

Postmillennialism (Dominion Theology)

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The postmillennial view of the Millennial Kingdom, which believes the Church will transform society and bring in the kingdom, was all but extinct after the two world wars, the increase of violence, the drugs epidemic, and the overall sinful degradation of our society and world. However, in the last 35 to 40 years there has been a resurgence in this concept and view of the Millennial Kingdom. In this study we want to address the beliefs or primary tenets of postmillennialism, along with some of the modern terms and current trends in the Church, which are related to this old view of the Millennial Kingdom.

Historic Postmillennialism

Augustine was not a postmillennialist. He lacked the optimism required for a true postmillennialist which believes a literal kingdom can be established over the earth someday. The older Augustine rejected any notion of a literal kingdom. However, Augustine taught that the age between the first and second advents of Christ was the Millennium (the time Christ ruled over His spiritual kingdom of people). Augustine taught that the Second Advent would occur at the end of the Millennium or period of time when Christ rules over His spiritual kingdom of people called the Church. It can be seen how postmillennialism was spawned from the teaching of Augustine. The concept of Christ returning after the Millennium (an alleged period of time when Christ rules in the hearts of people as King) was taught since the days of Augustine. The postmillennialist takes amillennialism one step further. Christ not only rules in the hearts of people as King today but He does so in order to allow the Church to live victoriously and eventually bring in the earthly kingdom or Golden Age. Christ then returns after a kingdom and time of prosperity has been established on earth by the Church. This is postmillennialism.

This system of millennial thought was probably developed in the 16th century. It is generally thought that Daniel Whitby (1638-1725) developed systematic postmillennialism. However, since the days when the state and church merged under Constantine (A. D. 313), it

seemed that there was much optimism that the Church could overtake the world, even as it overtook the Roman Empire. Many people at this time identified themselves as Christian and the state development of the Church led to a form of victory and optimism about the spread of Christianity and its ability to overtake and dominate the world.

Postmillennialism teaches that conditions on earth will gradually improve over time evolving into a world that has become “Christianized” and ready for the Second Coming of Christ to start eternity. The prefix “post” before the word Millennium means that Christ comes *after* the Church has already Christianized the world through spreading the Gospel. In other words, Christ returns only *after* the thousand years (a figurative expression of a long period of time) has expired. Postmillennialists are not literalistic about the length of the kingdom. The kingdom that eventually will be established over the earth is viewed as an unknown period or duration of time. The kingdom comes to planet earth as the Church gradually overtakes the world through the efforts of the Gospel and the conversion of vast multitudes of people. Christ’s presence on earth is not needed for the expansion of this kingdom.

The postmillennialist sees the Millennial Kingdom as the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that he would become a great nation and that all peoples on earth would be blessed through him (Genesis 12:2-3). This holy reign will come about via gradual conversion, through the spread of the Gospel (an incremental progress) rather than premillennialism's cataclysmic Christological advent of the Second Coming. The postmillennialist believes that the Millennium is a long era of time (not a literal thousand years) during which Christ will reign over the earth, not from a literal and earthly throne, but through the gradual increase of the Gospel and its power to change lives, as Christ spiritually reigns in the hearts of people. To the postmillennialist, the kingdom is present right now, as it occurs in the hearts of people, and as the Church continues to overtake a sinful society, save souls through the preaching of the Gospel and the Spirit’s work in the hearts of people, the spiritual kingdom will eventually turn into the earthly and physical kingdom of peace.

As Christ rules in the hearts of people today the promise of the kingdom spreads over the earth gradually. So, this is called Postmillennialism because this teaching concludes that Christ will return *after* the Millennium has been established by the church through Christ living in the hearts of His people and transforming society. After this gradual Christianization of the world, Christ will physically return and immediately usher the church into their eternal state after judging the wicked. Major proponents of this postmillennial view include Rousas J. Rushdoony, Greg L. Bahnsen, Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., David Chilton, and Gary North.

There is a brand of liberal postmillennialism that has historically taught that the world will be transformed through humanism and the social gospel. Adopting the evolutionary thought that man was advancing, historic liberal postmillennialists taught that the world would become a better place to live and eventually develop into a utopia, which would be a time of peace and prosperity. Postmillennialism *fit the thinking of the times* prior to the French Revolution and World Wars causing this millennial view to become very popular in Europe and North America. With the advancements of technology and man's increased knowledge it seemed that man had the ability to do anything.

