

UPLOOK

AUG-SEPT 2008

Assess the Need • Catch the Vision • Take the Challenge

**ISRAEL'S
ULTIMATE KING**
Doug Kazen

**THE CHALLENGE
OF PRETERISM**
Chet Plimpton

**GEORGETOWN
C3 OUTREACH**
Don't miss it!



Grace and Glory
THE MILLENNIUM

www.uplook.org



Ryan Lane

"A literal reign of Christ on David's throne is inextricably bound to the grace of God."

Grace and Glory

Millennial manifestaion

It is sometimes surmised that the millennium is one of those prophetic details which, although intriguing, has no significant relevance to the real business of day-to-day Christian living. But, when viewed properly, prophecy is vital to proper Christian living, for *"the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"* (Rev. 19:10). A proper understanding of the millennium reveals two great truths concerning our Lord and His dealings with men.

Grace In certain circles, it is taught that there is no real millennium. Israel forfeited her right to the kingdom by rejecting her Messiah. Consequently, she has been permanently set aside and God's promises to her have been passed on in some spiritual sense to the church. Christ will not return to earth to reign from Jerusalem for 1000 years.

There are many godly believers who hold to this view. But they do so without realizing that it undermines the grace of God. Is this how the Lord works? Is the faithfulness of man the basis for the wonderful promises of God?

Psalms 89 deals specifically with this issue. After promising a literal, permanent kingdom to David and his descendants (vv. 20-29), God specifies what will happen if Israel is unfaithful (vv. 30-32). Far from saying that He will cast them off and replace them, He vows, *"Nevertheless My lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips. Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before Me"* (vv.33-36). Notice the repeated references to "My." The security of God's people relies on the faithfulness of God, not the goodness of man.

But there is another serious problem with this viewpoint. If His people's disobedience is sufficient grounds for God to rescind His promises to them, then it is not only Israel who is in trouble. If the hundreds of promises God made to His Old Testament people can be revoked (in violation of Romans 11:29) and given to someone else, on what basis can His New Testament people be confident He won't do the same to us? On the basis of our faithfulness and goodness? Such self-righteous thinking is nothing more than salvation by works. A literal reign of Christ on David's throne is inextricably bound to the grace of God.

Glory The millennium is also designed to be a showcase for the glory of the Lord. In previous dispensations, man had convenient excuses on which to blame his sin: the devil, a fallen world, corrupt government. But during the millennium, Satan is bound, the world is returned to Edenic conditions, and perfect government prevails. Yet man rebels against God and against His Christ. The Lord is glorified as this last test proves once and for all that God's assessment of sinful man is utterly accurate.

It is also vital that Christ be glorified in the same sphere where man crucified the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2:8). And glorified, He will be! (Isa. 40:5) Christ will come in the glory of His Father and flaming fire (Mt. 16:27; 2 Thes. 1:7). The glory of God will return to the temple (Ezek. 43:2ff). Messiah will reign as the King of glory (Ps. 24:7ff). As Solomon promised in his millennial psalm, *"let the whole earth be filled with His glory"* (Ps. 72:19). *"The Lord gives grace and glory"* (Ps. 84:11). That's why the millennium matters.

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UPLOOK magazine is intended to encourage the people of God in fidelity to His Word, fervency in intercessory prayer, labors more abundant, and love to the Lord. Believing in the practical Headship of Christ and the local autonomy of each assembly, this is not intended to be an official organ of any group or federation of local churches. The editor and authors take responsibility for materials published. For any blessing which accrues, to God be the glory.

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Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with all unsolicited material. News items must be submitted at least two months in advance of issue requested. Selected news items will be carried for two issues (if time permits). The editor reserves the right to determine those items best suited for the magazine. Editorial decisions are final. Photos accepted. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for photos you wish returned. Send news items to frontlines@uplook.org

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Purpose by Design


Can mindless chance think ahead?

Purpose in living systems is evidence of intelligence applied. Human stem cells are important during both development and adult life. Therefore, one could argue that only intelligence can explain the purpose-driven life of the stem cell. The standard biological explanation, however, is that stem cells evolved by a process devoid of purpose or intelligent direction; that evolution “created” complex living stem cells which serve important purposes but which were, themselves, not created on purpose. Recently, a surprising new purpose has been described for adult stem cells which makes it even more difficult to believe that such critically important cells evolved by purposeless chance.

Stem cells are unspecialized cells that can divide and produce highly specialized cells.¹ During embryonic development, stem cells have a clear purpose in producing the cells that eventually become the liver, heart, lungs, and all other organs. Some stem cells remain active into adulthood and throughout an individual’s life. These adult stem cells continuously produce intermediate cells called transient amplifying cells which become replacement bone, blood, and skin cells. But biologically speaking, it would be much less complex, and less expensive in terms of energy, if replacement cells were produced directly from other skin or fat cells by simple cell division instead of through levels of intermediate amplifying cells. Yet, this is not the case. So why then are so many cells replaced by this much less efficient method?

