

Premillennialism

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Many within the church today are teaching views on the Millennium (1,000 years) instead of teaching what the Bible actually says about the Millennium. Our present-day emphasis on scholarship has caused some of God's people to miss the unmistakably clear teaching about the Millennium and God's future plan for the nation of Israel. This study will unapologetically embrace premillennialism as the only scriptural and correct understanding of God's unchanging Word. If we do not edit God's mind and just believe what God says, it's then that we will come to embrace the teaching of Premillennialism. Let us remember one thing. We are to follow truth – not positions.

The Teaching of Premillennialism

Premillennialism is the eschatological view that Christ's Second Coming will occur before the Millennial Kingdom is established. It teaches that Christ will return literally to earth in order to establish the Millennial Kingdom, which is a future, literal, 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth – a time when Christ will rule on the throne of David in Jerusalem. The term Millennium comes from the Latin word *mille* ("thousand") and *annus* (year). Thus, it refers to the 1000-year reign of Christ. In the early church, premillennialism was called *chiliasm*, which comes from the Greek term meaning 1,000. This term is used six times in Revelation 20:2-7 to reinforce its literal significance.

Acts 1:6

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

Christ had a golden opportunity to correct the disciples understanding about the literal earthly kingdom and theocracy that would someday come upon the earth. However, instead of correcting the disciples understanding of a literal kingdom Christ agreed with them. He only explained that they could not understand the exact timing and arrival of the earthly kingdom

from their present perspective and knowledge of the future until later revelation in the New Testament Scriptures would be given.

No person can hijack the meaning that Jesus Christ is going to return to earth in His Second Coming to establish a Millennium (a literal 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth) unless they want to do away with the literal understanding of what the Bible teaches on this subject. Even though the strongest support for premillennialism is found in the clear statement of Revelation 20:1-7, where six times Christ's kingdom is said to last 1,000 years, the Old Testament and the rest of the New Testament also support a premillennial understanding of God's plan for history.

Charles Ryrie cites essential features of premillennialism as follows: "Its duration will be 1,000 years; its location will be on this earth; its government will be theocratic with the personal presence of Christ reigning as King; and it will fulfill all the yet-unfulfilled promises about the earthly kingdom."

These are the basic teachings of premillennialism. Before Augustine (A.D. 354-430), for the first three hundred years of the church's existence, the premillennial view of Christ's Second Coming was the only view to be found in the church. *The earliest interpretation of the millennial reign of Christ is that of premillennialism.* In premillennialism, words mean what they normally mean in everyday usage, while at the same time it allows for legitimate figures of speech. Because of this the one thousand years mentioned six times in Revelation 20 is taken literally and refers to a literal reign of Christ over the earth in the future. The simple thesis of premillennialism is that Jesus will literally return to the earth before (pre) the Millennium begins and that He himself will inaugurate and rule over it.

In contrast, amillennialism sees the kingdom of God, not as a literal kingdom, but present now "in the hearts of men." Postmillennialism also sees Christ ruling in the hearts of men today in a spiritual kingdom so that man can gain victory over planet earth and bring in an earthly time of peace. Postmillennialism sees Christ returning to earth after the Millennium is already finished. The word "premillennial" is derived of two components: "Pre" signifies *before*, and, "millennium" denotes a period of *1,000 years*.

This teaching suggests that Christ will return before the Millennium begins and establish a literal earthly reign over planet earth.

Premillennialism holds that after a period of seven years of tribulation, Christ will return to physically establish His Kingdom on earth for a period of one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-2; Zech. 13:2). This return will occur before the Millennium is established over the earth. This is why it is called premillennialism. Christ comes *before* the Millennium is established. This opposes postmillennialism (Christ's comes after the kingdom is established) and amillennialism (there is no earthly kingdom).

Premillennialism is the only system of interpretation that teaches Christ will establish a literal kingdom over the earth that will last one thousand years. No other system of interpretation (amillennialism, postmillennialism) takes the world Millennium literally as referring to 1,000 years. The literal interpretation of the Scripture will bring a person to the conclusion that Christ will rule and reign over the world for 1,000 years.

It can be factually substantiated that the literal interpretation of the one thousand years was abandoned due to the rise of allegorical interpretation (Origen) which was an interpretive scheme directly influenced by pagan philosophy. Others taught that the Millennium would be a time of sensual indulgence and this also sparked a figurative interpretation of the thousand years by other thinkers (Augustine).

Postmillennialism and amillennialism teaches that we are living in an *allegorical millennial kingdom* and dismiss the whole idea that Christ will return before a literal kingdom is established over the earth. In these systems of thought the kingdom is figuratively construed to mean the church or people of God over which Jesus rules today. However, it must be noted that the linguistic meaning of the term kingdom (*basileia*) is a "reign" and has nothing to do with a "realm" or "people." The attempt of postmillennialism and amillennialism to link the term kingdom to the church is unwarranted linguistically, biblically, and prophetically. Thus, premillennialism teaches that Christ will come *before* the kingdom has been established and that He, as the King of the Kings and Lord of Lords, will set

up and establish a literal kingdom reign over the earth that will last one thousand years (Rev. 19:11-16).

It is frequently pointed out by the amillennialist that there is no reference to either Israel or the earth in Revelation 20:4-6. This is intended to demonstrate that it is not an earthly millennial reign over the nation of Israel that is being described and that there is no such thing as a one-thousand-year rule. By the same line of argumentation, the amillennial viewpoint may be negated too, since Revelation 20:1-3 makes no reference to the earth, to the death of Christ, or to the church and Revelation 20:4-6 makes no reference to heaven.

It's also generally held that by those who reject the literalness of the 1,000 years that the angel, heaven, the pit, Satan, the first resurrection, and the nations are literal in Revelation chapter 20. But if this is true, then why would the number 1,000 not be literal like the other time designations in the book of the Revelation? It is sheer folly to accept the literalness of the other details and reject the literalness of first resurrection and the one thousand years. Those who lived next to the apostles, and the whole Church for 300 years, understood the thousand years in the plain literal sense. Why would anyone want to change this interpretation to a figurative and allegorical interpretation? The answer lies in the fact that they are heavily influenced by Augustinianism which has been passed down through the history of the Church since the fourth century.

The nonliteral amillenarian will also tell you that the binding of Satan has occurred today in view of Christ's defeat of Satan on the cross. However, if Satan is bound in this way, then why is he roaming about deceiving mankind and the nations (Job 1:7; 2:2; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 16":13-14). The Bible is not teaching a metaphorical binding of Satan but a literal binding of Satan when Jesus returns in His Second Coming. Premillennialism teaches that it's during the Millennium (not today) that Satan will be bound and unable to deceive people. It takes this prophecy *literally* and with a *futurist* interpretation. After the Millennium, Satan will then be set free for a short time (Rev. 20:3), but his rebellion will be quickly vanquished or brought down by God (Rev. 20:7-10).

Here is another interesting note. Prophecies of Christ ruling with an iron scepter (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15) give strong evidence that there will eventually be a literal Millennial Kingdom populated at least in part by unsaved, mortal people. In addition, it should be obvious that these prophecies must apply to the future because they were not fulfilled during Christ's first coming. But in spite of the many clear verses on this subject, there are some people who do not believe that the 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth is literal, and others who do not believe the Kingdom is coming in the future. If either of these beliefs were correct, then the only people available for Christ to rule with an iron scepter would be the saved believers in the everlasting kingdom. However, being ruled with an iron scepter is not the way it will be during the Eternal State. It is the unregenerate, people alive during the Millennial Kingdom who will need to be ruled with an iron scepter. This is yet another reason why the teaching of the Millennium should not be allegorized.

As already mentioned, the premillennialist teaches that there will be a literal one-thousand-year reign of Christ over the earth where the Tribulation martyrs will be resurrected to rule with Christ (Rev. 20:4 – “they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” with Rev. 20:6 - “This is the first resurrection”). The first resurrection has to do with the *literal* bodily resurrection of the saved (Tribulation martyrs) which occurs at the close of the Tribulation Period. The second resurrection (Rev. 20:5) has to do with the literal bodily resurrection of the unsaved which occurs after the literal Millennium. This is the time when the unsaved stand before the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). A period of 1,000 years exists between these two distinct literal resurrections (Rev. 20:5 - “but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished”).

Premillennialism takes the first resurrection of Revelation 20:4 in the most natural interpretive sense. It sees it as a literal resurrection of people to enter the earthly theocracy or kingdom. The amillennialist and postmillennialist must allegorize the first resurrection by making it refer to regeneration instead of resurrection. This is done to escape the reality of a literal future, literal kingdom that people will someday enter. Of course, this interpretive conclusion is completely unwarranted and forced upon the text. It is an exegetical fallacy of the worst sort. It's very clear that the first

resurrection is speaking of physical resurrection to enter the Millennium and not some kind of spiritual resurrection. To try and teach anything else is an obvious attempt to turn the tables of interpretation.

Robert Gromacki correctly observes:

“The term ‘resurrection’ (anastasis; 20:5, 6) is never used in salvation passages to refer to spiritual regeneration. In addition, the verb “lived” (ezezan), used twice (20: 4, 5), must have the same meaning in the context. It cannot refer to spiritual life in 20:4 and to bodily resurrection life in 20:5.”

Alva McClain also observes:

“If the people involved were beheaded physically, and then lived again, common sense would suggest that they received back the same category of life that that had been lost.”

Saucy also remarks:

“They are portrayed as physically dead just before the statement ‘They came to life and reigned’ (v. 4), which suggests that this new life is physical.”

The attempt to hijack the meaning of this text is done so the amillennialist can maintain the teaching that there is only one people of God, which is the present-day Church (not tribulation martyrs or Israel’s resurrection into a millennial kingdom), and one purpose for this group of people, which is their salvation (not another deviant purpose of a literal earthly kingdom for some other group of people). The explanation of the first resurrection as a spiritual rebirth of the soul or regeneration allows the amillennialist to spiritualize the 1,000 years. He teaches that the Millennium is Christ’s spiritual rule today over His one people called the Church and rejects the notion of a literal future kingdom over which Christ will reign.

Others suggest that the 1,000 years is a picture of Heaven and the Eternal State. All this creative interpretation is done in order to maintain no distinctions and divisions in the outworking of God’s prophetic program with different peoples. Those who reject the dispensational approach to the Bible, which sees different people and purposes being worked out in

history and prophecy, give themselves an interpretive license to change the obvious meaning of certain Bible passages, in order to maintain the purpose of Covenant Theology (one people, one goal, one ending). If the amillennialist takes the resurrection to be literal, then he would have to also take the 1,000 years to be literal. This would upset his system of eschatological interpretation which teaches there will be no literal Millennium over the earth, no future for Israel, and only one literal resurrection on the last day.

Premillennialism accepts the first resurrection as a literal resurrection and naturally accepts a literal Millennium. Only a literal interpretation of Revelation 20:4 will arrive at Premillennialism. A literal resurrection and literal Millennium compliment one another. The Premillennialist is consistently literal in his interpretation of Revelation 20:4-5. Revelation 20 logically follows the content of Revelation 19:11-21 which speaks of the Second Coming of Christ to earth. When Christ returns to earth Satan will be bound, a resurrection will occur, and then the Millennium (1,000-year reign).

To change the obvious and most natural understanding of these words to mean that Satan is bound today, in the sense that he cannot keep God's elect from being regenerated (first resurrection) and Christ from ruling over His kingdom of people called the Church (the allegorized Millennium or 1,000 years), is committing what I call voodoo exegesis. Whenever a literal prophecy is spiritualized it becomes exegetical fraud. Also, whenever a literal promise is spiritualized or allegorized it becomes a clear case of exegetical fraud. The burden of proof always rests on the one who claims that a certain part of the Bible does not mean what it says.