Postmillennial teaching, which promised the transformation of society by those living upon earth, opened up the doors for the social gospel. This false gospel taught and still teaches today the social transformation of society instead of the spiritual transformation of people's lives through the Gospel (John 3:3). As the structures of society are altered by improving the condition of society and the poor and the economic distribution rearranged, it's then that people's behavior and character will change too. Of course, the liberal social gospel leaves out the Spirit's ministry (John 16:8; 2 Cor. 3:18), something that a postmillennialist within the realm of orthodoxy would never do. The proponents of the social gospel see the kingdom being introduced in this world through human agencies and movements even outside what is defined as the Church. To them the kingdom is simply the improvement of society. It can be seen that this postmillennial concept has been abused greatly by the liberals of the past and even today. To their credit, evangelical postmillennialists

teach that it takes the Gospel to transform the world and eventually begin the kingdom years of perfect peace and prosperity.

Postmillennialism became all but extinct after two world wars, the Great Depression, and the unchanging moral decay and sinful degradation in the world. However, this teaching began to be revived in the 1970's once again. Today it appears under the disguise of modern terms such as "Dominion Theology," Reconstructionism," and "Theonomy." The idea is taught that the Church is going to reconstruct society and take dominion of the world, through instituting God's Old Testament Law on society, and then Jesus Christ comes back to earth to start eternity. Therefore, Christ will come back "post" or after the Church establishes this utopia on planet earth. *Postmillennialism is a man-made Millennium.* Man is responsible for transforming society, people, and ushering in the Golden Age of peace and tranquility on earth, when there will be no more war and strife.

Similar to amillennialism, this view claims that the kingdom of Revelation 20:4 is primarily Christ ruling in the hearts of His people (the Church). The postmillennialist turns the 1,000 years into a symbolic or allegorical kingdom over which Christ rules today in the hearts of His people. The idea is that Christ rules today as King through the hearts and lives of people so that His people can as vice-regents bring in the kingdom. *Christ is definitely King, but He is King only in the sense that He rules in the hearts and lives of His people. This spiritual rule of Christ in the hearts of His people will cause them to reign triumphantly and bring in the earthly kingdom.* According to the postmillennialist the references to the Millennium in Revelation chapter twenty cannot refer to a literal time when Christ will return to earth and set up a kingdom, since the Church is said to set up the kingdom, as a result of Christ ruling through the hearts of His people.

Revelation 20:4 needs to be interpreted figuratively in this system to once again mean that Christ is ruling His kingdom of people (the Church). The postmillennialist believes that the thousand-year reign of Christ in Revelation 20 is figurative and represents a time when Christ reigns in the hearts of believers in order to give them victory and power as rulers over the earth. This in return will eventually usher in a time of earthly rule that consists of peace and prosperity on

planet earth. In one sense, Christ must rule in the hearts of people today as the King and the more this takes place the closer the world will be to entering the time of utopia and peace on planet earth.

So in the postmillennial scheme of teaching the Millennium of Revelation 20 is not a literal millennial rule of Christ on the earth but Christ reigning over His people in a spiritual kingdom today. It is really the rule of Christ in the hearts of men (Luke 17:21). The idea that is propagated is this. *Only as men come to faith in Christ and submit to His rule (the spiritual kingdom and rule of Christ in the hearts of men) can the promise of the earthly kingdom be seen in a greater way.* More people being converted bring the promise of the kingdom that much closer. Wherever men believe in Jesus Christ, commit themselves to Him, and obey Him, the kingdom is potentially present and spreading, and the world is that much closer to the beginning of the time of peace and prosperity.

To the postmillennialist *the kingdom is not something that is to be introduced cataclysmically at a future time when Christ returns.* The kingdom is already perceived as being here in some sense. The earthly kingdom is growing gradually like leaven (Matt. 13:33), as more people come under the spiritual rule of Christ, which will eventually result in a time of peace and perfect conditions on earth. For the postmillennialist *the kingdom is arriving by degrees upon planet earth.* It is being introduced progressively and at one point, which no one knows, the advancement of the kingdom will result in the commencement of the time of peace over earth and the actual beginning of the earthly Millennium. Of course, this is shoddy theology because it rejects the literal interpretation the Bible.

First, the kingdom is not here on planet earth today in any spiritual form of existence. Interpreting Revelation 20 and the 1,000 years in this way is pure disbelief. It avoids the context and syntax of Revelation chapter twenty which follows the literal return of the King in Revelation chapter nineteen. Furthermore, Luke 17:21 (“the kingdom of God is within you”) literally reads “in the midst of you” and means that Jesus was in the midst of the people presenting Himself as their long-awaited King during His earthly ministry. Second, the establishment of the earthly kingdom is not a gradual process that

occurs over many centuries. The kingdom will be established immediately when Jesus returns to earth.