John Pepper of the University of Arizona has recently put forward the surprising explanation that adult stem cells exist in long-lived animals and humans for the purpose of preventing evolution from happening.² Evolution, that is, within a single individual. An individual

can be thought of as a group of cooperating cells. Every time a cell divides, there is an opportunity for genetic errors or mutations to occur (micro-evolution). If skin cells were replaced by division of existing skin cells, there would be billions of opportunities for mutations to occur which could lead to cancer. By contrast, cell replacement using amplified stem cells always starts out with a non-mutated cell which is amplified only a limited number of times. This method prevents the accumulation of harmful mutations. If this were not the case, as people age, their organs would be at risk of breaking down because of the accumulation of mutated cells.

This finding that adult stem cells are needed to prevent evolution within an individual has striking implications. The unexpected choice of amplified stem cell replacement over direct cell division replacement speaks of purpose by deliberate design. But rather than recognize this, Dr. Pepper suggests that millions of years ago, single-celled animals could never have evolved into stable multicellular animals until the mechanism that stops evolution from occurring had also evolved. Is he really saying that for multicellular evolution to have occurred at all there must first have evolved a way to stop evolution? Don’t you think this is asking quite a lot of an evolutionary process which cannot think ahead? 

—MICHAEL G. WINDHEUSER, PH.D.

Recently, a surprising new purpose has been described for adult stem cells which makes it even more difficult to believe that such critically important cells evolved by purposeless chance.

1 J. Panno, *Stem Cell Research: Medical applications and ethical controversy* (New York, NY: Facts on File, Inc., 2005).

2 J.W. Pepper, et al., *Animal Cell Differentiation Patterns Suppress Somatic Evolution*, Plos Computational Biology. Vol 3(12) e250; 2532-2545, 2007.



Pray for Persecuted Saints

Reports from India call for continued fervent prayer

India's Supreme Court recently ordered eastern Orissa state to report on steps taken to stop a wave of anti-Christian rioting that has claimed 16 lives, a court official said. Sadly however, a local believer stated, "Today they have killed more than 100 but Newspaper says only 10." Some 200 people have been arrested in connection with the riots and 13,000 others, mostly Christians, are sheltering under police guard in seven camps in Orissa's Kandhamal district. Thousands of others have fled to the jungles after their homes, churches and prayer halls were torched.



A young Christian villager recovers from her burns at a relief camp in Kandhamal.

The violence erupted after the August 23 murder of a popular Hindu leader by unknown gunmen. A curfew has helped the cities in Kandhamal stay relatively calm. The interior is still on the boil. The huge security presence, villagers say, is still not making them feel safe. Instead, people from both communities—Hindus and Christians—hide in the forest every night fearing for their lives. As night falls, families huddle together and make their way into the forest, as sporadic attacks continue. They speak in hushed voices, and are afraid to be seen or heard. It's a routine the villagers, a majority of them Pano Christians, follow everyday. A local villager, says: "They burnt

down the church. They also burnt our huts. They burnt all our clothes. There is no food. They are torturing us and now we live in the jungles." Recently an Indian Maoist group has claimed responsibility for the killing of the Swami.

For more information, or to learn how to help, please visit www.gospelmi.org or contact *Gospel Missions of India* by emailing email@gospelmi.org or call 586-247-7924 (day) or 586-306-5669 (evening).

ATLANTIC/LYMAN IOWA CONFERENCE

Atlantic Gospel Chapel, Sunnyside Gospel Chapel and Lyman Assembly will host their 95th annual conference Sep 12-14. Speakers will be Tom Taylor (PA) and Ken Daughters (IA). Children's ministry will be provided. and meals will be served. **Contact:** Dennis Oathoudt ph: 712-243-6303 email: koathoudt@hotmail.com

WORD ALIVE BIBLE STUDY IN GA

Studies are held at Washington Chapel, 808 East Robert Toombs Ave., Washington, GA. Scheduled times are 9 AM - 3 PM with lunch provided. Sept 13 - *A Dispensational Transition* Acts 1-28 Mark Hartley
Oct 11 - *The Saving Gospel of Grace* Acts 12:25-16:5 Sam Thorpe Jr.
Dec 13 - *Reaching the Known World* Acts 19:21-28:31 Mike Attwood
Contact: Sam Thorpe 706-359-6297

LADIES CONFERENCE IN GA

Camp Hope in Dahlonga, GA announce their annual Ladies Conference Sep 26-28. Mimi Wilson will be the speaker. Cost: \$50. **Contact:** Barbara Thorpe ph: 706-359-6297 email: sambarb@nu-z.net
Camp Hope ph: 770-536-4787 email: camphopega@arilio.com
web: www.camphopega.org

ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN IOWA

Gateway Bible Chapel and High Point Bible Chapel will hold their annual conference Sep 26-28 at Grace Lutheran Camp, DeWitt, IA. The expected speaker is Scott DeGross (KS). **Contact:** Jim Fullan ph: 563-242-4597 email: jimfullanh@ci.dinton.ia.us
Jim Iverson ph: 563-391-3122 email: iversonhipt@netzero.com