The key belief of every premillennialist is that the kingdom is literal and is still future whereas the amillennial system of interpretation denies the literalness of a future earthly kingdom, claiming that it is an allegorical kingdom over which Christ rules today in the hearts of people. Premillennialism teaches that Christ will come *before* the kingdom (1,000 years) is established and set up the kingdom whereas Postmillennialism teaches that Christ comes *after* the kingdom has already been established and runs its course. The premillennial view adheres to a literal interpretation of the Bible. This means that it does not

spiritualize/allegorize the texts of Scripture that teach numerical truth and literal prophetic events.

The History of Premillennialism

As previously mentioned, this is the oldest known interpretation of the Millennial Kingdom. For the first two centuries, premillennialism was the accepted view of the Church. Early Church fathers embraced this truth. The dean of Church historians, Philip Schaff has said, "The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene Age [A.D. 100-325] is the prominent chiliasm, or millenarianism, . . . a widely current opinion of distinguished teachers, such as Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Methodius, and Lactantius."

Papias was a companion of Polycarp, who was discipled by John, the author of the Book of Revelation. Papias believed in the literal, earthly, premillennial doctrine. "The days will come in which vines shall grow," imagined Papias of Hierapolis, "each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each true twig ten thousand shoots, and in each one of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give two hundred gallons of wine. And when any of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, 'I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me.'"

Papias was perhaps the first post-biblical author to describe the thousand-year visible Kingdom of Christ - the Millennium. Clement of Rome (A.D. 40-100), Ignatius of Antioch (A.D. 50-115), Hippolytus (160-240) all embraced the premillennial view of Christ's Second Coming to earth. Other second and third century scholars who held to this belief included Irenaeus, Appolinarius, Victorinus, Tertullian, and Lactantius.

Below is a list that gives us a birds-eye view of those who taught a premillennial view following the days of Jesus and also those who eventually followed the apostles and embraced premillennialism.

Pre-Mill Advocates of the 1st Century:

1. Andrew
2. Peter
3. Philip
4. Thomas
5. James
6. John
7. Matthew
8. Aristio
9. John the Presbyter
10. Clement of Rome A.D. 40-100
11. Barnabas A.D. 40-100
12. Hermas A.D. 40-150
13. Ignatius A.D. 50-115
14. Polycarp A.D. 70-167
15. Papias A.D. 80-163

None can be cited in this century to be against the premillennial view.

Pre-Mill Advocates of the 2nd Century:

1. Pothinus A.D. 87-177
2. Justin Martyr A.D. 100-168
3. Melito A.D. 100-170
4. Hegesippus A.D. 130-190
5. Tatian A.D. 130-190
6. Irenaeus A.D. 140-202
7. The Churches of Vienne and Lyons - a letter A.D. 177
8. Tertulian A.D. 150-220
9. Hippolytus A.D. 160-240
10. Apollinaris A.D. 150-200

None can be cited in this century to be against premillennialism. The common belief of the Church was Chiliastic (premillennial).

Anti-premillennialist Shedd said this about the widespread premillennialism of the second century. "So general had the tenant premillennialism become

in the last half of the 2d century, that Justin Martyr declares that it was the belief of all but the Gnostics.”

Pre-Mill Advocates of the 3rd Century:

1. Cyprian A.D. 200-258
2. Commodian A.D. 200-270
3. Nepos A.D. 230-280
4. Coracion A.D. 230-280
5. Victorinus A.D. 240-303
6. Methodius A.D. 250-311
7. Lactantius A.D. 240-330

There were only four in this century that opposed the premillennial view.

1. Caius (or Gaius), wrote about A.D. 210
2. Clemens Alexandrinus, died A.D. 202 (great influence on Origin)
3. Origin A.D. 185-254
4. Dionysius A.D. 190-265

Premillennialism was not contradicted by a single orthodox Church Father until the beginning of the third century, when Gaius first launched an attack. Gaius is the first one in recorded church history who interpreted the thousand years symbolically. However, for the first three centuries those who were called "orthodox" held the premillennial view, and attributed this view also to Christ and His apostles. The apostolic and post-apostolic church was premillennial in its eschatology.

This should tell us something. Those who were apostles and those who lived closest to the times of the apostles all taught Premillennialism. They taught that Christ was going to return before the Kingdom is established over the earth, that He would set up the kingdom, and then rule and reign for 1,000 years. It was those who drifted away from the apostolic interpretations of Scripture and which were influenced by pagan philosophy that began to teach against the literal reign of Christ on earth.

Thomas Ice comments:

“The point needs to be made that anti-millennialism did not arise from the study of Scripture, but rather as a result of disturbed sensibilities of individuals who were already affected by pagan thought. The earliest reaction was not to come up with an alternate interpretation of Revelation 20, since it appeared to clearly teach premillennialism, but to claim that the book of Revelation did not belong in the inspired New Testament canon.”

Men like Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215?), his pupil Origen (A. D. 185 – 254), and Origen’s successor Eusebius (A. D. 263-339) began to fuel the fire of attack against premillennial literalism. Eusebius, when writing about one who interpreted prophecy literally named Papias (70-155), says:

“Papias . . . says that there will be a millennium after the resurrections of the dead, when the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this earth. I suppose that he got these notions by a perverse reading of the apostolic accounts, not realizing that they had spoken mystically and symbolically. For he was a man of very little intelligence, as is clear from his books. But he is responsible for the fact that so many Christian writers after him held the same opinion, relying on his antiquity, for instance Irenaeus and whoever else appears to have held the same views.” Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. I, translated by Kirsopp Lake, *Loeb Classical Library*, vol. 153 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), pp. 295, 297.

Premillennialism was attacked by the Alexandrian school in Egypt during the middle of the third century. Men like Origen who were influenced by Platonic philosophy began to question the literal meaning of Scripture. Elsewhere Jerome (347-420) and Augustine (354-430) also reacted strongly to the literal prophetic interpretation of the Millennium. In his commentary on Daniel, written shortly before the year 400, Jerome argued that “The saints will in no wise have an earthly kingdom, but only a celestial one; thus must cease the fable of one thousand years.”

Augustine's writing entitled the “City of God” dismissed any hope for the earthly and physical fulfillment of the Millennial Kingdom. Donatist theologian, Tyconius suggested an allegorical interpretation of Revelation

20. Augustine adopted Tyconius' interpretation of Revelation 20 and produced the earliest form of amillennial theology in his book "The City of God." It was the first writing to actually spell-out a positive statement of amillennialism.

Premillennialism began to die out in the established Catholic Church during the life of Augustine (A.D. 354-430) who was really the founder of the Roman Catholic Church. Ryrie summarizes this change: "With the union of church and state under Constantine, the hope of Christ's coming faded some. The Alexandrian school of interpretation attacked the literal hermeneutic on which Premillennialism was based, and the influence of the teaching of Augustine reinterpreted the concept and time of the Millennium."

It's noteworthy that premillennialism has always survived, even when it has not been the dominant or widely recognized millennial belief. Chiliasm (premillennialism), though suppressed by the dominant Catholic Church, nevertheless survived through underground and secretive groups of Christians during the 1,000-year mediaeval period. During the Reformation Anabaptists and Huguenots helped to revive premillennialism until it was adopted on a wide scale by many Puritans during the Post-Reformation era.

It is a common practice with some theologians to brand chiliasm (premillennialism) as a modern theory, not remembering that, in its restored form, even justification by faith is comparatively a modern truth. Both justification by faith and premillennialism are taught in the New Testament and were therefore the belief of the early church. These doctrines, like all other essential truths, went into obscurity during the Dark Ages. The Reformers did not restore all features of doctrine during the Reformation. They retained the Romansh notion that the Church is the kingdom, fulfilling the Davidic covenant, and that the Church is appointed to conquer the world by bringing it under its authority.

The Biblically based doctrine of premillennialism disappeared on a large scale when Christianity became a world power under the emperor Constantine. The entire character and biblical testimony of premillennialism was changed by Gnostic and Alexandrian influences. Along

with much other vital truth, the Church lost her conception of the purifying hope of Christ's return. Eventually, under Constantine, the emphasis of Christ's return to rule was exchanged for a world-conquering Church. Instead of Christ returning to rule in a literal Millennium it began to be taught that the Church would rule the world. Bengel said: "When Christianity became a worldly power by Constantine, the hope of the future was weakened by the joy over the present success." Similarly, Auberlen has this to say: "Chiliasm disappeared in proportion as Roman Papal Catholicism advanced."

One must understand that premillennialism on a large scale was lost, along with other vital truths, at the end of the third century, and remained hidden until the Reformation. But premillennialism, like other truths, had to be *rediscovered* and *restated*, all of which requires much time and study. The last 200 years have seen the greatest revival, development, and spread of premillennialism since the days of the early Church. This revival started in the British Isles with John Nelson Darby who was a minister of the Church of Ireland, a denomination in the Anglican community, and the founder of the Plymouth Brethren. It soon spread to America and was popularized in the prophetic conferences. Consistent premillennialism, known as dispensational premillennialism, is a form of premillennialism that interprets the covenant promises to Israel literally. It's this form of premillennialism that has become a dominate teaching of the evangelical faith.

Here is a running history of those who embraced Premillennialism.

- Barnabas, who was a co-worker with the apostle Paul, has been quoted as saying, "The true Sabbath is the one thousand years ... when Christ comes back to reign."
- Clement (a.d. 96), Bishop of Rome, said, "Let us every hour expect the kingdom of God ... we know not the day."
- Polycarp (a.d. 108), Bishop of Smyrna and finally burned at the stake there, said, "He will raise us from the dead ... we shall ... reign with Him."

- Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who the historian Eusebius says was the apostle Peter's successor, commented, "Consider the times and expect Him."
- Papias (a.d. 116), Bishop of Hierapolis, who—according to Irenaeus—saw and heard the apostle John, said, "There will be one thousand years ... when the reign of Christ personally will be established on earth."
- Justin Martyr (a.d. 150) said, "I and all others who are orthodox Christians, on all points, know there will be a thousand years in Jerusalem ... as Isaiah and Ezekiel declared."
- Irenaeus (a.d. 175), Bishop of Lyons, commenting on Jesus' promise to drink again of the fruit of the vine in His Father's kingdom, argues: "That this ... can only be fulfilled upon our Lord's personal return to earth."
- Tertullian (a.d. 200) said, "We do indeed confess that a kingdom is promised on earth."
- Martin Luther said, "Let us not think that the coming of Christ is far off."
- John Calvin, in his third book of *Institutes*, wrote: "Scripture uniformly enjoins us to look with expectation for the advent of Christ."
- Canon A. R. Fausset said this: "The early Christian fathers, Clement, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus, looked for the Lord's speedy return as the necessary precursor of the millennial kingdom. Not until the professing Church lost her first love, and became the harlot resting on the world power, did she cease to be the Bride going forth to meet the Bridegroom, and seek to reign already on earth without waiting for His Advent."
- Dr. Elliott wrote: "All primitive expositors, except Origen and the few who rejected Revelation, were premillennial."
- Gussler's work on church history says of this blessed hope that "it was so distinctly and prominently mentioned that we do not hesitate in regarding it as the general belief of that age."
- Chillingworth declared: "It was the doctrine believed and taught by the most eminent fathers of the age next to the apostles and by none of that age condemned."

- Dr. Adolf von Harnack wrote: “The earlier fathers—Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, etc.—believed it because it was part of the tradition of the early church. It is the same all through the third and fourth centuries with those Latin theologians who escaped the influence of Greek speculation.”

Historic and Dispensational Premillennialism

Michael Vlach states:

“Among premillennialists there are two main groups. Historic premillennialists believe that God will fulfill His promises to Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3, 7) through the spiritual seed of Abraham, namely, believers whom the Old Testament writers called Israel and the New Testament writers called the church. Dispensational premillennialists believe that God will fulfill His promises to Abraham through the physical seed of Abraham, namely, the Jewish people whom the writers of both testaments referred to as Israel.”

