

Premillennialism True or False?

Introduction

Bible Answers About Denominations

It must be noted that it is next to impossible to give a definition to this term premillennialism which all millennial teachers would accept. There are various approaches made by different teachers of this theory, and each one professing to believe it will have some peculiar twist to it that others would repudiate. However, there are certain views which are so common among millennialists as to justify a general definition. It is fundamentally the idea that there will be a literal one thousand year period during which Jesus Christ shall return to this earth and reign in Jerusalem on David's throne; the Jews will return to Palestine and Christ will rule over them in a material kingdom; this thousand years standing between the second coming of Christ and the final judgment of all. The prefix "pre" means we are living before that time. The suffix "ism" means this idea has been crystallized into a dogma.

This doctrine is extremely popular with nearly every denomination or sect holding to some form of it. It is found in its rankest form among such materialistic groups as the Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses. The Baptist Church and most Holiness groups hold to some form of it. Even some preachers in the conservative Christian Church advocate some form of it. Therefore, it will be the purpose of the next several articles to investigate various aspects of this theory to determine if it is true or false. In this article we will set out the basic theory

The Premillennial "Program"

First, based upon a number of prophecies the Jews had envisioned the coming of the Messiah who had been promised by those prophecies. The Jews longed for the kingdom which God had promised. They were certain that they would then have an earthly king who would be able to drive the Roman military forces out of their land and also conquer quickly all others. Among the prophecies which related to this matter are the following: (1) those relating to the seed promise – Gen. 3:15; 22:18; 2 Sam. 17:12-13; (2) those relating to the land promise -Gen. 15 -17; 17:1-8; (3) the prophecies concerning the promise of restoration from the land of Babylon, and (4) promises relating to the king and His kingdom – 2 Sam. 7:12-13; Isa. 2:1-4; Dan. 2:35-44; Psa. 89:3-4; 89:34-37; Psa. 110:1-4; Dan. 7:13-14; Ezek. 21:27; Gen. 48:10. Just as the Jews misinterpreted these passages, Premillennial people have contended that the prophecies of the Old Testament indicated that the Messiah was to reign on a literal throne over fleshly Israel in Jerusalem as a political ruler.

Premillennialists hold that because Christ did not measure up to the image which the Jews had of their promised king, most of them rejected Him. They further hold that this fact, coupled with His condemnation of the Jews because of their hypocrisy, led to His crucifixion.

Premillennialists hold that when Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15) it was His purpose to set up immediately the kingdom which had been prophesied by the prophets. However, according to premillennialism, the Jews rejected that kingdom and crucified the king. This forces them to the view that the church of Christ was not in God's original plan. The church had to be set up as a sort of temporary substitute to function until Christ comes again. They hold that present preaching of the gospel is not an effort to save all men; rather it is for the specific purpose of witnessing and calling a definite number who are to compose the body of Christ.

The "first resurrection" (mentioned in Rev. 20) will take place, according to premillennialism, at "the rapture." This means: when Christ comes for His saints. All saints who have died (both during the Old Testament and New Testament periods) will be raised from the dead. All saints then living will be changed. This is the so-called "first part" of the first resurrection. The resurrection of the tribulation saints later will be the "second part" of the first resurrection.

In the "rapture," according to premillennialism, all the saints will ascend to meet the Lord in the air. The "church age" ends at the "rapture." The coming of Christ for His saints will be secret; it will be in the night.

According to premillennialism, after the "rapture" the saints will be in heaven with the Lord for seven years. During these seven years the "judgments of the saints" will take place. This will involve the giving to each saint his appropriate reward and assigning to each his respective position. Also, during this period, the so-called marriage feast in heaven will be eaten. Then, during the last three and one half years of the seven years there will be the occurrence of the "great tribulation" on earth. The antiChrist will appear during these seven years the saints are with the Lord in heaven. The Jews will then make a covenant with Him. Those people who are converted during the seven years that the saints are with Christ in heaven will be killed before the Lord returns. During this period all of Israel (that is, the national house of fleshly Israel) will be saved.

The "second coming" (the "revelation") is to occur simultaneously with the coming of Christ with His saints to end the "great tribulation." This will be the time that the "tribulation saints" are resurrected. The Gentiles who are living on the earth will be judged and disposed of. Christ will then ascend to His throne of David and be seated as a earthly king of a so called "millennial kingdom. This kingdom will be a material, earthly kingdom that will last for a thousand years. After this there will be the great judgment and heaven and hell. In the next several articles we will show this Premillennial theory to be completely false.

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