PACIFIC COAST CONFERENCE

This annual conference will be held Sep 29-Oct 3 at the Mission Springs Christian Conference Center in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The conference begins Monday with dinner at 6:00 PM and ends Friday with lunch. Speakers: Mike Fitzhugh (MI) and Keith Keyser (PA). **Contact:** Max Krieger ph: 323-256-1992 email: maxnbethk@sbcglobal.net

WITNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Roy Hill (Eng) is the speaker at a seminar Sep 25-26 designed to help men and women at every level of business deal with the numerous challenges faced in today's business environment. It will be held Thursday morning through Friday noon at the Willow Valley Conference Center & Resort, Lancaster County, PA (www.willowvalley.com). Provision for

FRONT LINES *continued*

families available. **Contact:** Know the Word, c/o Mark Kolchin, P.O. Box 305, Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734 www.knowtheword.com knowtheword@comcast.net

FALL FOLIAGE CONFERENCE

Know the Word will conduct its fourteenth annual Fall Foliage Conference Sep 29 - Oct. 3 with Roy Hill (Eng) speaking on the topic, "Tests in the Life of the Believer." Held at the Tuscarora Inn on the Delaware River in the Poconos (PA), the cost is \$325. per person and includes all meals, deluxe accommodations and an afternoon sight-seeing excursion. **Contact:** www.knowtheword.com e-mail: knowtheword@comcast.net To register, send fully-refundable amount to: Know the Word, c/o Mark Kolchin, P.O. Box 305, Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734

CREATION SCIENCE WEEKEND

Bethany Bible Chapel will host a series of weekend meetings Oct 3-5 dealing with the topic of Creation Science. Dr. Ben Scripture (IN) will speak on the latest issues in the evolution vs. creation science debate; advances in Intelligent Design theory and a biblical examination of the six days of creation including how dinosaurs fit into the biblical record. The conference begins at 7:30 PM Friday, continuing Saturday at 10 AM and concludes on the Lord's Day with an afternoon meeting at 1:30 PM. Arrangements can be made for overnight accommodations. **Contact:** Know the Word, c/o Mark Kolchin, P.O. Box 305, Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734 web: www.knowtheword.com knowtheword@comcast.net

CT FALL BIBLE CONFERENCE

The annual Fall Bible Conference at Wellspring Bible Fellowship, Welles Road, Old Mystic, CT is planned for Oct 3-5. Expected speaker is Scott Dunkerton (NJ). The conference begins 7:30 PM Friday with four sessions on Saturday, lunch provided. Brother Scott will also speak at the Sunday morning meeting. **Contact:** John Clifford ph: 860-445-0622 email: clifford.j@att.net

NC LADIES MISSIONARY CONFERENCE

The ladies of Parkway Chapel, Winston-Salem, NC, will be hosting the conference Oct 4. Speakers will be Ruth Bloom from *Immanuel Mission* and Jane Wolcott from *CMML*. Clothing items will be collected at the conference for each of these ministries. Presentations will be given on behalf of *Good News on the Move* and *Mount Jubilee Ministries*. The project for the conference is to help purchase a van for John and Sunita Locklear, working with children with special needs in Mysore, India. **Contact:** Janice Bishop 2865 Gracefield Ct., Winston-Salem, NC 27127 email: JBishop11@triad.rr.com

MAINE BIBLE CONFERENCE

A cordial invitation is extended to all to join for the 50th annual Bible Conference at Spring Hill Gospel Hall, Westbrook, ME Oct 10-12. Speakers expected are Donald Cox (QC), and Harold Smith (NS). Overnight accommodations available upon early request. **Contact:** Daniel F. Chick,



For 2008
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December 29th thru January 1st

Come stick your toes in the sand and enjoy excellent ministry from the Word each day. The conference features up to 6 hours of free time for fellowship with family or friends!

Speakers:



Mike Attwood
General Sessions



Bernard Osborne
General Sessions



Tim McNeal
Childrens Mtgs

Room Rates:

1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom
\$192.00	\$350.00	\$400.00

Commuter rate = \$25 / person, \$40 / couple, \$50 / family

REGISTER EARLY - SPACE IS LIMITED!