This is a good summary. Historic premillennialism sees the Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of Christ as the same event. In other words, this brand of premillennialism believes that Christ will come back only once. It teaches that Christ will catch His people away and then immediately return to the earth with His Church to establish the Millennial Kingdom. This is also known as a post-tribulation rapture and teaches that believers must endure the seven-year Tribulation Period prior to the glorious Second Coming of Jesus Christ to earth. Some forms of historic premillennialism mix the Church with Israel and do not see a major distinction among the two groups. Many historic premillennialists deny any fulfillment of Biblical prophecies related to Israel during the Millennial Kingdom.

Historicist premillennialists believe that scriptural prophecy, especially the passages in Daniel and Revelation, gives the entire history of the Church in symbolic form. Therefore, most prophetic details about the Tribulation Period and futurist details in the Book of Revelation are not taken literally. They must somehow be spiritualized/allegorized to do away with any future prophecies revolving around the purification and salvation of national Israel. However, historic premillennialism does embrace a literal

reign of Christ over the earth following the Second Coming. Charles Spurgeon embraced this form of premillennialism. He saw Christ establishing a future, literal, one-thousand-year reign over the earth. However, Spurgeon did not fill in all the specific details related to a future Tribulation Period and the fulfillment of covenant promises to national Israel during the Millennium.

Historic premillennialism draws its name from the fact that many of the early Church Fathers of history believed and taught that there would be a visible kingdom of God upon the earth, after the return of Christ. Without question, the best and most influential historic premillennialist was the late George Eldon Ladd of Fuller Theological Seminary. Through the work of Ladd, historic premillennialism gained scholarly respect and popularity among Evangelical and Reformed theologians.

Other major historic premillennialists include the late Walter Martin, John Warwick Montgomery, J. Barton Payne, Henry Alford (the noted Greek scholar), and Theodore Zahn (the German NT specialist). The best examples of current historical premillennial work would be the many scholars of the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Evangelical Free). Surprisingly, a number of the faculty of Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis (a Reformed institution), held to a covenantal form of premillennialism -- J.O. Buswell, J. Barton Payne and R. Laird Harris. However, all of these men have now departed for glory, and the Reformed varieties of premillennialism are probably gone with them. As already mentioned, the most popular of all historic premillennial writers was the late George E Ladd. See his works on the subject: [A Commentary on the Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), [The Presence of the Future](#) (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1981), [The Last Things](#) (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1982), and [The Gospel of the Kingdom](#) (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1981).

Not all premillennialists are dispensationalists, but all dispensationalists are premillennialists. This is because the dispensational premillennialist is *consistently literally* in his interpretation and understanding of Bible prophecy. One who embraces dispensational teaching will believe that Israel is a distinct people from the Church and that God is not finished with

Israel. He will believe that Israel has a primary part in the Millennial Kingdom. A dispensational premillennialist makes a distinction or division between Israel and the Church. He observes by a fair reading of Scripture that God has another ongoing purpose for a distinct people called Israel. He does not spiritualize/allegorize the Millennial Kingdom. He believes that Christ will return before the Millennium to establish a literal Millennium (1,000-year reign) over the earth to fulfill His promises with Israel.

When interpreting the Bible in a consistent literal fashion one not only arrives at historic Premillennialism (a literal Millennium without national Israel) but dispensational premillennialism (a Millennium with national Israel). Dispensational premillennialism teaches that God still has a plan for national Israel in the Millennial Kingdom. This conclusion is the result of interpreting the covenant promises literally and seeing a clear distinction between Israel and the Church. Dispensational premillennialism does not blend the two people together (Israel and the Church) under the same umbrella in order to abandon God's kingdom purpose for national Israel or bypass a literal Millennium. The truth is this. The Church is never called Israel or the kingdom. It is distinct from Israel because of its *participants* (1 Cor. 12:13), its *origin* (Eph. 1:20-22; 4:7-12; Acts 2; 11:15-16) its *past mystery character* (Eph. 3:3-5, 9; Col. 1:26-27) and because of a *consistent historical-grammatical, literal interpretation* of Scripture.

In order for God to keep His promises to Israel and His covenant with David (2 Samuel 7:8-16; 23:5; Psalm 89:3-4), there must be a literal, physical kingdom on this earth. Clear Biblical indications that the kingdom will be a literal earthly kingdom are as follows: 1) Christ's feet actually touching the Mount of Olives prior to the kingdom (Zechariah 14:4, 9); 2) During the kingdom, the Messiah will execute justice and judgment On the earth (Jeremiah 23:5-8); 3) The kingdom is described as being UNDER heaven (Daniel 7:13-14, 27); 4) The prophets foretold of dramatic earthly changes during the kingdom (Acts 3:21; Isaiah 35:1-2; 11:6-9; 29:18; 65:20-22; Ezekiel 47:1-12; Amos 9:11-15); and 5) The chronological order of events in Revelation indicate an earthly kingdom prior to the conclusion of world history (Revelation 20).

Jesus would be born in Bethlehem as David was and would one day inherit David's throne in Jerusalem as David possessed. I believe in a literal fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. It's the only interpretation that makes sense. It's the only interpretation that is fair to the Bible. Therefore, I believe in a literal Millennium over planet earth. Jesus is the rightful heir to the Davidic Covenant and He is someday going to reign 1,000 years in Jerusalem to regain the earth that the Satan usurped from man (1 Cor. 15:25) and then reign forever (eternally) as David's Son and King.

Luke 1:32 suggests that Jesus Christ's rule will be Davidic ("he shall give unto him the throne of his father David"). This means that Jesus is the rightful heir of David who has full authority to sit on what was once David's throne in Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 7:16

And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

There has certainly never been a kingly seed in Israel's history that has restored an eternal earthly kingdom and throne in the originally stated boundaries of the Promised Land that would last forever! Only Jesus can reinstate an earthly theocracy over Israel that will last forever. This is because He is the king of kings and Lord of Lords and lives eternally.

So as Jesus was literally born in the city of David (Bethlehem – Luke 2:4) so He will one day literally reign in Jerusalem where David ruled! It's all literal. It's as literal as Pecan Pie with vanilla ice cream! You can't have a literal birth without a literal reign in spite of what the amillennialist teaches. You see, there are many today who teach that Jesus will not rule on the throne of David. This is a flat out denial of the clearly revealed and understood facts of Scripture. The prophets took the promises literally and so should we.

Isaiah 9:6

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

When a person changes the meaning of a literal promise they commit a hermeneutical fallacy and change the meaning of God's Word. They take away the plain intended meaning of God's Word. This might be a horse pill for some to swallow but it is the truth!

The promise of God to David in the New Testament retains its same character as in the Old Testament. David's literal promises are not transferred to the church in some kind of spiritual kingdom. There are many who teach that the church is the heir to David's promises and that the church is building a spiritual kingdom today. This is nonsense! It's turning the tables of interpretation to suit man's theology instead of God's theology. If I believe that Jesus was literally born as the son of David, I must out of necessity believe that He will literally rein someday as the Son of David. The promises are literal. The New Testament writers never intended to divert David's throne into some ecclesiastical channel.

In order to understand what dispensational premillennialism is there needs to be a clarification of what dispensationalism is. When a person believes in the dispensational approach to interpreting Scripture (Eph. 1:10; 3:2) he believes that God revolves all of history and prophecy around distinct time periods with different programs or stewardships coming to pass for distinct groups of people. In short, dispensationalism is known by the divisions and distinctions it places between people (Jews, Gentiles, Church), programs (covenant program with Jews, Church program, dispensations throughout the Bible), and prophetic events.

These prophetic events include a Rapture or secret coming for the Church and seven years later the Second Coming of Christ to earth. They also include separate judgments for the Church (Bema), Jews, Gentiles, and then finally the Great White Throne Judgment. They also include a literal Tribulation Period and Kingdom revolving around Israel and the blessing of both Jews and the Church in the Millennium Kingdom or literal 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth. The dispensationalist sees a distinction in the people of God, the purposes of God related to these people, and the prophetic details and destinies revolving around these people. We could state it this way. A dispensationalist is a *divider* (2 Tim. 2:15 – “rightly dividing the word of truth”).

Dispensationalism sees *differences* or *divisions* among the programs, peoples, and the outworking of prophetic details in the Bible, as it relates to these people. It sees God working with different groups of people in order to fulfill His plan or destiny related to them. Of course, the detailed distinctions among **peoples** (Jews, Gentiles, Church) and God's prophetic program dealing with separate **judgments** (judgments for the Church, living nations on earth, Great White Throne), **resurrections** (for Church, Old Testament saints, Tribulation martyrs, and the unsaved) **Rapture** (secret coming in the air), **Second Coming** (return to earth), and **Millennium** (1,000 years) all have a unifying purpose to glorify God ("to the praise of his glory" – Eph. 1:12). The dispensational approach to Scripture with its multifaceted distinctions and divisions of Scripture in regards to working economies (innocence, conscience, government, promise, law, grace, tribulation, kingdom, eternal state) and prophetic program related to Israel are all designed to glorify God rather than just promote a salvation and redemptive purpose.

If one is a dispensationalist (a divider) they believe God has one plan for Israel and another plan for the Church. These two classes of people have different programs related to them. Since God is working with both these groups of people He has different programs for them. The dispensationalist (divider) is known for creating different classes of people (Jews, Church, Gentiles), seeing differences in the outworking of God's programs and purposes with these people (Innocence, Conscience, Government, Promise, Law, Grace, Tribulation, Kingdom, eternity), and seeing distinct details related to God's prophetic program for these different groups of people (Rapture of the Church, Judgment for the Church, seven year Tribulation Period, Second Coming, regathering of Israel, Judgment for Old Testament saints, 1,000 year reign of Christ, Great White Throne Judgment, eternal state).

A dispensationalist sees noteworthy divisions within the Bible in regards to people and prophetic events. There is no need for a dispensationalist to dodge the plain meaning of a passage or to reinterpret and spiritualize it in order to resolve conflicts with other passages. The dispensationalist simply notes the obvious distinctions and differences between people and God's prophetic program and does not try to unify these differences by unsound

allegorizing methods. If one is satisfied with the divisions that God has given, he will not attempt to bridge the gap between these divisions by making two people into one or different prophetic events into one. He will simply rightly divide the Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15) and rest in the divisions that he discovers and observes.

George Zeller observed:

“In order to be ‘rightly dividing the Word of truth’ it is essential to distinguish things that differ and to recognize certain basic Biblical distinctions, such as the difference between God’s program for Israel and God’s program for the Church (Acts 15:14-17; Rom. 11:25-27), the separation of 1000 years between the two resurrections (Rev. 20:4-6), the difference between the various judgments which occur at various times (2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 20:11-15), the difference between law and grace (John 1:17; Rom. 6:14-15 Rom. 7:1-6) and the difference between Christ’s present session at the right hand of the Father as the Church’s great High Priest and Christ’s future session on the restored Davidic throne as Israel’s millennial King (Heb. 1:3; 10:12-13; Acts 15:16; Luke 1:32).”

A dispensationalist believes that God has dealt with Israel through the promise of a covenant program and that He is not finished dealing with this national group of people. God will give to these people what He has originally promised. On the other hand, Covenant Theology, as its name indicates, structures all of redemptive history around the covenant of redemption (made between the Father and Son), the covenant of law (made between God and man), and the covenant of grace (made between God and the elect believer). Covenant theologians affirm that God has only one plan of redemption, only one redeemed people, and only one future for His people. Amillennialism and postmillennialism are subdivisions of Covenant Theology. The goal of Covenant Theology and its proponents is to maintain one simple unifying purpose for God’s people throughout all of history and prophecy, which is their redemption or salvation. To depart from this key covenant purpose is to complicate matters and misunderstand God’s redemptive hand and role in history.

