

A STUDY OF PREMILLENNIALISM

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Around about us we see much is said and written about a millennial kingdom. From Hal Lindsey's book "*The Late, Great Planet Earth*" to the current "*Left Behind*" series of books, much is said about a coming kingdom. There are many "millennial" preachers that are seen on TV: Billy Graham, Pat Robertson, Jimmy Swaggart, Jerry Falwell, John Hage, Jack Van Impe, *et al.* Although this study will be very brief, it is hoped that this will motivate you to study and investigate further this false doctrine. Abraham Lincoln said "*let the people know the truth and the Nation will be safe.*" If brethren know the truth, the church will be safe. They should know the doctrines taught by enemies that are within the church as well as those who are without the church – hence the purpose of revealing these plain facts.

I. PREMILLENNIALISM DEFINED.

A. Premillennialism Defined:

1. Millennial comes from 2 Latin words:
 - a) MILLE = thousand
 - b) ANNUM = year
2. Pre = before
3. ism = "the doctrine of"

II. WHAT IS PREMILLENNIALISM?

A. To summarize, the premillennial view asserts that Christ came to this earth for the purpose of setting up his kingdom. He was, however, surprisingly rejected by the Jews. Hence, he postponed the kingdom plans, and set up the church instead – as sort of an emergency measure. When he returns, he allegedly will raise only the righteous dead, restore national Israel, sit upon David's literal throne in Jerusalem, and then reign for a span of 1,000 years – after which comes the resurrection of the wicked and the judgment.

B. The "sugar stick" of the premillennial view is found in Revelation 20:1-6.

C. There are 3 views of the millennium in Revelation 20:

1. Premillennialism – The belief that Christ will return in order to set up a kingdom on this earth *just prior to a 1,000 year reign.*
2. Postmillennialism – The belief that the 1,000 years is a figurative expression which indicates a long period of time in which things will getting better & better (due to the influence and spread of the gospel) and that *following this millennium Christ will come.*
3. Amillennialism – The belief that the *1000 years are figurative not literal* and there will be no worldwide peace or righteousness.

D. Premillennialism is the most popular of the 3; some think this view is held by 75-85% of the religious world.

III. HISTORY OF PREMILLENNIALISM.

A. Premillennial views have troubled God's people since ancient times.

B. By the 2nd – 3rd centuries premillennialism heresies arose, but then was called *Chiliasm*.

1. Chiliasm is from the Greek word **CHILIA** which means 1,000.

C. Premillennialism in some form can be found in every century. A few of the “church fathers” held the views of Premillennialism (Chiliasm) and this doctrine was refuted then also.

D. By the 1800’s a specific form of premillennialism became popular – Dispensationalism.

1. The dispensational form of premillennialism teaches that all human history can be divided into 7 successive ages corresponding to the 7 days of creation:

- | | |
|---|---|
| a) 1 st day = Age of Innocence
(Creation → Fall of Man) | d) 4 th day = Age of Promise
(Abraham → Sinai) |
| b) 2 nd day = Age of Conscience
(Fall → Flood) | e) 5 th day = Age of Law
(Sinai → Calvary) |
| c) 3 rd day = Age of Human Government
(Flood → Abraham) | f) 6 th day = Age of Grace
(Calvary → 2 nd Coming) |
| | g) 7 th day = Age of The Kingdom
(Millennium) |

E. Premillennialists contend we are living in the “6th day”, the age of grace.

F. There are many things wrong with Dispensational Premillennialism. Here are the 2 major things:

1. Dispensationalists use an erroneous interpretation of 2 Peter 3:8 where they read the Bible to say that a day = 1,000 years.

a) **NOTE:** The passage does not say “*was* a thousand years” but correctly reads “*as* a thousand years.”

2. All these “ages” are purely arbitrary. These are nowhere taught in the Bible.

IV. HAS THE KINGDOM COME?

A. The principle doctrine of premillennialism is that the kingdom has not come. If we can prove from the Bible that the kingdom has already come, we have essentially proved premillennialism is a false system.

B. The Kingdom Was Prophesied In The Old Testament.

1. Isaiah 2:1f foretells the building of the Lord’s House.

a) This prophecy would take place in the last days.

b) The Lord’s house was going to be built.

c) All nations would flow into it.

d) The word of the Lord would go forth from Jerusalem.

2. Daniel 2 – Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.

a) Would be in the latter days.

b) In the days of the 4th kingdom (Roman Empire) God would set up His kingdom.

C. The Kingdom Was In Preparation During The Personal Ministries of John & Jesus.

1. John the Baptist preached “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” – Matthew 3:2

a) “at hand” – very near, within reach, soon.

2. Jesus preached that the kingdom was at hand – Matthew 4:17.

3. In Matthew 16:16ff Jesus promised to build His church and to give Peter the keys of the kingdom.

a) Note the terms church and kingdom are used interchangeably.

4. Jesus told His disciples that some of them would live to see the kingdom would come with power – Mark 9:1.
 5. Jesus told Nicodemus how to enter the kingdom – John 3:1-5.
 6. Luke 24:49 Jesus told the apostles they would receive power in Jerusalem. Cf. Mark 9:1
 7. In Acts 1 Jesus tells His apostles they shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost has come upon them.
- D. The Kingdom Came In Perfection On Pentecost. Note The Following:
1. The time was right – it was in “the last days”: Isaiah 2; Daniel 2; Acts 2.
 2. The place was right – it was in Jerusalem: Isaiah 2; Acts 2.
 3. It was during the time of the Roman Empire: Daniel 2; Compare Luke 3:1.
 4. Peter used the keys of the kingdom.
 5. We enter the kingdom (church) by being born of water and the Spirit.

CONCLUSION: *The kingdom of Christ, which is the church of Christ, came on the 1st Pentecost following our Lord’s ascension.*

- E. Notice also all references of the kingdom (church) prior to Pentecost (Acts 2) the kingdom is spoken of in prospect, in the future.
- F. All references to the kingdom (church) after Pentecost speaks of its being in existence.
See: Acts 14:22; Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 4:20, 6:9, 10, 15:24, 50; Colossians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:5; Hebrews 12:28; 2 Peter 1:11; Revelation 1:9.

V. THINGS WRONG WITH THE PREMILLENNIAL VIEWS:

- A. Makes Christ 1st coming a failure.
- B. Casts reflection on the omnipotence of God.
- C. Casts reflection on the omniscience of God.
- D. Makes the church of Christ an afterthought.
- E. Makes Revelation 20 the focal point around which the rest of the Bible is to be interpreted.