Register online: www.mbbibleconferences.org
or call Mark Hartley @ 919-452-4866

95 Maple Street, Westbrook, ME 04092, ph: 207-449-1492

FALL CONFERENCE IN OKLAHOMA

The believers at East Tulsa Bible Chapel, Tulsa, OK, are planning, Lord willing, a fall conference for the weekend of Oct 17-19. Joe Reese (ON) will be speaking at general sessions and to the men, Ann Reese to the women and Ken Miller to the children. **Contact:** Dan Moffitt email: danmoffitt@sbcglobal.net

BIBLE CONFERENCE IN LA

Held Nov 8-9 at 4256 West Congress St., Lafayette, LA, the conference begins Saturday at 3:00 PM, concluding with Sunday lunch. The expected speaker is John Bjorlie (MI). Special conference rates have been arranged at nearby Hampton Inn. ph: 337-236-6161. **Contact:** William O. Walker, 103 Robert Drive, Lafayette, LA, 70506-3241. ph: 337-232-6577 email: wowalker@bellsouth.net

BIBLE LANDS TOUR

Join Rex Trogdon Nov 10-21 for the Bible Lands Study Tour to Greece and Israel. Request a brochure today for the trip of a lifetime. **Contact:** Rex Trogdon ph: 704-843-9632 email: rextrogdon@carolina.rr.com

COMMENDATION

The elders at Bethel Gospel Chapel in New Liskeard, ON are pleased to announce the commendation of *Emily Hartford* to the full-time service of the Lord at Tyndale Bible Seminary near Amsterdam, Holland. Emily has been used of the Lord at Tyndale as an administrative assistant since July 2007 and will continue in this ministry as the Lord leads.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Camp Li-Lo-Li desires to fill the position of Camp Administrator. The camp is located in southwestern New York State. Applicant should have a local assembly commendation. Responsibilities include: promoting the camp's mission, managing a central office, interacting with governmental and accrediting agencies, guest group ministry, and communication with assemblies and individuals within camp's sphere of influence. **Contact:** Clyde Tyson, 3667 Spice Creek Road, Wheatfield NY 14120 ph: 716-693-1995 e-mail: heirlooms@verizon.net web: www.camp-li-lo-li.com



The Lodge at Camp Li-Lo-Li



Scenery in Cyprus

Logos School in Cyprus requires teachers for this school year at both primary and secondary levels. All inquiries should be sent to Gary Love. email: g.love@logos.ac.cy web: www.logos.ac.cy

As a result of a prison ministry ongoing for 9 years in the Apple Valley of Southern CA, the Crabb's have sensed the Lord's leading to begin a small Bible school for no more than 12 hand-picked parolees from across North America. These must be saved and indicate a developing reality of the true Christian life and have a desire to rise above the plagues of sin to live and walk with Christ. Help is requested to be part of this effort for Him. **Contact:** Doug Crabb email: goto@bigescape.info

Bethel Bible Camp, Woolwine, VA requires a maintenance man with mechanical aptitude. He will need to be commended by his home assembly. Lodging is provided. **Contact:** John Hand ph: 276-930-4289 e-mail: keptbyhim1936@va.net Bethel Bible Camp, P.O. Box 71, Woolwine, VA 24185

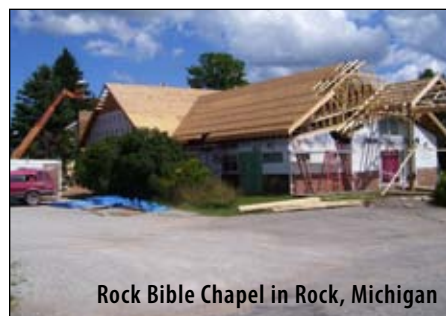
Parkside Ranch, located in Orford Quebec, Canada has a need for a full time cook, (single or couple). The cook position includes 8 weeks of summer camps with weekend and weekly groups during the year and the responsibility of ordering food. web: www.parksideranch.com email: registrar@parksideranch.com Fax to: 819-868-6730 c/o Mr. Dean Somers

ADDRESS CHANGE

Rex and Nancy Trogdon, 7200 Winslow Dr, Waxhaw, NC 28173-8012 ph: 704-843-9632 email: rextrogdon@carolina.rr.com nancytrogdon@carolina.rr.com

MYRTLE BEACH, SC RENTAL

A spacious 4 bedroom, 3 bathroom beach-front condo which sleeps 8-10 people, is available for rent on a weekly or monthly basis. Readers of "UPLOOK" will receive a 10% discount off the realtor's price. **Contact:** John Spyralatos spyralatos_condo5f@yahoo.gr



Rock Bible Chapel in Rock, Michigan

RENOVATION

Rock Bible Chapel, Rock MI, began a renovation in June of their building and the addition of a multi-purpose room and classrooms. After much prayer, it was decided to begin building and trust the Lord to supply the funds and workers so the Chapel can continue to reach the unsaved and encourage growth in the believers. The chapel is located in Upper MI on highway M-35, between Marquette and Escanaba. Visitors are welcome to come and fellowship. **Contact:** Mike Lepisto ph: 906-356-6346 email: mlepisto@chater.net web: www.rockbiblechapel.com



Join us...

**October 4-10, 2008
in Georgetown, ON**

FOR A SPECIAL OUTREACH!



WHAT IS HAPPENING?

A major gospel effort is planned for the near future as the Cross Canada Cruisers finish their five month trip across Canada. The plan is to spend one week, October 4-10, working with the believers at Halton Hills Bible Chapel and other Christians in reaching out to their community.

WHY AT THIS TIME?