A dispensationalist teaches that Israel and the Church are two *distinct* peoples of God with two *different* programs. The Church (composed of

both Jews and Gentiles) is commissioned to evangelize the lost (Acts 15:14) in view of the secret Rapture, whereas Israel as a nation is yet to be saved following the Tribulation Period at the Second Coming of Christ to earth (Acts 15:16). At Christ's Second Advent the Gentile people on earth will also be blessed when entering the Millennium (Acts 15:17). The dispensationalist understands that God can have several goals and purposes going on throughout history and prophecy. It teaches that God is not finished with Israel (Rom. 11:1-2) and that He will fulfill His covenant promises to this nation in an earthly kingdom (Luke 1:32).

Dispensationalism marks a division between Israel and Church and sees that God still has a future purpose for the Jews on this earth (the Millennial Kingdom). The other millennial views (amillennialism and postmillennialism) disregard the future of Israel and a literal Millennium by transferring Israel's covenant promises to the Church (making the Church the new Israel or people of God) in order to try and create one people of God and only one purpose of God throughout history. A dispensational premillennialist believes that God will bring His purpose and prophetic destiny to pass for Israel by bringing a literal Tribulation Period of seven years on planet earth in order to purify His people (Jer. 30:7, 11; Mal. 4:5-6) and finally bring them to faith in the Messiah (Zech. 12:10-13:1). This purifying period will result in the fulfillment of their kingdom promises in a literal 1,000-year reign of Christ over the earth (Rev. 20:1-6).

Dispensational Premillennialism believes in a pretribulational Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 1:10), followed by a period of seven literal years of tribulation on earth (Matt. 24:21), and finally, the glorious Second Coming of Christ (Matt. 24:29) and the start of His millennial reign (1,000 years). This form of premillennialism does not believe God has any purpose for the Church in the Tribulation Period. Therefore, a pretribulational rapture is taught and promised (Rev. 3:10).

Dispensational premillennialism also takes the Tribulation Period literally. It consistently sees a distinction between Israel and the Church in the outworking of God's purposes that can be reflected in the prophetic details connected to Israel's future, such as a Tribulation Period for chastening and refining the Jews (Zech. 13:9; Dan. 12:2), a specific judgment of Jewish

people at Christ's return (Matt. 24:27-51), and a literal kingdom for the Jews (Dan. 7:22, 27; Isa. 12:4-6; Joel 2:32).

In other words, Dispensational premillennialism, which teaches a marked difference between the Church and Israel and God's purposes for these distinct groups, concludes that God has a purpose for a literal Tribulation Period and Millennium in order to bring Israel into her covenant promises. When one fails to distinguish between those Bible passages dealing with Israel and the Church they create an *improper merging* between the two peoples and the programs and prophecies related to these people. This breeds great confusion and a misunderstanding of God's Word as it relates to His unfolding program of the ages.

Dispensational premillennialism is most often associated with a *futurist* interpretation of all the prophecies related to the Tribulation and regards most of the book of Revelation as futurist. Dispensational premillennialism also takes the covenant promises to Israel as having a literal fulfillment during the Millennium. *When one rightly divides the Scriptures they will arrive at Dispensational premillennialism.* Dispensational premillennialism has been the belief held since the early Church. It was the historic position of the Church, since the apostles taught a distinction among the Church and Israel (1 Cor. 10:32), a literal Tribulation Period (Matt. 24:21; 1 Thess. 1:10; Rev. 3:10) and literal Kingdom where Israel will one day reach her prophetic destiny (Luke 1:32; Acts 1:3; Romans 11:26-27; 1 Cor. 15:24).

To believe in a literal reign of Christ over the earth one must believe the literal covenant promises from which this kingdom reign originated. Dispensational premillennialism teaches that the covenant promises to Israel are literal and are yet to be fulfilled in the kingdom reign. Dispensational premillennialism teaches the literal fulfillment of Bible prophecy when studying the Old and New Testament. Of course, this leads to a literal interpretation of the Millennial Kingdom. The Old Testament prophecies and New Testament epistles *teach* the earthly kingdom concept whereas Revelation 20 gives the *duration* or length of the kingdom.

In short, Dispensational premillennialism is known by its literal interpretation of the covenant promises to Israel, the literal interpretation

of the prophetic details of Bible prophecy related to Israel, which results in a literal 1,000 reign of Christ over the earth, restoring the theocracy to national Israel. *Dispensational premillennialism is consistently literal from start to finish.* Thus, dispensational premillennialism makes the necessary distinctions between the Church and Israel and then brings Israel's promised covenant program to fulfillment by seeing Christ return before the Millennium in order to establish His 1,000-year reign over earth as the Davidic King (Luke 1:32-33; Jer. 23:5; 30:9).

In summary, a dispensationalist rightly divides the Bible texts (2 Tim. 2:15) which lead to a distinction among Jews, Gentiles, and the Church. When rightly dividing the Scriptures one will also see differing economies and compartments of time in which God has chosen to work with different people in different ways. To state is simply. God works in different ways with different people at different times. This is the essence of dispensationalism.

The opponents of dispensationalism say that dividing up the Bible or compartmentalizing the Bible destroys the unity of the Bible concerning salvation and God's plan of redemption. But this is not true. Dispensationalists do not cloud the unity of the Bible but clarify it by recognizing that the Bible is a progressive unfolding of God's plan of redemption throughout progressive stages and also reveals other plans that God has for different people at different times. Dispensationalism sees the Bible as one book that gives witness to one God which forms one continuous story about God's glory and redemption. However, dispensationalism also recognizes that God has other purposes, plans, or arrangements with different people in different time periods. It recognizes that God has plans to once again work with His original people (the Jews) even though He has started a new program with a new people called the Church.

Leading premillennial dispensational theologians include John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie, J. Dwight Pentecost, Norman Geisler and Charles Feinberg. Dallas Theological Seminary is the leading dispensational institution. Other dispensational institutions include: Talbot Theological Seminary, the Master's College and Grace Theological Seminary. The standard

dispensational textbook is J. Dwight Pentecost's Things to Come (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978). Other important works include: Charles Ryrie, The Basis of the Premillennial Faith (New York: The Loizeaux Brothers, 1953); Charles Ryrie, Dispensationalism Today (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977); John Walvoord, The Millennial Kingdom (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1983), and John F. Walvoord, The Rapture Question (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1979). In addition, John Walvoord has authored an updated work incorporating all of his popular writings; Major Bible Prophecies (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1991).

Biblical Basis for Premillennialism

Even though the strongest support for premillennialism is found in the clear statement of Revelation 20:1-7, where six times Christ's kingdom is said to last 1,000 years, the Old Testament and the rest of the New Testament also support a premillennial understanding of God's plan for history.

Premillennialism Developed from the Old Testament

Jesus Christ's earthly reign will be the fulfillment of many prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the reign of a completely faithful descendant of David (2 Sam. 7:10–16). God promised David that one of His descendants would reign over the Israelites forever, that His kingdom would have no end. Most dispensationalists have believed that this reign will begin after Jesus Christ returns to earth at His second coming, and it will continue through the Millennium and on into eternity forever.

The Old Testament covenants established unconditional promises of an Israelite, or Jewish kingdom in the ancient land of Palestine, which will be ruled by the heir of the Son of David – the Messiah (Jesus Christ). All the covenant promises that are given to Israel (Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, New) have four characteristics. They are *literal*, they are *eternal* (Abrahamic – Gen. 13:15; 17:7-8, 13, 19; 1 Chron. 16:17; Psalm 105:10 – Palestinian – Ezekiel 16:60 – Davidic – 2 Sam. 7:16; 23:5; Isa. 55:3; Ezek. 37:25 – New – Isa. 24:5; 61:8; Jer. 32:40; 50:5; Heb. 13:20), their fulfillment depends entirely on the integrity and *faithfulness of God* (promised by God), and they are made with a *distinct covenant people* (national Israel).

2 Samuel 7:16

“And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.”

This passage in 2 Samuel 7:16 (Davidic Covenant) records a promise made by God to King David. Here, God promises David that he will have descendants, and out of those descendants God will establish an eternal reigning king on a throne in an unending kingdom. This is referring to the rule of Christ during the Millennium (1,000 years), and then forever throughout the eternal kingdom. It is important to keep in mind that this promise must be fulfilled literally and has not yet taken place. The promises of the Davidic Covenant speak of an eternal seed (posterity) being ruled in an eternal kingdom, where there will be an eternal king from David's line ruling on an eternal throne!

We must believe that since David's kingdom was an earthly kingdom and since David and his successors ruled on the earth, the coming fulfillment of Davidic kingdom promises will take place on the earth.

Progressive dispensationalists, on the other hand, believe that Jesus' rule as David's successor began when He ascended into heaven following His resurrection and that it will move to earth at the second coming and will continue throughout eternity. They view the promised Davidic kingdom as having heavenly (already) and earthly (not yet) stages.

Amillennialists suggest that the Davidic Covenant was already fulfilled during Solomon's historical reign over Israel. This alleged conclusion allows the amillennialist to do away with a future Millennium where Christ will rule a distinct people called Israel. The claim is made that this rule is now past and God has abandoned Israel's covenant promises by transferring them in a spiritual way to the Church. However, there is a fly in their amillennial ointment. There is a problem with the amillennial conclusion. The entire territory over which Solomon ruled is not held by Israel today. Furthermore, Solomon does not rule over Israel today! Solomon also died and his rule or throne was not eternal. Therefore, Solomon was not the offspring of David that would fulfill the Davidic Covenant. This can only mean one thing. The specific promise given to David has yet to be fulfilled!

“And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.”

Solomon in all of his glory and power never obtained permanent possession of the land in a kingdom rule (Gen. 17:7-8) nor did he occupy all the land in an eternal kingdom. He merely collected tribute money from others who were in the land (2 Chron. 8:8). Temporary ownership is not everlasting ownership or ruling authority over a kingdom that will never end. Since the eternal or *unending fulfillment* of this covenant has not been fulfilled in Israel’s history, and because of its unconditional character (2 Sam. 7:13, 16, 23:5; 1 Chron, 17:12; Isa. 55:3; Ezek. 37:25), there must be a future literal fulfillment attached to the covenant. The Davidic Covenant demands a literal fulfillment. This means that Christ must come back to sit on David’s throne on the earth and reign over David’s people forever! Israel will be brought back to her land of inheritance and Christ will rule over Israel in an eternal kingdom. What a glorious promise this is!

God promised Abraham that his decedents would possess a land *forever*, which has not happened yet (Gen. 13:15; 17:8). 2 Samuel 7:16 says that God would establish a King who would rule for *eternity*. If one is honest with the Scripture they must believe that God is going to do what He says. He is going to bring national Israel back into the land and Jesus Christ, who is in the Davidic line (Rev. 5:5; 22:16), will rule over Israel throughout the Millennium, crushing every work of rebellion (1 Cor. 15:24-28), and then continue to rule Israel throughout the eternal ages of time (everlasting kingdom).

One thing is absolutely certain. Israel will be preserved as a nation and bring forth a ruler who is linked to David. And David’s Son (Jesus Christ) must literally return to earth bodily in order to reign over David’s covenanted kingdom. Luke 1:32-33 contains the main promises of the Davidic covenant. “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.”