Matthew 13:41-43

“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Matthew 25:31-34

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Matthew 25:41 adds this:

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Matthew 25:46 concludes by saying:

“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

Postmillennialists usually claim that the kingdom verses refer only to the eternal kingdom or eternal state that is going to be established over the earth but not to a literal 1,000-year reign where Christ is the King. This conclusion is unwarranted for the simple reason that 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 establishes the truth that Jesus must reign for 1,000 years to prepare the earth for the eternal state.

Third, it's Jesus who sets up the kingdom – not man!

Daniel 2:44

“And in the days of these kings shall **the God of heaven set up a kingdom**, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not

be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”

Daniel 7:27

“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, **shall be given to the people of the saints** (not established by them) of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”

Jeremiah 23:5

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and **a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.**”

Revelation 11:15

“ ... The kingdoms of this world are **become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ;** and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

Jeremiah 33:15

“In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and **he shall execute judgment and righteousness** in the land.”

Fourth, we must understand that the establishment of the earthly kingdom is a *prophetic* event that deals with the future literal reign of Jesus Christ upon planet earth.

Isaiah 32:1

“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.”

Zechariah 14:9

“And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.”

Fifth, the kingdom is linked to a time when the King will return to judge an earth that is defective and overcome by the degradation of sin.

Revelation 19:11-16

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

If the Church victoriously takes over the world and brings in the kingdom, then why must Jesus return and judge the world? Why must He “smite the nations” of the world represented in Armageddon and throughout the land of Palestine?

Zechariah 12:8

“In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them.”

Isaiah 11:4

“But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.”

Revelation 14:14-20

“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And

another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.”

This doesn't sound like the King returning to an earth that is already at peace and under the control of the Church. It sounds like a world that is in chaos, out of control, and under the power of Satan (1 John 5:19). The Scriptures are very clear. It's King Jesus who is going to judge the world and establish His kingdom – not the Church. Only a person with postmillennial eyeglasses would come to any other conclusion. Let the Scriptures speak for themselves. The postmillennial system is simply a fanciful dream. The Church will not transform society and bring in the promised kingdom. The Scriptures teach that society is gradually getting worse (2 Timothy 3:1-13 – “perilous times shall come” and “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse”). The present age is prophesied to deteriorate and apostatize (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Thess. 3:1-3), culminating in the departure of those who are “in Christ” to Heaven (1 Thess. 4:13-17; John 14:1-3), followed by a universal acceptance of the Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2:3-10), who will be destroyed by the cataclysmic Second Coming of Jesus Christ to earth (2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 19:20) to set up His glorious Kingdom reign (Rev. 20:1-6).

After two world wars and the continuing wars that plague our society today, one must almost deceive himself into thinking that the world is getting better. The League of Nations was unsuccessful in bringing world peace. The United Nations is not successful either with their peace efforts. We simply can't have peace without the Prince of Peace (Jesus Christ) ruling on planet earth (Isaiah 9:6). The saints are not going to bring in the kingdom in various stages or degrees and finally triumphant over the earth. Jesus Christ is going to return and bring in the kingdom with His own power and might (Matt. 24:29-30). The saints will not nor can they bring in the kingdom as we have already seen (Daniel 2:44; 7:20-22; 27). It will take the “King of Kings” (Rev. 19:16) to usher in the earthly Kingdom. There can be no peace

on planet earth until the Prince of Peace returns. This is the clear and unmistakable reading and understanding of Scripture.

Like the amillennialist, the postmillennialist sees the current age as the kingdom of God (a spiritual kingdom occurring in the hearts of men over which Christ rules). However, not only does the postmillennialist see the kingdom occurring in the hearts of believers today, but also impacting society. *Postmillennialism is simply an optimistic form of amillennialism.* The postmillennialist believes that God can and will have a literal kingdom over the earth someday where His people rule victoriously. The postmillennialist expects a conversion of all the nations prior to Christ's Second Coming based upon such a verse as Matthew 24:14.

Their misunderstanding is that we are not preaching the "gospel of the kingdom" today (a gospel that is designed to advance the kingdom over the earth) nor are we living in the eschatological period of time known as the Tribulation Period, awaiting the coming kingdom. Furthermore, the kingdom is not the next prophetic event on God's calendar. The Rapture is going to occur next where God's people are transported back to Heaven in order to dwell with Christ (John 14:1-2). In addition, one must understand that the "gospel of the kingdom" will only be preached during the future literal Tribulation Period which is an era of time that exists just before the Millennial Kingdom is established on planet earth. This Gospel has nothing to do with *advancing* the kingdom on earth but *announcing* that the kingdom will soon be ushered in by the returning King who is Jesus. During the future Tribulation Period it will be announced that judgment is coming and that people should place faith in Christ or else be judged by the King when He returns (Matt. 3:1-12).