Here is a great opportunity to participate in a gospel effort unlike anything Southern Ontario has seen in the recent past, as hundreds of believers gather to share the gospel.

WHY DO THIS?

- That the aroma of Christ will fill Georgetown and that God will be glorified.
- That the believers are strengthened as lives are transformed in serving the Lord.
- That the gospel goes out, saints are revived and people are saved.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

- Pray. Pray that God will be glorified, the believers encouraged and souls saved.
- Come. Book vacation time to spend the week sharing the good news of the gospel with others.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Specifics about the outreach: www.goodnewsgeorgetown.com

The Cross Canada Cruisers web site: www.crosscanadacruisers.com

About the assembly of Christians hosting the week: www.haltonhillsbiblechapel.com

Contact: **Haniel Ghezzi** at 905.877.9066 or hanielghezzi@hotmail.com

For the preaching of the cross ... is the power of God - 1 Corinthians 1:18



The Future of Israel

An assurance of God's faithfulness

It may be safely (and biblically) said that if the Lord does not carry out His plans for Israel, then there is no assurance of the fulfillment of anything else that He promised in the Bible.

Israel continues to dominate world headlines on an almost daily basis. For a small nation with a population of just over seven million, whose land area is about the same size as New Jersey, it holds a remarkable position in world affairs. Some of the brightest minds of Europe and North America have spent the better part of the past sixty years trying to devise a solution to the problems of this tiny democracy. At first glance, all of this attention seems unwarranted. Why is this country so important? One factor is the magnificent promises the Lord has made to His ancient people.

Of course, God's promises to biblical Israel do not justify everything going on in the modern state of Israel or its policies; nevertheless, it is clear that God has a plan for the Land and the Hebrew people.¹ This design has great implications which extend far beyond the borders of that nation. Furthermore, the Almighty's will for the Jews is tremendously important for the Gentile world as well. It may be safely (and biblically) said that if the Lord does not carry out His plans for Israel, then there is no assurance of the

fulfillment of anything else that He promised in the Bible. Thus, upon the fate of the Jews hinges the credibility of the sovereign God of the universe. Moreover, His usage of the Gentiles in connection with the Jews displays His incomparable wisdom and mercy.

Why doesn't Israel recognize Christ now?

Regrettably, Romans 9-11 has become a controversial part of the Bible. Leaving aside the theological polemic that often accompanies discussion of this passage, it is important to see its context in Romans. The preceding chapters explain the principles of the gospel with copious quotations from the Old Testament bolstering each point. The eighth chapter concludes by stating that nothing can separate the believer from God's love in Christ (v. 39). One can imagine the critic of the gospel countering: "If this gospel is according to God's plan, why don't more Jews believe it? If they are not saved, then why should Gentiles pay any heed to this message?" Moreover, the Gentile believers in Rome may have wondered why they should care about Israel. Chapters 9-11 answer these queries.

Paul responds by explaining the historical purposes of God with the nation of Israel. First, he points out the great privileges that Israel enjoys, including "*the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all...*" (Rom. 9:4-5). In spite of these great blessings, physical descent from Abraham is no guarantee of spiritual relationship with God. A survey of the patriarchal period shows that many of those associated with Abraham did not share his faith in Jehovah. It never was the case that all of those who physically descended from Abraham were saved (Rom. 9:6). Only the children of the promise were brought by faith into the promises that God made to the patriarch.



Sunrise over the Golan Heights in northern Israel

GOD'S BELLWETHER *continued*

The Gentiles receive God's mercy

In the matter of God's selection of tools, He chose to use Israel as His instrument in the world prior to the dawning of the church age. Hosea is referenced, envisioning the time when "Not my people" will become "My people" (Rom. 9:25-26). With what astonishment would the pious Jew read this prophecy and the succeeding quotation from Isaiah being applied to a remnant of Jews and Gentiles becoming righteous through faith! Yet this mercy is extended to those who do not stumble over Christ but through faith call on Him for salvation (Rom. 9:33; 10:9-13). What is more, by faith the Gentiles are brought into the service of God. These verses demonstrate that when salvation comes to Israel, it will be to a remnant that believes, instead of the unbelieving multitude. So it should not surprise anyone that in Paul's day, only a remnant believed. This has been the ordinary state of affairs throughout history and will be so again in the future.

Salvation in Christ through faith alone was the major obstacle to the Jews of Paul's day. They were passionate for the Law, and they sought to establish their own righteousness by keeping the commandments. They balked at the truth that "*Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth*" (Rom. 10:4). In keeping with the teaching of the first eight chapters, Paul argues that the gospel is the story of what Christ freely offers man, as opposed to human religious effort; it requires faith, not human works. One may suggest that maybe it was just ignorance on the part of these pious Jews. This is not so, however, for the message was proclaimed to them, but they did not obey it (the citations from Isaiah affirm this; cf. Rom. 10:16 with Isa. 53:1). Therefore, God turned to a different tactic: provoking Israel to jealousy by extending His mercy to the Gentiles.