The Old Testament prophets looked forward to the establishment of this kingdom (Isa. 9:7; Dan. 2:44; 7:22, 27) when Jesus Christ would sit upon the throne of David in Jerusalem (Isa. 9:6-7; 16:5; 32:1; Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23; 37:24; Hos. 3:5; Amos 9:11). The Scriptures teach that the ancient people of Israel will one day repent as a nation (Isa. 53:1-12; Zech. 12:10-14), be spiritually forgiven, cleansed, regenerated (Deut. 30:6; Zech. 13:1-2; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-32), and restored to the land of Palestine in the Millennial Kingdom in order to experience the fulfillment of her covenant promises (Deut. 4:27-31; Isaiah 11:11-16; 14:1-3; 27:12-13; 43:5-7; 48:8-16; 60:20-21; 66:20-22; Jer. 3:17-18; 16:14-16; 23:5-8; 30:3, 10-11; 31:8, 31-37; Ezek. 11:17-21; 20:33-38; 34:11-16; 37:1-4; 13-14, 21, 24-25; 39:25-29; Hosea 1:10-11; 3:4-5; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:4-7; 7:20; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 8:4-8).

Amos 9:15 gives this promise to national believing Israel:

“And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.”

Of course, this has never happened to Israel historically but will happen to them in the future. God has promised that a spiritual remnant of saved Jews will inherit the original dimensions of the Promised Land (Gen. 15:18) that God gave to them and they will inherit it as an everlasting possession (Deut. 4:27-31). Certainly Paul believed in the literal fulfillment of the covenant promises when saying in Acts 26:6-7: “And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, instantly serving *God* day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”

God is not finished with Israel. This is the clear and unmistakable teaching of Scripture! Paul asks a rhetorical question where the answer is understood. God has not cast away national Israel.

Romans 11:1

“I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Jeremiah 31:36 gives us this clear revelation:

“If those ordinances (sun, moon, stars) depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.”

Isaiah 14:1

“For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.”

Isaiah 49:16

“Behold, I have graven thee (*Israel*) upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.”

The astonishing claims that all of God’s future promises to Israel were historically fulfilled in Joshua’s day just because Israel entered the land and possessed part of the land (Joshua 21:43-45), or that they were fulfilled in Solomon’s reign, reveals the depths of delusion that grips those who insist that Israel no longer has any significance in God’s purposes and prophetic program. Only an amillennialist with an axe to grind could come to the conclusion that God is finished with national Israel, that He does not promise to establish a literal kingdom over planet earth, and that national Israel will never come into her eternal covenant promises.

Premillennialism Developed from the New Testament

The New Testament writers do not reinterpret the Old Testament kingdom promises and apply them to the church like amillennialism and postmillennialism does. Instead the Church participates now in the universal spiritual blessings of the Abrahamic (Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:28-29) and New Covenant (1 Cor. 11:23-28) without negating or overriding the ultimate fulfillment of the covenant promises to Israel (Rom. 9:4-5; 11:1-2). The New Testament authors *affirm* rather than deny the ancient kingdom hope of Israel (Matt. 8:11; 19:28; Luke 1:31-32; Acts 1:6, 15:16; Romans 11:26, Rev. 11:15).

The New Testament writers teach a future for national Israel. Specifically, Acts 1:6 with Acts 3:19-26 confirms that the restoration of the kingdom to Israel takes place at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Romans 11:26-27 also confirms that at the time of the Second Coming of Christ Israel will have all her unconditional covenants fulfilled to her. First Corinthians 15 speaks of an interim kingdom of 1,000 years following Christ's return, which exists prior to the eternal kingdom of God. This will be a time when Christ will rule and vanquish all His enemies (1 Cor. 15:24). Finally, Revelation 20 gives the chronology of events and length of Christ's kingdom on this earth prior to the eternal state (Rev. 20:1-6).

The Purpose for the Millennium

People have often asked me, "Does it really matter whether we believe in premillennialism or the fact that Christ is going to establish a literal kingdom over the earth for 1,000 years?" The answer is a resounding yes! When one understands the underlying purpose or reason why there must be a Millennium or 1,000-year rule of Christ established over the earth there can be no question about its significance or importance in God's eschatological program. The Millennial Kingdom serves as a transition period of time that leads into the eternal state. It's a time when God regains His theocracy (God's government and rule) in the world which was His original design and purpose for planet earth.

The statements in the prophets and prophecies include the description of the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ (Rev. 20:1-6) which is the actual time when Jesus Christ wins back the world from every opposing force ("For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" - 1 Cor. 15:25). This specified time of reign refers to the 1,000 years of the Millennial Kingdom. It can't refer to Christ's eternal rule (eternal state) as the amillennialist asserts, in order to do away with the Millennium and Israel's promises, for the simple reason that this rule comes to an end. An eternal rule can never end! Thus, a different rule and kingdom is in Paul's mind.

The only other rule where Christ will actually vanquish His enemies is during the 1,000-year reign over the earth (Ps. 2:6-9). This millennial rule is the actual allotted time when Christ takes back the earth, which Satan

usurped from Adam, who was to be God's ruling representative on earth (Gen. 1:26-29). The fact that God gave Adam this dominion indicates that God's original form of government that He ordained for our planet was a theocracy - a rule by God. In the original earth God was to be the undisputed ruler of the planet whose rule was to be administered through His representative Adam.

Although man still rules over the animal kingdom and seemingly controls the planet through his governmental rule of today he does not rule as God's representative. Satan actually rules behind the scenes as the ruler of this planet (Dan. 10:13, 20; Eph. 6:12). Man has lost his estate and tenant possession of the earth because of his sin and cannot rule as God's representative any longer. Adam was originally created to administer God's rule (theocracy) over the earth (Gen. 1:26) but when Adam sinned this privilege to rule as God's representative was taken away from Adam by Satan. Satan became the ruler of the earth (John 14:30; 16:11).

Through Adam's defection, Satan usurped the rule of the world system away from God. As a result, God's theocratic kingdom was replaced by Satan's kingdom. Instead of a theocracy (God's rule) in this world today we have a satanocracy (Satan's rule). Today Satan is said to be the ruler of this world since he has usurped Adam's right to rule as God's representative (John 12:31, 14:30; 16:11; Matt. 4:8; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 John 5:18). The Biblical scenario goes like this. Man can never win back the world which Satan usurped from Adam (Dan. 7:27) but someday Christ will return as the King to restore this planet to God's rule or theocracy (Rev. 11:15; 20:1-3).

The restoration process will begin when Christ takes back the title deed to this earth (Rev. 5:1-7). The title deed that Jesus takes from the hand of the Father (Rev. 5:7) was man's tenant-possession and rule of the earth, which was forfeited when mankind fell away from God. Jesus is going to someday take back man's title deed and rightful inheritance to the earth which was given to him by God (Gen. 1:26-28; Ps. 115:16; Isa. 24:5 - "the everlasting covenant") and once again administer God's rule over the planet once again as the last Adam. This reclaiming of the earth will begin with the unleashing of God's judgments on Satan's earthly kingdom (Rev. 6-19). During the Tribulation Period Satan will be cast out of heaven (Rev. 12:7-9), which is

his area of domain (Eph. 6:12), indicating that Christ is going to take back His earthly theocracy (Rev. 12:10 - "now has come ... the kingdom of our God"). Jesus will then return as the "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:16) to destroy the armies that Satan has brought together to represent the world nations that are against God (Rev. 16:13-14).

Satan's ultimate challenge is to try and prevent Jesus Christ from taking back the world and ruling it in a theocracy once again (Psalm 2). But Satan and his armies in Palestine will not prevail. The political and military aspects of Satan's rule and world system will be crushed by the returning King (Isa. 63:1-4). Jesus as King will then remove all the members of Satan's kingdom (Matt. 13:36-43, 47-50), imprison Satan in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-3) and once again restore His theocracy to this earth (Rev. 20:4-6). This is called the Millennium or the 1,000 years. Jesus will rule as the King (Ps. 47:2; Zech. 14:9) with His coregents (the Church) as God's representatives over the earth (Rev. 5:10).

The first man (Adam) lost God's ruling theocracy or kingdom over this planet when he fell into sin (Gen. 3:14-19). God's earthy kingdom or theocracy, which was to be ruled by Adam, was usurped by Satan and now becomes Satan's dominion and kingdom of darkness (Col. 1:13). The first man lost God's paradise (God's kingdom or administrative rule) over the earth but the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45) will restore paradise (God's theocracy) to this planet in "the world to come" (Heb. 6:5) - the Millennial Kingdom. God must once again have a man, an Adam, functioning as His representative on earth. Jesus Christ who is called "the Son of man" (Dan. 7:13-14) will be this man. He was born as a child (Isa. 9:6), incarnated in human flesh (John 1:14), and was a descendent of King David (Isa. 9:7; Jer. 23:5). Therefore, Jesus qualifies as the "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45) who can restore the theocracy or God's administrative rule over planet earth in the future.

This is exactly what will take during the Millennial Kingdom. During the 1,000-year reign Christ will demonstrate that He is the King and that He has the right to rule planet earth (1 Cor. 15:24-25). Christ's rule will be worldwide (Zech. 14:9 - "king over all the earth"; Dan. 2:35 - "and filled the whole earth"; Hab. 2:14 - "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of

the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea"; Ps. 2: 8 - "the uttermost parts of the earth"; Ps. 47:2 - "a great King over all the earth"; Ps. 72:8 - "unto the ends of the earth for thy possession"; Rev. 11:15 - "the kingdoms of this world").

Christ's worldwide rule will universally demonstrate that He is returning the planet to a theocracy (God's government) where God alone rules and is in control. The submission of the earth dwellers, heaven dwellers, hell dwellers, and all angelic dwellers to the King, at Christ's Second Coming to earth and the commencement of the Millennial Kingdom, will be undisputed evidence that Jesus Christ is taking back the earth and restoring the theocracy or God's rule over planet earth (Phil. 2:9-11). After the 1,000-year reign Christ will deliver up the Millennial Kingdom to the Father.

1 Corinthians 15:24 states:

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."

The expression "then cometh the end" probably refers to the end of Christ's Millennial Kingdom and the conclusion of God's resurrection program which takes place at the close of the Millennial Kingdom. At the end of Christ's Millennial Reign, when He shall have put down all His enemies (2 Cor. 15:14b-25 with Rev. 20:7-9), there will be a resurrection of the wicked dead ("The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" - vs. 26). This is the last resurrection ever to take place. It occurs at the end of the Millennial Kingdom and completes God's resurrection program.

All who have ever died in unbelief will stand before the Judgment of the Great White Throne to have their doom stated and sealed (Rev. 20:14-16). This judgment will be the last enemy that Christ will destroy since the second death will come upon all Christ rejecters who are Christ's enemies (Rom. 5:10). After the Great White Throne Judgment Christ will deliver up His Millennial Kingdom into the hands of the Father and at this particular time eternity or the eternal state will begin (Rev. 21-22).

These verses found in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 confirm that the prophets were speaking of a literal Millennium (1,000 years). It's the time when Israel's covenants will be fulfilled and when Jesus Christ rules the world to regain his rightful "inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. 2:8). The prophets out of necessity were envisioning this one-thousand-year reign of Christ, which is the time when Christ reigns to regain and reclaim the world from His enemies ("when he shall have put down all rule and authority" - 1 Cor. 15:24).

After the 1,000 year reign or Millennial Kingdom is finished ("for he hath put all things under his feet" - 1 Cor. 15:27) Christ will then turn the kingdom over to the Father ("deliver up the kingdom to God" - vs. 24) and only then will the eternal kingdom begin which the prophets also spoke about (2 Sam. 7:16 - "thy kingdom shall be established forever" and Dan. 2:44 - "it shall stand forever" and Dan. 7:27 - "whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom" and Isaiah 9:6 - "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end"). Actually, the Millennium (1,000 years) or the time when Christ defeats all His enemies and reclaims the world and the eternal kingdom are often blended together and seen to be overlapping by the prophets.