Nevertheless, to the postmillennialist, the kingdom is present right now as the Church establishes it upon the earth through the preaching of the Gospel and the Spirit's ministry working in the hearts of men. *As Christ rules in the hearts of people the promise of the kingdom spreads over the earth gradually.* The kingdom will gradually and progressively advance but at one point in time the kingdom will actually begin. *No one knows for sure when the kingdom begins or when the earth will be subdued enough to have entered the time of peace.* Some postmillennialists provide for a gradual establishment of

the Millennium; others for a more abrupt beginning. Most, but not all, allow for a brief apostasy or resurgence of evil just prior to the advent and in preparation for the final judgment. Of course, even this seems to go against their teaching.

One thing seems to be prominent among most postmillennial writers. The Millennium has no clear starting point or beginning. *In one sense, the kingdom will arrive by degrees.* But there will one day be a condition of perfect peace that was completely absent from the previous day. This victory is possible because Satan is bound in the present age (not a future age), as Revelation 20:2 teaches, representing Satan's defeat that he suffered when Christ died upon the cross, or his inability to prevent the spread of the Gospel in the world today. Of course, this is a clear distortion of the prophetic Scriptures and the literal understanding of Scripture. A casual reading of the Scriptures reveals that Satan is not bound today as this millennial system erroneously teaches and that he does prevent the spread of the Gospel message by blinding people to the truth (2 Cor. 2:11; 4:4; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 5:19).

Postmillennialism does not teach that every person will be saved. However, it teaches that a substantial number of people in every populace of the world will be saved. This system of interpretation believes that since the kingdom was established at Christ's first coming (Matt. 4:17), it is currently being expanded through the preaching of the gospel (Matt. 24:14), until an overwhelming majority of people, though not all, will be converted to Christ. Worldwide revival will take place gradually until the kingdom arrives on earth. The key point is this. *The Christianization of the entire world will take place due to man and not the return of Christ to earth.* The conversion of individual Christians by grace through faith will bring about the transformation of the world.

Of course, this is fanciful theology and an illusionary dream in light of the repeated warnings of how the earth will revolt against God before the arrival of the kingdom. Like Noah's day, people will be living their own life and doing their own thing, while ignoring the spiritual warnings of the Lord (see Matthew 24:36-39). Furthermore, Jesus never spoke about a wide gate where multitudes of saved people would travel (Matt. 7:13). Rather, Jesus spoke about a narrow gate

where few people travel and this is the gate that leads to eternal life (Matt. 7:14). A mass salvation of the populace of the world prior to Christ's return is simply an illusionary dream that does not harmonize with the statements of Christ and Scripture.

The kingdom idea of the postmillennialist is different than what amillennialism teaches in that the amillennialist rejects the idea of any future kingdom of earthly peace. It's true that postmillennialists spiritualize/allegorize the kingdom in Revelation 20:4 to mean the rule of Christ over His people today, so that people can live victoriously and bring in the earthly kingdom. This allegorized teaching keeps the postmillennialist from admitting that Christ will establish a literal future kingdom over the world. Nevertheless, the postmillennialist does embrace the teaching that a time of literal peace and prosperity will eventually break out on the earth as Christ rules more people and society is changed. It will be a time when all wars will cease and all will be well in societal living.

The postmillennialist speaks of a time of world transformation before Christ returns and starts eternity. Of course, this is not taught by amillennialism, which rejects any idea of an earthly kingdom or Millennium. For the postmillennialist this era of peace or Millennium will be established upon earth for an unknown duration of time. The kingdom will gradually become established over the earth as more and more persons come to faith in Christ and submit themselves to the Lord's plans, practices, and personal teachings. When people do this, peace will be the natural result. National and racial conflict will cease in the world dissolving disharmony between blacks and whites and all other races. Even religious and all denominational turmoil will become a thing of the past. And this will be the spiritual fulfillment of the prediction of Isaiah when it says that the wolf and the lamb will lie down together (Isaiah 11:6). For the postmillennialist, this is nothing but a figurative expression and illustration of peace existing among the nations.