Man's failure employed in the extension of divine mercy

Rather than an interruption of God's plan, the gospel of Christ with its inclusion of the Gentiles is actually a broader fulfillment of it. The current unbelief of the Jews affords the Almighty the opportunity of saving many Gentiles. This does not rule out, however, the future fulfillment of the promises made to the patriarchs. Even now, Paul points out that there is "*a remnant according to the election of grace*" (Rom. 11:5). In the future, this remnant will expand to include the



Boris Katsman

Tabor Valley, Israel

beleaguered nation of Israel at the end of the Tribulation: "*And so all Israel shall be saved*" (Rom. 11:26). It is the ingenuity of the Lord to use Israel's failure as the means of showing mercy to the Gentiles, who were once "*strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, without God in the world*" (Eph. 2:12). He can then use these same strangers to turn the Jews back to Himself through jealousy as they behold His gracious dealings with those who previously were afar off.

This blessing should not breed haughtiness in non-Jewish hearts, for Israel will one day reclaim center stage in the dealings of God. Whereas, currently, the numerical majority of Christians are Gentiles, during the Tribulation, believing Israelites will comprise the bulk of believers. God is not forgetful of His promises to Israel. What is more, the fulfillment of them will entail blessings that involve more than just one ethnic group; when God fulfills His promises they will encompass the entire world. The Scripture sums up this expansively gracious program in these words: "*For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all*" (Rom. 11:30-32). Thus, God's promises are faithful and true, and His credibility is beyond question. Whether Jews or Gentiles, believers of every epoch can rejoice in the steadfast mercy of the covenant-keeping Lord. 🕒

Endnote

1 Some well-meaning Western Christians equate present-day Israel with the prophecies regarding restored Israel. It should be noted, however, that many of Israel's citizens reject the notion of God, let alone the Messianic claims of the Lord Jesus. Someday, a believing remnant will be restored to the Lord (e.g. Zech. 12:9-14.) Until then, we should not link our affections and agreement to any particular regime in the state of Israel. Like every other nation, they do good things as well as bad things. Also, like other nations, they are not in the habit of seeking God's opinion for their current policies.

The Challenge of Preterism

What if the Lord came and nobody noticed?

According to preterist doctrine ... the Millennium is going on now, and the new creation has already begun.

Preterism, which comes from the Latin word, *praeteritus*, meaning “past” or “gone by,” is a position held by a growing number of evangelicals who claim that most, if not all, biblical predictions have already been fulfilled in conjunction with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Futurism holds that future events will yet be fulfilled, including the rapture of the church, the seven-year Tribulation period, the second coming of Christ to judge the earth, His reign on earth for 1000 years, and the final eternal state.

Among preterists, there are three points of view: mild, moderate, and extreme. Mild preterism holds that events in the book of the Revelation were fulfilled within the first 300 years, as God judged Israel and Rome. Moderate preterists believe that nearly all prophecy was fulfilled in the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Extreme preterists believe that all Bible prophecy was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, with no future second coming or bodily resurrection.

Preterist prooftexts

Matthew 10:23 “But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.” Preterists understand this to mean that before the disciples could cover the boundaries of Palestine, Jesus would return in judgment by means of the Roman army in A.D. 70. The reality is that when Israel nationally rejected the message of deliverance, Jesus turned to individuals with the gospel. The Lord was looking past His pending death and resurrection to a time of tribulation that would culminate in Israel’s acceptance of their King—a necessary occurrence before His return to earth.

Matthew 16:27-28 “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom.” Because Jesus indicated some “shall not taste death” but would see Him come in His kingdom, preterists contend this to be further proof that He returned in A.D. 70. However, futurists believe this occurred on the Mount of Transfiguration when Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the top of a mountain “and was transfigured before them,” His face shining as bright as the sun and His clothing impeccably white (Mt. 17:4). Peter later referred to this experience as being “eyewitnesses of His majesty” (2 Pet. 1:16), indicating that the transfiguration was a representation of how Christ would appear in His second coming. Two distinct events are referred to in Matthew 16:27 and 28. Verse 27 refers to the future second coming of Christ, while verse 28, separated from verse 27 by the phrase, “Verily I say unto you,” was fulfilled at the transfiguration only a week after Christ told of these events.

Matthew 24:34 “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” Both futurists and preterists recognize the Olivet discourse as the context of Israel’s rejection of their Messiah. Both agree the destruction of the temple described in Matthew 24:2, “There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down,” was carried out by the Romans in A.D. 70. However, at this point futurists and preterists diverge in their understanding of prophetic events. Because Matthew 24:34 indicates “all these things” will take place before “this generation”



Shane Siebelberger

The Arch of Titus at the Forum of Rome celebrated the Roman triumph over the Jewish Revolt of AD 66-73.