This is because the prophets were not given the additional revelation about the timing of the 1,000-year reign of Christ (Rev. 20:4-6). They were only given the information of a literal kingdom where Christ would crush His enemies and reign eternally upon the throne of David in fulfillment of Israel's covenant promises (Isa. 9:6). Thus, the progressive revelation of the New Testament gives us an exact number of 1,000 years that is linked to the time when Christ regains planet earth and crushes His enemies (1 Cor. 15:24-25). Revelation 20:1-7 provides the *chronology* of the Millennium while the Old Testament prophets and promises given to Israel provide the *content* of the Millennium.

All the readings of the prophets would agree that the 1,000-year reign of Christ will merge into His eternal kingdom and the eternal state. This is why Isaiah spoke of the conditions of the Millennium (1,000 years) as a "new heavens and a new earth" (Isa. 60:17). The conditions in the earth will be similar to the eternal state. Of course, the Millennial Kingdom is not the

eternal state since sinners are seen to die during Christ's earthly reign (Isa. 65:20). This time also speak of Christ judging sinners (Isa. 11:4; 66:14; Ps. 2:9). These things will not occur during the Eternal State (Rev. 21:4 - "no more death" and "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth" – Rev. 21:27). However, the Millennial Kingdom conditions are similar to the Eternal State and will actually merge into the Eternal State and Kingdom (Rev. 21-22).

But Revelation 19:11–21:8 speaks of an intermediate era between the present age and the Eternal State. The Old Testament passage of Isaiah 65:20 and others do not fit in the scene of the Eternal State. Instead, this passage and many others indicates some future era which is not part of the present Church Age and where there is still sin, rebellion, and death on the earth. There is no time in history when the conditions described in Isaiah 65:20 have occurred (Ps 90:10) and in Eternal State there is no longer any sin, death, or curse (Rev 21:4; 22:3). Therefore, Isaiah 65:20 must be fulfilled in an era that is different from our current period, yet distinct from the Eternal State. This means there must be an *intermediate kingdom*, or what we call the Millennium.

Isaiah envisions the world to be like the new heavens and the new earth (Isa. 65:17, 22) for the simple reason that the earth will be so drastically changed environmentally and politically from its previous state when Christ rules in the Millennium. So radically different will be the Millennial Kingdom that the Bible calls this 1,000-year reign "the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory" (Matt. 19:28). The earth during the Millennial Kingdom will be born again socially, politically, economically, and environmentally. Peter spoke of "the times of refreshing" that "shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 2:19) and "the times of the restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21). This once again refers to the Millennial Kingdom or the Messianic Age and the time when God's theocracy is once again operating upon the earth through the Messiah.

During the Millennium the political, social, and environmental structures of the earth will be restored to their original state as in the Garden of Eden, when Adam reigned as God's representative in the perfect theocracy. In the future the "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45) will restore the earthly theocracy for

1,000 years. Of course, the 1,000-year reign will merge into the eternal kingdom and therefore the two time periods are often blended together by the prophets as we have already noted (Luke 1:32-33; 2 Pet. 1:11; Rev. 11:15).

There are some amillennialists who look at the overwhelming evidence about a kingdom in the Old Testament and suggest that these expressions of a kingdom are literal but they are only descriptive of the eternal kingdom or the Eternal State (Rev. 21-22) and not the 1,000-year reign or the Millennium. This conclusion allows them to bypass the promises to Israel and transfer them to the church in a spiritual kingdom. However, those amillennialists who conclude this forget that Isaiah envisioned a day when Jesus as the King would fulfill the Davidic Covenant and sit upon the throne of David (Isa. 9:6) and when Jerusalem and the Jews would be the centerpiece of the world one again (Isa. 2:2; Zech 8:23).

Of course, this is not believed by any amillennialist since it's maintained that God is finished with Israel and Israel's covenant promises. They also fail to see how the Old Testament prophecies speak of Christ ruling over enemies and how death occurs during His reign (Isa. 65:20). The prophecies speak of Christ judging the sinners (Isa. 11:4; 66:14; Ps. 2:9) and nations (Isa. 60:12) during His earthly reign. This is hardly a description of the Eternal State (Revelation 21). Nice try guys! This conclusion regarding the Millennial Kingdom (the kingdom is a picture of the Eternal State) ignores the repeated promises given in the Old Testament of a literal earthly kingdom to Israel (2 Samuel 7:16), Christ's promotion (Matt. 10:5-7) and offer (Matt. 4:17; 6:9-10; 21:43; Luke 17:21; 19:42) of the earthly kingdom to Israel during His earthly ministry, and the people's expectation of an earthly kingdom (Matt. 2:2; Matt. 21:9; Acts 1:6; 3:19-21).

One must remember that all of history is moving toward the promised earthly kingdom of 1,000 years (Eph. 1:10 – “the dispensation of the fullness of times”), which is the time when Jesus Christ will “put down all rule and all authority and power” (1 Cor. 15:24). The 1,000 years which is mentioned six times in Revelation chapter twenty is but the *first phase* of Christ's eternal rule. The Millennium is the front porch that leads into eternity. The 1,000 years becomes an important time of rule that bridges

the gap from man's rebellious rule over earth to God's eternal rule. The 1,000 years acts an interim period of rule where Christ takes over the earth. 1 Corinthians 15:25 says, "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Again, this cannot be referring to the Eternal State but a time prior to it – the 1,000 years. This means that Christ's reign continues for one thousand years until every trace of rebellion and enmity has been put down. Christ's abolishing all other rule, authority, and power will finally take place when He subdues the rebels that rise up against Him at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:7–10).

At the end of this time of rule and subjugation of all earth's inhabitants, Christ turns the rulership of the earth over to the Father and eternity begins. When the Millennium or 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-6) is over it's then that the Son will deliver up "the kingdom to God, even the Father" (1 Cor. 15:24) and the Eternal State will commence. After Christ has brought everything into subjection, He will hand the kingdom back to the Father. Creation will be brought back to God the Father in a perfect condition. Thus, the earthly kingdom promises (Gen. 15:18; Deut. 30:3-5; 2 Sam. 7:16) and kingdom prophecies (Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:5) of the Old Testament will be literally and prophetically fulfilled in the Millennium (1,000-year reign of Christ) which is an *interim period of time* when Christ brings the world under the complete realm of His authority. The 1,000 years is the bridge or link between history and God's eternal order. During the 1,000 years Christ will finish earth's history by taking back the dominion that was lost by the Genesis Fall (Ps. 2:8; 24:1).

The Millennium is the bridge between history and God's eternal order. It links history with eternity. Historically Satan usurped the rulership of the world from Adam who was to rule the earth for God. As a result, God must take back the world through Jesus Christ (the millennium) and then rule eternally. The one (the 1,000 years) opens up the gate for the Eternal State. The promise of the Davidic covenant continues into the future. The covenant is called a perpetual covenant (Ps. 89:3-4). God confirmed this covenant with an oath (Ps. 89:3, 4, 33; 132:11) and then promises He will never break this covenant (Ps. 89:34-36). God will fulfill the Davidic covenant when the Lord Jesus, who is "the Root of David" (Rev. 5:5), reigns upon the throne of David for 1,000 years in Jerusalem (Luke 1:32-33). This

is the time Christ wins back the earth which Satan usurped from Adam (1 Cor. 15:24-29). His reign will also be an eternal reign in answer to the prophetic predictions of the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:16).

This means that after Christ gains back the world He will continue to reign as the sovereign king in the eternal kingdom or Eternal State (Rev. 22). Scripture gives no indication that this covenant is to cease at some point in the future. Nor does the Scripture give any indication that we should spiritualize or allegorize the covenant to undo the promises made to Israel (Acts 1:6). The Davidic covenant will be fulfilled in the future when the Lord comes back to earth and sits on His earthly throne (Matt. 25:31). The Scriptures are clear on this matter. The Davidic covenant is unconditional (2 Sam. 7:8-17), eternal (Isa. 55:3; Ps 89:4), and literal (Acts 1:6).

The Millennium will last 1000 years (Rev. 20:1-6) and includes the time when God reclaims this world from Satan and establishes His theocracy (1 Cor. 15:24-29 – “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet”). However, the actual promise of the Davidic Covenant is that Messiah’s reign over David’s kingdom from David’s throne will never end (2 Sam. 7:16). This means that the Millennium is the preparatory step to God’s eternal rule. Christ begins His rule during the Millennium (Rev. 20), purging and reclaiming the earth from Satan (1 Cor. 15:24-29), and then continues to rule for eternity. One cannot have an eternal kingdom without a Millennial Kingdom (the 1,000 years of Revelation 20) since the Millennium bridges the gap between history and prophecy.

The Millennium intersects the history and prophecy of the earth. Historically Satan usurped Adam’s right to rule the earth for God (John 12:31). Therefore, Jesus Christ must come back and first reclaim the world for God (the Millennium or 1,000 years) and then rule for eternity (the eternal kingdom). This means that the two concepts of a Millennium (a kingdom consisting of 1,000 years) and an eternal kingdom (the Eternal State) are interlocked together. You cannot have an eternal kingdom without a Millennial Kingdom.

For this reason, the Millennium, which is the time when Christ rules the earth for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:6) is joined together with God’s eternal rule

over the earth (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:32-33). The one (the Millennial Kingdom) leads into the other (the eternal kingdom). The one cannot begin without the other. Both are linked together. The Millennium being compared to the vestibule or front porch, which leads into the Eternal State or kingdom. The Millennium is simply the preparatory step and phase that leads into the eternal kingdom.

The amillennialist sees a conflict and insists that the eternality of Christ's kingdom does not permit any place for a thousand-year reign on earth. Many reject the one thousand years for this reason and call it a fiction in God's prophetic program. However, the amillennialist fails to see that the 1,000 years is simply the allotted time when the Son will gain dominion over the world that was once usurped from man by the devil. The Bible passage in 1 Corinthians 15:25 tells us that the Son will reign until He puts all enemies under his feet. This indicates a separate time designation before the Eternal State begins.

Revelation 20 gives us the answer to the duration of the time that the Son will reign until all His enemies are brought under His authority. The time designation is one thousand years. After the thousand years the Millennial Kingdom will turn into the eternal kingdom or Eternal State as seen in Revelation 21-22. The prophets did not distinguish between the two simply because the covenant promises were eternal in their fulfillment and therefore the Millennial Kingdom of one thousand years will simply flow into God's eternal rule. Nonetheless there is a distinction between the 1,000 years and Eternal State. This period of time (1,000 years) is actually a *prophetic prelude* to the Eternal State. The 1,000 years' functions as the *prophetic hinge* which brings together the time when God overtakes the world through the Messiah and the commencement of the eternal kingdom or state.

As already stated, following the millennium (1,000 years) will be the resurrection of the lost and the Great White Throne Judgment (1 Cor. 15:26 – "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"). This is the time when death is finally destroyed and forever barred from entering God's universe again (Rev. 20:14). Someday "all things" will be placed "under his feet" (Christ's feet - 1 Cor. 15:27) and "all things shall be subdued unto him"

(Christ – 1 Cor. 15:28) except God the Father (“he is excepted”), who is excluded from being subject to Christ, since the Son must be subject to the Father throughout the Eternal State (“then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him”) as He was during His earthly ministry (Matt. 28:18; John 5:26-27) and within the eternal counsel of the Godhead.

In the Millennial Kingdom Christ’s foes will be in subjection to Him (“under his feet”). However, when all revolt and rebellion is put down following the millennial reign of Christ (the 1,000 years), then the Son will turn around and submit Himself before the Father, to once again display the eternal relationship that the triune God possessed from eternity past (1 Cor. 15:28; Gen. 1:26; 11:7). With this expression of submission within the Godhead the eternal kingdom will be established over the earth, where the Godhead functioning together, will rule the world and universe forever - “that God is all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28). This means that someday the triune God will be the head of everything and His leadership or dominion over the world, along with His glory in this world, will last forever. It indicates that there will be no more challenge to the sovereign rule of God over the entire universe.