The gradual growth of the kingdom is the key distinctive feature of this position. The *kingdom will arrive in degrees*, through the lives of changed people, instead of a sudden and dramatic fashion, through the visible and bodily return of Jesus Christ to earth, as the Scripture teaches (Mathew 24:27-31). The postmillennialist believes that

continually spreading the Gospel will increasingly and progressively introduce the kingdom of peace. Eventually, though the efforts of God's messengers, the world will enter the time of utopia and experience the kingdom blessings of peace and tranquility. As the name postmillennial means, only *after* the world has been established in this era or time of peace, will Jesus return.

According to postmillennialism there will be a brief time of rebellion that will occur following the kingdom which results in the return of Jesus Christ. At the end of the Millennium there will be a time of apostasy and a flare-up of some kind of evil. And finally, the Millennium will end when Jesus returns to judge planet earth. So the name "post" (meaning after) best describes this system of thought. *Christ will come after the Millennium has run its course.* A general resurrection and judgment will occur when Jesus returns at the end of time where every person will be consigned to their appropriate place of eternal dwelling. At this point eternity will begin and the eternal form of the kingdom will commence.

Some postmillennialists see the present Church Age in which we live covering the Millennium in its beginning stages. Others see it as a future period that will eventually blend together with the present age. Unlike premillennialism, the postmillennialist does not see the Millennium as radically different than our present world. They don't view it as a quality of existence that is very different than other ages and a completely different type of world where even the curse is broken upon nature (Isaiah 41:18-19; 51:30). The postmillennialist tends to allegorize the prophecies connected with the Millennium which teach about nature dwelling together in serenity (Isaiah 11:6). They don't want to take the Old Testament prophecies literally, or even the 1,000 years literally, lest they also are forced to take the kingdom promises to Israel literally, where Christ is foreseen returning to earth in order to inaugurate an earthly literal kingdom for Israel.

Texts that speak of Christ physically ruling over planet earth, and the earth being literally changed by His physical presence, simply do not fit into the eschatological scheme of postmillennialism, which rejects the truth of Christ bringing in the kingdom. *Allegorizing the promises given to Israel and certain Millennium texts, allows the*

postmillennialist to deny Christ's return to earth in order to establish a literal kingdom. All that the postmillennialist teaches is that the Church (the new Israel) will eventually take over the world (as Christ rules in their hearts and changes lives) and usher in an unknown period of peace over planet earth that will be characterized by no war and violence.

Modern Postmillennialism

This postmillennial movement is being promoted today by some in the modern day Charismatic movement such as Pat Robertson, Kenneth Hagin, and Kenneth Copeland. Other men such as D. James Kennedy promote this view of the Millennium. Kennedy does not believe there will be a literal Millennium over earth which Christ rules but that the Church, over which Christ reigns today, will eventually improve society, bring in the Millennium and reign victoriously. This is why these men major on speaking out against the social ills of our society. They believe that the mandate for the Church is to reconstruct society and make it better. One can hardly wonder how D. James Kennedy can espouse this view of the Millennium since he is constantly speaking out against the departure of this nation from its historical Christian roots. He should be able to see the hopeless slide of this nation and world into the devil's lap (1 John 5:19). In a September 1994 plenary speech to the Christian Coalition national convention, Rev. D. James Kennedy said that "true Christian citizenship" involves an active engagement in society to "take dominion over all things as vice-regents of God."

This is sometimes supported by such a verse as Genesis 1:26 where God told man to take dominion over the earth. Kennedy fails to see that this verse is referring to "every creeping thing" (the animal kingdom) and not to organized society. Nor is this given as a mandate to the Church to Christianize society and bring in the kingdom. This is a gross misapplication of this Scripture that is taken out of context. The Church is not called upon to become a ruling leader in society but to win souls for Jesus Christ (Acts 15:14) and this will have the greatest impact on society. Reconstructionists propose that personal salvation is not the only part of the Great Commission (Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19-20). Our evangelism must include the transformation of society as well as the salvation of souls.

In short, the Gospel must also include the social reform of culture and institute a new social order, as well as a new birth, a revolution as well as a regeneration. Of course, this is a false gospel (Gal. 1:8-10).

Al Dager says:

"Of all the dominionist' materials I've read I have yet to see a single, *accurately exegeted Scripture reference* that substantiates the dominionist mandate for subduing the nations and/or ruling the world prior to Jesus' return. They either spiritualize, allegorize, or erroneously apply the Scriptures in their attempts to justify an otherwise untenable position."