NO BLESSED HOPE? *continued*

A relief visible on the inside wall of the arch depicts the Romans taking spoils from the Second Temple in Jerusalem.



ends, preterists hold that all other events, including false messiahs, persecutions, famines, earthquakes, wars, false prophets, and increased iniquity, were also fulfilled in the days surrounding A.D. 70 (see Mt. 24:4-14). Futurists understand “this generation” is determined by the timing of the events described as “all these things.” In other words, Jesus is saying that the generation alive when “all these things” begin to happen will still be alive when they are completed. As Dr. Darrell Bock says in his notes on Luke 9:51-24:53, “the generation that sees the beginning of the end, also sees its end.”

Preterists also claim that references in Revelation to events “shortly taking place” or “occurring quickly” prove the author expected prophecy to be fulfilled sooner, rather than later. However, an examination of the word *tachos*, translated “quickly,” shows that it can be used to mean “soon” or “shortly,” as applied by preterists, or it can be used to mean “quickly” or “suddenly,” describing not *when* but *how* Christ will return. John Walvoord, in his book, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, explains it this way: “The idea is not that the event may occur soon, but that when it does, it will be sudden.” Even if we understand the word “quickly” to mean “soon,” we must also remember the words of Peter in 2 Peter 3:8, “*But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*”

One of the glaring errors of preterism is the selection of a relatively few Bible passages to support its position, while ignoring many other Bible passages that clearly point to a futuristic interpretation of eschatology. Preterists often point to three passages in Matthew (10:23; 16:28; 24:34), and to three terms of “timing” used in Revelation (“soon,” “near,” and “I come”), to prove that events prophesied in the New Testament were fulfilled close to the date the actual prophesies were given. But the preterist’s approach forces a strained interpretation of vast numbers of Bible passages, while avoiding obvious questions such as, “When during the historical siege and destruction of Jerusalem (Mt. 23:39), did Israel look to the Lord Jesus and say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord?’”

Alarming implications

According to preterist doctrine, God has no future plan for Israel, blessings meant originally for Israel have been transferred to the church, the great tribulation took place at the fall of Israel, the Antichrist is a term that describes

apostasy prior to the fall of Jerusalem, the Beast of Revelation was a symbol of Nero, there is no separation between the rapture and the second coming, the millennium is going on now, and the new creation has already begun.

The viewpoint of preterism that prophetic events have been fulfilled forces a conclusion that much of the New Testament applies only to believers living between the death of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Consequently, believers living in the church age are without Scripture instructing them how to live victoriously in Christ while waiting for His return. An example is Titus 2:12-13. Most preterists believe the expectation of Titus 2:13, “*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,*” refers to the coming of Christ in A.D. 70. This means that it was a blessed hope only for those living before the destruction of Jerusalem. A potentially disastrous implication is that the connecting admonition of verse 12 to “*live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*” must also refer to the age ending in A.D. 70. Preterism leaves the church without anchor or rudder.

According to preterists, the binding of Satan for 1000 years, as described in Revelation 20:1-3, has already taken place. If this is true, then commands pertaining to our spiritual warfare such as “*resist the devil and he will flee from you*” (Jas. 4:7) and the explanation given in Ephesians 6:12 do not apply to believers in the church today. If Ephesians 6:12 does not apply to believers today, then neither does verse 13 which says, “*take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*” Preterism leaves the church without weapon or victory.

Remembering and anticipating

The Bible certainly instructs the church of Jesus Christ to look back in remembrance to what Christ has accomplished on the cross, but the Bible also encourages the church to look forward in joyful anticipation of His return. Preterism offers no such hope. 🔗

Thomas Ice, Has Bible Prophecy Already Been Fulfilled? (Conservative Theological Journal, 2000)

Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), p.1691-92

Randall Price, *Preterism* (Israel My Glory, Jan.-Feb. 2005) Pre-trib Research Center: <http://www.pre-trib.org>



Clear Thinking about Conflicting Views

“In understanding be men” (1 Cor. 14:20)

When it comes to the study of last things (eschatology), there are three major views. All three revolve around the return of Jesus Christ in relation to the millennium (Latin *mille* “thousand” plus *annus* “year”).

Premillennialism is the belief that the second coming of Christ will occur before His literal reign of one thousand years on earth (Rev. 20:1-6). After His coming in power and glory, Christ will personally reign from Jerusalem, producing a time of peace, prosperity, and righteousness. Premillennialists see the present era as the church age, which is a separate and distinct work in God’s plan from that of His dealings with Israel.

Amillennialism teaches that Christ’s millennial kingdom extends from His resurrection to the time of His second coming at the end of this age. At no time will Christ reign on the earth in Jerusalem. There is no literal thousand-year reign. National Israel has been permanently rejected by the Lord and the church has taken her place and inherited her promises. After the second coming of Christ, there will be a final general resurrection and single judgment of all mankind.

Postmillennialism is the view that Christ will return at the end of an extended period of righteousness and prosperity (the millennium). Like the amillennialist, the postmillennialist sees the current age as the kingdom of God. However, they see the reign of Christ not just in the hearts of believers today but as affecting society. Postmillennialists believe that since the kingdom was established at Christ’s first coming, it is currently being expanded through the preaching of the gospel, and, some would say, social effort, until an overwhelming majority, though not all, will be converted to Christ, issuing in a golden age on earth.