Romans 11:36

“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

The earthly Millennial Kingdom of 1,000 years will end and everything will merge into the eternal kingdom of God (Isa. 9:7; Luke 1:33) causing the Eternal State with a new heaven and earth to begin (Revelation 21-22). After Christ has taken over the restored world for His Father and reigned for 1,000 years, all things will return to the original way they were designed to be by God, as seen in the perfection and glory of the new heavens and new earth. This is why many verses that speak about the Millennial Kingdom of 1,000 years also point to the eternal kingdom as well (2 Sam. 7:16; Dan. 2:44; 7:14, 27; 2 Pet. 1:11; Rev. 11:15).

This is because the 1,000 years is the *first phase* and *interim period* of time when God’s rule (theocracy) over the earth is regained, and the period of time which opens the door for the eternal kingdom of God to commence over the earth. The one thousands years paves the way or leads into God’s

eternal kingdom. The millennial reign of Christ (the 1,000 years) is like a river which flows into the vast and unending ocean of God's eternal kingdom rule.

Again, there can be no eternal kingdom without the Millennial Kingdom first being established over the earth. This is because the 1,000 years is a time when God's rule is regained over the earth and the specific event which allows His eternal rule and kingdom to commence. Therefore, when the earthly kingdom is mentioned with eternal characteristics it must, out of necessity, include the Millennium (1,000-year reign of Christ), since the 1,000 years is the gateway or entranceway that leads into the eternal rule of God. One cannot be overlooked without the other. There must be a Millennium for God's theocracy to be restored on this earth and there must be a Millennium for the eternal order to commence upon planet earth. Revelation 20:1-6 repeatedly says that this Millennium lasts for 1,000 years.

The Basic Tenets of Premillennialism

There is an acronym that gives us an overview of this teaching. Sometimes we need to see things in a simple format to understand it.

- P** - Promise of God of a literal rule on David's throne in Jerusalem (Luke 1:32-33)
- R** - Resurrection in Revelation 20:4-6 of people entering the 1,000 year reign
- E** - Earliest View of the Church (Because it was Biblical!)
- M** - Most Natural Reading and understanding of Revelation 20:1-6
- I** - Imprisonment of Satan (future) during the Millennium (Rev. 20:1)
- L** - Literal One Thousand Years (Revelation 20:1-6)

In short, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to earth will result in a literal kingdom being established on earth (Matthew 25:31-34). Revelation 19:11-21 envisions Christ's return to earth when He will just the soldiers at Armageddon and Antichrist who is seeking to control the earth. Then, in the very next chapter (Revelation chapter 20) we see the Millennium mentioned or the 1,000-year rule of Jesus Christ on earth.

So, Jesus comes BEFORE the Millennium, not after the Millennium as in Postmillennialism, where the church is somehow going to make the world perfect and then Jesus returns. And since there is a literal 1,000 years mentioned on planet earth following the Second Coming this cannot be an allegorical millennium where Christ is only ruling in the hearts of people as their King, as Amillennialism teaches, which espouses a non-literal 1,000-year reign of Christ over the earth.

Those who teach Postmillennialism try and concoct the story that the church will bring in the kingdom by reforming the earth and then the King will return. This is a dream. Is the world really getting better? Is the church really reforming Washington DC, the acts of sinful depravity, and the fear of constant war and terrorism? I don't think so. 2 Timothy 3:1-13, Matthew 24:4-7, 38-39 says the earth will get worse before the Second Coming. I cannot find the "post" that Postmillennialism is leaning upon. This is a view but not a Biblical teaching of the End Times. Revelation 19 (the Second Coming) comes BEFORE Revelation chapter 20 (the Millennium). Brilliant! So, there is no such thing as Postmillennialism (that Jesus comes AFTER the Millennium is already established). Revelation 19-20 teach the very opposite.

Also, Amillennialism rejects what the Bible clearly teaches as a literal 1,000-year rule of Christ (Revelation 20:1-7) after a literal Second Coming (Revelation chapter 19). If the Millennium is not literal, then the Second coming is not literal. But no person has the authority to make the Second Coming literal (Revelation 19) and then by their own preconceived ideas reject a literal Millennium. This is not being fair with the text of Scripture.

Isaiah 9:6-7 declares:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given (*the first coming of Jesus to earth – Bethlehem*): and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace (*the Millennium of Revelation 20:1-7 and which is the subject of many prophecies – Isa. 11:1-9*) upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice (*the 1,000 years*) from henceforth even for ever (the eternal kingdom). The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

In other words, this will happen even if the amill's say it won't happen! I believe God's Word over the philosophical conclusions of men. When the Bible states that "of his government and peace there shall be no end" it means the 1,000 years merges into the eternal kingdom and state of Revelation 21. But there will be a specific time period when Christ sits upon the throne of David. This will be a literal fulfillment of Christ ruling on the throne of David in Jerusalem. It cannot refer to some kind of allegorical fulfillment in the Church today.

Michael Vlach correctly observes:

"If the events of Revelation 20 follow the events of Revelation 19 chronologically, then premillennialism must be true. If the two resurrections of Rev 20:4–5 are physical resurrections (which all admit the second is physical), then premillennialism must be true. If the abyss in which Satan is thrown is a real spiritual prison where he as a person is incarcerated, then premillennialism must be true (Rev 20:1–3). If Jesus assumes His Davidic throne at the time of His second coming as Matt 19:28 and Matt 25:31 indicate, then Jesus' kingdom is future from our standpoint and premillennialism must be true. If the successful reign of the Last Adam and mankind must take place from and over the realm where God originally placed and tasked the first Adam, then premillennialism must be true. If all of the covenants and promises of the Bible must be fulfilled in all their dimensions (spiritual and physical; national and international) under the Messiah before the Eternal State begins, then premillennialism must be true."

The Hermeneutics of Premillennialism

Dispensational premillennialism is merely the result of interpreting the whole Bible, Genesis to Revelation, in the most natural way - literally. Premillennialism has always held to a literal hermeneutic when it comes to the interpretation of texts. The system of literal interpretation used for premillennialism is based upon the grammatical-historical or textual approach to hermeneutics. A consistent use of the grammatical-historical system of interpretation (what the normal grammar and historical use of a terms mean) yields the interpretative conclusion that Israel always and only refers to national Israel in all of the Biblical texts.

In other words, the Church will not be substituted for Israel if the grammatical-historical system is *consistently* used. This is because there are no textual indicators that such is the case. When a person ignores the historical usage and meaning of words in their given culture and time, they can make the bold claim that the term Israel can now refer to the term Church. Of course, this destroys the literal understanding of a word and the literal understanding of a text of Scripture. In addition, when someone imports an idea from a particular text (about Israel) and imposes it upon another text (about the Church), in order to change the obvious meaning of the text, then they have not submitted themselves to the literal interpretation of that text. Instead, they have used a *replacement approach* to change the true meaning and understanding of the text that is being read.

The allegorical hermeneutical method is placed upon Bible texts dealing with the Church in order to simplify God's work throughout the ages. Covenant Theology is only interested in the alleged covenant of redemption which stresses a unifying goal of salvation for only one people throughout all time. In order to accomplish this goal, the *distinctions, dispensations, and divisions* in Scripture must become either non-existent, or figuratively explained, in order to become part of the one unifying goal. If God has only one purpose for one group of people throughout the ages, then the Bible cannot possibly teach that there are different classes of people who have different promises, blessings, and futures. Detailed dispensational purposes revolving around law, grace, Church age, the Biblical covenants, or kingdom age do not fit into the narrow framework of Covenant Theology.

Likewise, prophecies about the Rapture, Tribulation Period, different judgments and resurrections for the Church and Old Testament Saints, and the literal Millennium are too complex for the simplicity of Covenant Theology. In addition, the different classes of people (Church, Israel, Gentiles), do not fit into the Covenant Theology scheme of interpretation and the simplified understanding of God's covenant program of redemption. There is less divisions and variations in the outworking of Covenant Theology since this system of interpretation seeks to maintain, one people, one purpose, and one ending. The simplicity of this system is attractive to many interpreters of Scripture. *Covenant Theology argues for*

simplicity while God argues for multiplicity. God has a multifaceted plan that He is bringing to fruition throughout the ages which involves several purposes, plans, and peoples. The Bible clearly teaches this when it's interpreted in a grammatical, historical, and literal fashion.

Those who reject the literal Millennium (1,000 years) claim that the promises about the earthly kingdom given to Israel can be re-read, re-interpreted, redefined, and re-applied as Christ's rule over the Church today, in a spiritual kingdom of people, who are now called the new Israel of God. But where in the Bible do we read about this alleged transfer taking place? There is no conclusive evidence (not one shred of evidence) that teaches such a transfer. That the Church becomes the new "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16) is simply a false accusation which is based upon faulty hermeneutics and exegesis.

It's interesting that the other 65 occurrences of the term "Israel" in the New Testament always refer to Jews. It would be very strange for Paul to use the term "Israel" in this one verse to include Gentile Christians and then use this expression ("Israel of God") as a definition for the New Testament Church. Paul elsewhere referred to different kinds of Israelites - believing Jews and unbelieving Jews (Rom. 9:6). In this benediction verse Paul was simply demonstrating his deep love and concern for the true Israel, which are Jews, who had come to faith in Christ. The true Israel of God is an expression for saved Jewish people who have been incorporated into the Church which is now composed of both Jews and Gentiles (1 Cor. 12:13). Jewish people were Paul's beloved kinsman in the flesh (Rom. 9:3). He deeply loved his own people and greets them as such in this verse.

It must be understood that when amillennialists and postmillennialists attempt to transfer Israel's promises and blessings to the Church, in order to keep Israel out of a literal earthly kingdom, they commit the interpretive error of illegitimate transfer (transferring the meaning of one text into another). In doing this they destroy the literal understanding of a text and the correct interpretation of the Bible. Confusion is created when interpreters of Scripture override God's dispensational distinctions and purposes. As a result, people, places, and things do not mean what God wants them to mean and God's plan of the ages is exchanged for the plan

of Covenant Theology. The burden of proof is always on the one who claims that a certain part of the Bible does not mean what it says.

The Dispensational premillennialist is consistently literal in his interpretation of Revelation 20:4-5 and those passages dealing with Israel, the Church, the Tribulation Period, and Millennium (1,000 years). He studies these texts without imposing the meaning of other texts upon them and overriding the obvious or clear meaning of the texts at hand. The old saying is still true: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense." We might add: "If the plain sense makes good sense, seek no other sense, lest it result in nonsense." The amillennialist and postmillennialist have created this same saying with a different twist. "If the plain sense of Scripture does not fit my theological system, then I will seek some other sense, lest I should end up agreeing with the dispensationalists!"

It's rather interesting that even the opponents of the literal interpretation of prophecy admit that if this approach were followed it would lead to premillennial theology. Floyd Hamilton said the following: "Now we must frankly admit that a literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies gives us just such a picture of an earthly reign of the Messiah as the premillennialist pictures. That was the kind of Messianic kingdom that the Jews of the time of Christ were looking for, on the basis of a literal interpretation of the Old Testament promises." In the same vein, Oswald Allis admits that "the Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been yet fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age."

One thing is certain. Only the premillennial view takes a literal interpretative approach to Revelation 20, the Old Testament prophets and prophecies related to the Millennial Kingdom and Israel, and to the broad spectrum of prophetic events that are distinguished and outlined in the Bible. While the Bible does speak allegorically at times, it is clear when it is doing so. If a passage *can* be taken literally, it should be. One thousand years is mentioned six times in Revelation 20:1-7. Other designations of time in Revelation are specific (ten days - Rev.2:10; forty-two months - Rev. 11:2, 13:5), or otherwise vaguely noted (a little while - Rev. 6:11; a short

time – Rev. 12:12). There is no reason not to take the one thousand years of Revelation 20 literally unless you have a preconceived bias toward amillennialism (no literal Millennium) and a personal vendetta against premillennialism (the teaching of a literal Millennium).