There are books and speakers today that give advice, which may sound good on the surface, but their actual findings and advice do not agree with the Scriptures. If it does not line up with the Bible, the advice that we hear must not be accepted. We need to be careful what books we purchase today and who we listen to on television and the radio. There are those who may sound spiritual but who are not Biblical correct (2 Tim. 2:18). Scripture actually tells us that when Jesus returns the nations will be allied *against* Him; they will not be waiting to welcome Him (see Revelation 16:14; 19:19; Psalm 2). The fact remains that when Jesus returns a vast major portion of the world will be under the rule of Antichrist, not under the rule of the Church. The world will be at odds with Jesus Christ and seek to destroy Him when He returns. There will be no such thing as a society and world that is reconstructed by Christian principles and which is following God.

We must conclude that modern postmillennialism is a theology and movement that is in serious error. Its theory is debunked. It comes under the disguise of "Dominion Theology" and "Christian Reconstructionism" which are terms that are teaching the same thing – the reconstruction of society and bringing in the kingdom. The Christian Reconstruction Movement (CRM) claims that believers possess a cultural mandate from God to reclaim in this age dominion over human society, a dominion forfeited by the Genesis Fall, but supposedly regained for immediate claim with the new birth experience. It sees the Church of God as reclaiming eventual dominion over the world and teaches "Kingdom Now" theology. This is because it holds that Christ actually set up His Messianic reign or

kingdom while He was here on earth during the first century, which will eventually Christianize the whole earth, after which He will return and consummate all things in resurrection and judgment.

As believers obey this mandate, gradually gaining dominion over earthly society, this present world will supposedly become "Christianized," inaugurating the Millennium. Dominionists are attempting to peacefully convert the laws of United States so that they match those of the Hebrew Scriptures. They intend to achieve this by using the freedom of religion in the US to train a generation of children in private Christian religious schools. Later, their graduates will be charged with the responsibility of creating a new Bible-based political, religious, and social order. One of the first tasks of this order will be to eliminate religious choice and freedom. Their eventual goal is to achieve the "*Kingdom of God*" in which much of the world is converted to Christianity.

According to Reconstructionists, the militancy of the Church must transform society and make it better. The Church is to exercise rule over every realm and institution of society – religious and political. It must return the earth to its Eden state where the earth is once again Christianized. As already mentioned, this movement focuses on Adam's mandate, which is wrongly interpreted as filling and subduing the earth in a spiritual and political way (Gen. 1:28). It's claimed that this mandate is the marching orders for the Church today. Many conclude that the Church must use the Old Testament Law in their quest to transform society. This is called *Theonomy* (Greek for "God's law").

The Christian Reconstructionist Movement leaders believe an Old Testament-based government should and will replace democracy. They believe and teach that an earth-wide rule of God will be established through the reinstatement of the Law of Moses for every nation. Reconstructionists will dismantle the present world culture and reconstruct it as a Mosaic society. Their claim is that following the details of God's laws will make America as strict as the most orthodox Muslim society. "True to the letter of Old Testament Law, homosexuals, incorrigible children, adulterers, blasphemers, astrologers and others will be executed," says Rodney Clapp (*Christianity Today*, 1987). CRM leaders have shaped their political,

judicial, and economic programs by relying totally on Old Testament Law.

It's interesting that the Puritans were the direct forerunners of today's Kingdom/Dominion/Reconstructionist heresy. The Puritans believed that they were carrying to America true Christianity as decreed by God, especially as written in the Old Testament. They also believed that they were on a divine mission to America, a place specially appointed by God to be the "New Israel," a theocratic "city upon a hill." The Puritans viewed themselves as God's special people, replacing national Israel, and that the American Indians were termed as the "new Canaanites." The fruit of the Puritan's theology was brutal. They saw their mission as converting the Canaanite Indians to Christianity, or slaughter them in the name of Christ. For example, the Puritan massacres of the Pequot Indian tribe on May 26, 1637, and again on July 14, 1637, were deemed by the Puritans to be directed by God. Captain John Mason declared, "God laughed his enemies and the enemies of his people to scorn, making them as a fiery oven ... Thus did the Lord judge among the heathen, filling the place with dead bodies" (Segal and Stinenback, *Puritans, Indians, and Manifest Destiny*, pp. 111-112, 134-135). Converting the pagans for God was acceptable to the Puritans.

Nearly three and a half centuries later, the "New Puritans," called Reconstructionists, want to do what the earlier ones could not. Reconstructionists of today believe they have a mandate from God to reconstruct American society. They want to establish a theocracy or Theonomy (God's law) by instituting the civil code of the Law of Moses under which all Americans, and eventually all the world, must live. Reconstructionism has married religion and politics. Under the cover of fighting abortion, homosexuality, witchcraft, pornography, secular public education, and other anathemas to Christianity, it has made enormous strides in religious and political affairs today.

The entire Reconstructionist Movement stands on a false premise. This is because the Law was given to govern the nation of Israel - not all of the Gentile world governments that would exist through the ages of time (Romans 9:4-5; Exodus 19:3-6). Furthermore, Israel was expected to implement all the intricacies of God's Law. The whole law was an indivisible unit with inseparable penalties (James 2:10; Gal.

3:10; 5:3). To keep one part makes one liable for the whole code. I know of no theonomist who is willing to be placed under the minute Old Testament laws that pertain to dietary regulations, farming, clothing, worship, and holy days (Matt. 23:23; Exodus 30:19-21; Lev. 5:2; 11:29-32; Numb. 6:18). The Bible teaches that such laws have been rescinded (Col. 2:16, Heb. 9:10) and that we are no longer under the strict outworking of the Mosaic dispensation (Rom. 6:14) with its strict penalties (Duet. 27:15-26).

Rolland McCune said:

“God’s whole dispensational program is based on epochs of new revelation of Himself and His will that result in new stewardships with new requirements and responsibilities that displace previous commands and laws.”

Of course, God’s moral laws never change. They existed prior to the Mosaic Law and therefore mankind knows intuitively that it’s wrong to steal, murder, and commit adultery with another man’s wife. The point is this. Imposing the Mosaic Law on the Gentile nations of the world is not the answer to changing people. The answer is the supernatural saving and transforming work of God’s grace upon the hearts of people (Titus 2:11-12).

The truth is this. **The Church was never commissioned by God to implement His Law on other nations since the Church is a separate people from Israel (1 Cor. 10:32) with a different commission (Mark 16:15).** The Church was never given the mandate to Christianize society or the existing world order along political and social lines. The Mosaic Law was the law and government for national Israel and it was to be instituted in an exact manner by Israel – not by the Church. The nations today should follow and use the Noahaic Covenant, as a form of governing principle to follow, which was given for the entire world to follow after the Genesis Flood (Genesis 9:1-16). This form of government is transdispensational and applies to all nations throughout the world.

Postmillennialism teaches that Christ has transferred the blessing of the kingdom from Israel to the Church. Now the new Israel (the Church) is to gain dominance over the world and usher in the earthly kingdom. The Great Commission given by Jesus was a commission

to dominate the entire world and rule it victoriously (Matt. 28:19-20). Satan has been bound or defeated in this present age by the death and resurrection of Christ. This allows the triumph of the Church to take place. After the kingdom has arrived through man's efforts and is established over the earth, it's only then that the King will return and judge the world at the end of time.

Reconstructionism is strongly opposed to Dispensationalism. Reconstructionism asserts that God intends the Mosaic Law to be in effect throughout history. By contrast, Dispensationalism teaches that the Mosaic Law was abolished and no longer serves the same purpose, as a system of rule or governmental structure over Israel (Gal. 3:19-22; 4:1-11; Eph. 2:15-16; Heb. 7:12; 9:10). Reconstructionism accuses premillennialism of defeatism (seeing no victorious end to history), of regarding the history of the Church as irrelevant, of draining believers of the motivation to advance the Kingdom of God over the earth, and of being a product of paganism. Of course, none of these assumptions are true.

Like amillennialism, Reconstructionism rejects the idea that the Rapture and the Second Coming will be two separate events that occur at different times. It insists that the Church will be raptured to meet Christ in the air while He is descending to earth in His glorious Second Coming on the last day of world history. Reconstructionists are convinced that the great majority of New Testament prophecies, including most of the Book of Revelation, have already been fulfilled. In fact, they believe that most of these prophecies were fulfilled by the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Reconstructionists teach that Matthew 24 and the Book of Revelation are not about the literal Second Coming of Christ to earth. Instead, they are prophecies about the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem and the ending of Israel as a national entity along with all her earthly kingdom promises (preterism).

Many adherents to reconstructionism conclude that the word *coming* in the book of the Revelation never refers to the physical return of Christ to the earth at His Second Coming. It insists that most Biblical references to Christ's Second Coming are to periodic comings of divine judgment upon people and nations during this present age. *These allegorized conclusions allow the Church to bring in the*

kingdom and Christ to return after the kingdom has already been established by the Church. Of course, these conclusions are forced upon the Scriptures instead of allowing the Scriptures to speak for themselves.