Of course, the word “thousand” can possess a figurative meaning in certain contexts and verses (Ex. 20:6; Ps. 50:10) but in other verses and contexts the word thousand is speaking about an exact number (Ps. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8; Rev. 20:1-7). In fact, looking up the word thousand in any concordance will verify to any honest Bible student of the literalness of this number in most instances. The point is this. *Context limits the possible meaning of a word to a single meaning.* An honest exegete of Scripture knows that a suggested meaning for a word lives or dies based upon the context and text in which it appears. Using other passages where a figurative expression of a thousand is used to support another use of the same number is exegetical fraud, exegetical fallacy, and the illegitimate transfer of one textual understanding for a word to another text. *The text must provide the basis of the true interpretation.* The text and context of Revelation 20 clearly supports the literal approach to the number “thousand” and the “thousand years.”

Waymeyer says:

"In order to be considered symbolic, the language in question must possess (a) some degree of *absurdity* when taken literally and (b) some degree of *clarity* when taken symbolically." He goes on to say, "It is difficult to imagine why one would consider the 'thousand years' in Revelation 20 to be symbolic language, for it possesses neither a degree of absurdity when taken literally, nor a degree of clarity when taken symbolically."

We might add that the symbolic is also identified by the use of the qualifying words “as” or “like.” However, even when these words (“like” or “as” or “as it were”) accompany a descriptive element in Scripture, and even when there is an absolute impossibility of something being literal, one must always faithfully interpret the symbolic as conveying something literal, *within the parameters of the text and context at hand.* So even the symbolic needs to be interpreted within the confines of a specific context and setting. This will keep the interpreter from inventing spurious interpretations of symbolic apocalyptic literature outside their prophetic

contexts. Needless to say the literal reading of a thousand years in Revelation 20 makes perfect sense just the way it is.

There is no reason to dismiss the literalness of the number 1,000 in the framework of the context. The only reason it may seem strange to some interpreters of Scripture is because they approach Scripture through the lens of Covenant Theology which rejects a literal Millennium. If the non-premillennialists (amillennialists and postmillennialists) would let the statements of a thousand years stand just the way they are then they would admit this passage (Rev. 20:1-7) clearly teaches premillennialism (Christ will rule on earth for 1,000 years).

As previously stated, many of the critics admit that if the literal approach is applied consistently to the whole of Scripture, then dispensational premillennialism is the natural result. If the Old Testament promises have never been fulfilled literally for Israel as a nation, then they are yet in the future, and they will be fulfilled in the literal 1,000-year reign of Christ over the earth.

The thousand years, which is repeatedly mentioned in Revelation 20:1-7, corresponds to Christ's literal 1,000-year reign on the earth. A literal physical rule of Christ over the earth is the only way the covenant promises and prophecies can be fulfilled for this is the manner and way that God intended them to be fulfilled. Applying a literal method of interpretation to Scripture results in the pieces of the puzzle coming together. All of the Old Testament prophecies regarding Jesus' first coming were fulfilled literally. Therefore, we should expect the prophecies regarding His Second Coming to be fulfilled literally as well (Isa. 9:6-7; Luke 1:31-33).

Isaiah 9:6 records Christ's first coming:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:7, in the same literal context of Christ's first coming, records Christ's Second Coming to establish the Millennium and then the eternal kingdom: "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no

end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”

Luke 1:31 records Christ’s first coming:

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.

Luke 1:32, in the same literal context of His birth, records Christ’s Second Coming to establish the Millennium and then the eternal kingdom: “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.”

Proper exegesis and the laws of hermeneutics demand that if the first coming of Jesus Christ and His birth are literal then His Second Coming to establish an earthly theocracy or rule as the King is also literal. There is nothing in these contexts and verses that would merit a figurative interpretive approach of Christ’s Second Coming and kingdom. They are both literal. Amillennialism and postmillennialism denies the simplicity of what the Bible says and what a child could understand when reading the Bible with the eye of faith. Dispensational premillennialism is the only system of interpretation that agrees with a literal interpretation and approach to God’s covenants and end-time prophecy.

It is important to remember that Scripture interprets Scripture (1 Cor. 2:13). *The Scripture itself is its own best interpreter.* Often a passage will cover a topic or subject that is also addressed elsewhere in the Bible in the same way. It is important to interpret all of these passages consistently with one another and not allegorize or change their meaning in another place. The topics of Scripture (Israel, Church, Millennium) must always be interpreted as possessing their normal, regular, and literal meaning unless the context of the passage indicates that it is figurative in nature. Furthermore, even if a passage is using figurative language it has a literal meaning associated with the context and purpose of the prophetic revelation at hand. *A literal interpretation does not eliminate the possibility of figures of speech being used.* Rather, it encourages the interpreter to not

read figurative language into the meaning of a passage unless it is appropriate for that word and context.

It is crucial to never seek a “deeper” or “more spiritual” meaning than is presented. Seeking an allegorical meaning for a text of Scripture, which is meant to be literal, becomes a very dangerous endeavor, since the basis for accurate interpretation is placed in the mind of the reader rather than coming from the Scripture or text itself. When it comes to allegorizing a text of the Bible there can be no objective standard of interpretation. Instead, Scripture becomes subject to the subjective whims of the interpreter and to every person’s own impression of what it means. 2 Peter 1:20-21 reminds us “that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.” In other words, no Bible passage should be shielded from the broad spectrum of Biblical teaching and the whole counsel of God’s Word (Acts 20:27) regarding a given subject. Let us remember one important detail. We must seek to uphold a proper method of biblical interpretation rather than a particular model of eschatology.

God means what He says and says what He means! Thus, when applying the grammatical, historical, and literal hermeneutic to Scripture one must concede that Israel (Abraham’s physical descendants) and the Church (Jews and Gentiles who come to faith in Christ today) are two distinct groups or people. God has not changed the meaning and understanding of words.

1 Corinthians 10:32

“Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.”

Jews are always defined as Jews. Gentiles are always defined as Gentiles. The Church is always defined as the Church composed of both Jews and Gentiles (1 Cor. 12:13). The Bible never changes the meaning of Israel or Jews to mean the Church or the Church to mean Israel. These are separate groups of people who have different purposes and goals related to them. In the scheme of God’s prophetic word, it is crucial to recognize and understand that Israel and the Church are distinct. If their true identities are misunderstood or lost the historic covenant promises given to Israel along with her prophetic promises of an earthly kingdom will be

misinterpreted and misrepresented (2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2). Specifically, passages that deal with promises made to Israel are prone to be misunderstood and misinterpreted if one tries to make them apply to the Church, and vice versa. We are not called upon to huckster the Bible! Remember, the context of the passage will determine to whom it is addressed and will point to the most correct interpretation!

Conclusion

In summary, the principle features of dispensational premillennialism include: Rightly dividing the Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15), a literal hermeneutic (2 Pet. 1:20), Israel as a distinct people from the Church (1 Cor. 10:32), the regathering of the Jews from the nations to the ancient land of Israel or Palestine (Deut. 30:3-4; Isaiah 43:5-7; Jer. 23:7-8; 30:3; 31:7-10; Ezek. 11:14-18; 36:24-25; Matt. 24:30-31), the mass spiritual regeneration of the Jewish people (Rom. 11:26-27; Ezek. 36:25-27), restoration of Jerusalem as the principal city of the millennial earth (Ps. 48:2; Jer. 3:17), Israel's Temple becoming the spiritual center of the world (Hag. 2:7; Isa. 60:5-7; Ezekiel 43-48), and the reign of David's ultimate Son (Isa. 9:7; Jer. 23:5; Luke 1:32-33) over the twelve reunited tribes (Luke 22:30), which dwell securely in the land (Jer. 30:10; 33:15-16; Amos 9:15; Zech. 14:11), and who become the featured or preeminent nation of the world (Zeph. 3:20; Micah 4:1-2).

The Old Testament contexts that speak of Israel promise that she will be regathered into the glorious kingdom reign (the 1,000 years or Millennium) as a national people. This is based upon the fact that God will never abandon His people whom He has chosen and loves.

Deuteronomy 30:3

“That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee.”

1 Samuel 12:22

“For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.”

2 Samuel 7:24

“For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel *to be* a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God.”

Isaiah 54:7

“For a small moment have I forsaken thee (*Israel*); but with great mercies will I gather thee (*for the Millennial Kingdom*).”

Isaiah 11:12

“And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

Isaiah 43:6

“I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.”

Jeremiah 23:3

“And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.”

Jeremiah 23:8

“But, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.”

Ezekiel 11:17

“Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.”

Ezekiel 20:34

“And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out.”

Ezekiel 20:41

“I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen.”

Ezekiel 34:12-13

“As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.”

Ezekiel 36:24

“For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.”

Ezekiel 37:21

“And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land.”

Hosea 3:5

“Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king (the Messiah); and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days” (of the Millennial Kingdom).

Jesus adds in Mark 13:27:

“And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect (Israel) from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.”

Peter adds in Acts 15:16:

“After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up.”

Paul concludes in Romans 11:26-27

“And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”

Romans 11:1

“I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.”

Isaiah 62:12,

“And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.”

Isaiah 60:21

“Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.”

Amos 9:15

“And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.”

If the words of the Bible mean something, then God is not finished with Israel! No honest exegete of the Bible, who takes God’s Word seriously, could ever make the bold claim that God is finished with His ancient people called Israel. The Bible confirms over and over again what God’s mind and plan is for Israel. National Israel has a glorious future that is connected with a literal kingdom reign on planet earth. The Second Coming of Christ will result in the literal fulfillment of Israel’s covenant promises and the prophecies of the Old Testament regarding the kingdom (Luke 1:32-33).

A positive presentation for dispensational premillennialism can be made from the Bible, while amillennialism and postmillennialism cannot. *The best defense is a good offense.* The case for dispensational premillennialism (a literal future kingdom and Jewish people over which Christ reigns) rests on the fact that the Old Testament promises of an earthly kingdom are not denied or redefined but confirmed by the New Testament (Matt. 19:28; Luke 1:31-32; Acts 3:19-26; 15:16; 26:6-8; Rom. 11:26-27).

The basis of dispensational premillennialism is not merely the reference to the thousand years in Revelation 20. This is only a detail, howbeit an important one, in the broad pattern of Scripture regarding the Millennium. The basis of dispensational premillennialism is the covenant-keeping nature of our God, affirmed over and over again in the pages of Scripture (2 Sam. 7:15, 23:5; Ps. 89:3-4; 20-37; Jer. 33:19–26). God will do what He has said He will do, for His own glory among the nations (Isa. 66:18-19). God has said that He will fulfill the Abrahamic, Davidic, Palestinian, and New

Covenants for a regathered, regenerated, restored nation of Israel at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The Millennial Kingdom will be established for one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-7) prior to the Eternal State of God's kingdom and universe (Revelation 21-22).

Revelation 11:15 concludes with the glorious words of Scripture that were adopted for Handel's Messiah: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ (the Millennium or 1,000 years); and he shall reign for ever and ever" (the eternal kingdom). The Millennium paves the way for the Eternal State. The earth cannot get to the Eternal State without God's earthly purposes being fulfilled during the 1,000 years. The Millennium is the time Christ's reclaims the earth, fulfills His earthly promises to Israel, establishes a theocracy in the place of a Satanocracy (1 Cor. 15:24-25), and rules with a rod of iron (Revelation 20). When this is finished, a new heavens and earth are created and the Eternal State begins (Revelation 21-22). The Millennium is the bridge that leads us into eternity!