Like amillennialism, postmillennialism blends together the two Bible entities of Israel and the Church making them the same universal people of God. Why? It's because postmillennialism must teach that the earthly kingdom promises of old Israel have now been transferred to the new Israel of God in an allegorical fashion. The new Israel (the Church) now becomes an actual kingdom of people over which Christ rules, as He manifests His presence in their hearts and lives. *Christ does not rule in a physically sense but only in a spiritually sense as He indwells His people.* This transferred kingdom concept and spiritual rule of Christ in the hearts of His people allows God's new Israel (the Church) to overtake, subdue, and rule the earth as they advance God's earthly physical kingdom throughout the world.

The postmillennialist must get rid of a literal kingdom where Christ rules over Israel, since in their scheme of eschatology, Christ is not going to bring in the kingdom rule. In other words, the postmillennial view requires the Church to inherit the kingdom promises that were given to Israel in a spiritual fashion (Christ ruling in their hearts), so that there can be no future for Israel over which King Jesus will physically rule and reign in a Millennium. Of course, the Scriptures teach otherwise. The New Testament does not teach that Israel has been replaced by the Church (Rom. 11:1). The Church is not the transformed Israel of the New Testament nor does it overtake the promises of Israel in any way (Rom. 11:26-27).

Postmillennialism teaches that the kingdom was founded and started to advance during the earthly ministry of Jesus, as He began to save and take rule or residency in the hearts of His people (Luke 17:21). However, Jesus only said that the kingdom was "near" (Luke 10:9, 11; 21:31) during His earthly ministry. This was because the King was present, or in their midst, and was offering to establish the earthly kingdom to Israel, which was a kingdom based upon the unchanging covenant promises given to them (Abrahamic – Gen. 12:1-3; 17:7-8, 13, 19; 1 Chron. 16:17; Psalm 105:10 – Palestinian – Deut. 30:5-6;

Ezekiel 16:60 – Davidic – 2 Sam. 7:16; 23:5; Isa. 55:3; New – Isa. 24:5; 61:8; Jer. 31:26-34; 32:40; 50:5; Ezek. 36:26-27; Heb. 13:20).

Nowhere in Scripture does it state that the Church began to advance and overtake society, while Jesus was here on earth, and working with His people. The postmillennialist wants us to believe that Christ began the advancement of His kingdom while He was on earth, as He began to change the lives of people, and motivate them to establish the kingdom. It's then asserted that Christ left earth and continues in a piecemeal fashion to advance His earthly kingdom, as He rules and reigns in the hearts of His people. Someday enough people will be saved and the entire world will be overtaken or subdued by God's victorious people. Of course, the Bible does not speak of the Church advancing Christ's kingdom during His earthly ministry for the simple reason that the Church was not even formed while Christ was on earth (Acts 1:4-5; 2). Furthermore, during Christ's earthly ministry He spoke of His kingdom as a future event that would take place when He returns to earth and is once again with His disciples.

Matthew 19:28

“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Christ actually promised during His earthly ministry that He would someday return and immediately usher in the kingdom without the help of His people.

Matthew 13:41-43

“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Let me conclude this study by saying this. The greatest problem with Postmillennialism is that the Bible does not teach it. **How can you have a kingdom without a king?** I have asked the Jehovah Witness

this same question. The concept that Christ is only a King that lives in the hearts of people, and that He commissions His people to bring in the earthly kingdom, does not fit the Biblical picture of Christ coming back as King in power and great glory to establish His kingdom (Rev. 19:11-21). Furthermore, for every earthly kingdom that is established there must always be a living, physical, and earthly king present (Dan. 2:44). Therefore, it will take the visible, bodily, and physical presence of King Jesus to bring in the earthly kingdom and He will do so when He returns and sits upon the throne of David.

Luke 1:31-32 states:

“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

There are four good reasons why Jesus Christ’s reign will be a literal, physical, and earthly reign rather than a spiritual reign in the hearts of people. First, Christ will be on earth after He returns (Rev. 19:11–16). Second, at the end of His reign the saints, who reign with Him, will still be on the earth (Rev. 20:9). Third, God promised the saints an earthly reign (Rev. 5:10). Fourth, the Old Testament Messianic prophecies anticipated an earthly kingdom (2 Sam. 7:10–16; Ps. 2:8; Isa. 65:17–66:24; Dan. 7:27).

There are no Bible verses when taken in their grammatical, historical, literal, and contextual approach that teach postmillennialism. The lack of any true Biblical support brings a fatal blow to the teaching of postmillennialism. Postmillennialists usually attack the clear teaching of premillennialism. They then attempt to support their eschatological scheme by allegorizing Scripture. Finally, they try to support their postmillennial presuppositions by proof texts of Scripture which are actually taken out of context. Let me conclude this study abruptly by saying one more thing. I have never found the post that postmillennialism is resting upon!