In recent years, a fourth viewpoint, **preterism**, has gained popularity. Preterism teaches that most, if not all, biblical predictions have already been fulfilled in conjunction with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Some preterists go so far as to maintain that the second coming of Christ occurred at that time. 📌



The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times

HOW PREVIOUS DISPENSATIONS ARE FULFILLED IN THE MILLENNIUM

INNOCENCE	CONSCIENCE	HUMAN GOVERNMENT	PROMISE	LAW	GRACE
Edenic conditions with Satan bound	“I will put a new spirit within them” (Ezek. 11:19) “They shall all know Me” (Jer. 31:34)	“The government will rest on His shoulders” (Isa. 9:6)	Israel inhabiting the entire land without opposition as chief of the nations (Gen. 12:2-3)	“I will put My law within them” (Jer. 31:33); millennial sacrifices (Jer. 33:14-18)	Christ glorified; the church reigning with Christ; indwelling of the Spirit (Ezek. 36:24ff)



The House of the Rising Son

The reigns of David and Solomon

Types are extremely useful to the student of the Word in understanding the greater truths they represent. To fully understand the coming kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, it's helpful to examine the respective kingdoms of David and his son Solomon. David is a type of Christ in His first coming to the present, while Solomon typifies Christ in His second coming. However, as with all types, they pale in comparison to their fulfillment in Christ.

Scripture reminds us of the fact that Solomon could neither reign in peace nor build the temple until David's enemies had first been subdued (1 Ki. 5:2-5). Likewise, the Lord Jesus will not reign here on earth nor dwell physically among His people until His enemies are made His footstool (Ps. 110:1).

The King disowned

Despite the fact that David was anointed to be king, he was never fully accepted by his people or even his own family. When the exiled king returned to Jerusalem, Israel declared, "*We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse*" (2 Sam. 20:1). This reminds us of Israel's rejection of the Son of David, who "*came unto His own, and His own received Him not*" (Jn. 1:11). Only when Israel is refined through the fire of the tribulation will they look upon Him whom they pierced and mourn "*as one mourneth for his only son.*" The Lord will then declare them His people, and they will declare, "*The Lord is my God*" (Zech. 12:10; 13:9).

The King at war

David never saw rest from his enemies in his lifetime. Nevertheless, his bloodshed paved the way for Solomon's peaceful reign. In a feat greater than David's, the Lord "*made peace through the blood of His cross*" (Col. 1:20). David remains buried in Jerusalem, but praise God that his Son was raised up to sit upon David's throne (Acts 2:29f)! Upon His return to earth, there will

be a reckoning of His remaining enemies. He will come "*in flaming fire taking vengeance upon them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (2 Thes. 1:8). Have you obeyed the gospel?

"The Lord Jesus will not reign here on earth nor dwell physically among His people until His enemies are made His footstool."

The Prince of Peace


Solomon, whose name means "peaceful," was given rest by the Lord from all his enemies. Isaiah, prophesying 250 years *after* Solomon died, spoke of a greater Son of David who will have the government upon His shoulder and whose name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty

God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). Unlike Solomon, Christ's glorious throne will be established forever (1 Chron. 17:12, 14).

Building the house of God

Solomon built the first temple, a place of worship where the Lord promised to dwell in the midst of His people (1 Ki. 9:1-9). Nonetheless, through the rebellion of Solomon and his descendants, Solomon's temple only stood 400 years before it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Ki. 25:8f).

Presently, the church is God's holy temple (Eph. 2:21f). The second coming of the Lord Jesus will see the temple rebuilt in Jerusalem and the glory of the Lord return. He will then dwell in the midst of His people (Ezek. 43:7).

The blessings of that coming kingdom extend to the church who will reign with the King on earth (Rev. 5:11). We've seen the pattern of David and Solomon establish the sequence of events for this coming Kingdom. Nonetheless, the types themselves fall short of the Antitype! Due to David's moral failures and Solomon's idolatry, they could not measure up to God's standard. But the Root and the Offspring of David will restore what they took away! Indeed, "*a greater than Solomon is here*" (Mt. 12:42)! 

—HANNIEL GHEZZI

Amillennialism: An Overview

Will Christ reign on David's throne?

How will God fulfill the prophecies concerning Messiah's second coming? The same way He fulfilled those concerning His first coming: literally.

Ever since the publication of Hank Hanegraaff's book, *Apocalypse Code*, the evangelical world has been reminded once again of the great divide that exists between those who hold to an amillennial view of Scripture and those who do not. In his book, Hanegraaff, the so-called "Bible answer man," hurls a blistering diatribe toward a number of premillennialists, including Tim LaHaye, author of the highly popular *Left Behind* book series. He charges him with blasphemy because he differs with him regarding the course of future events. Hanegraaff, a preterist, believes that most of the events of the Book of Revelation were fulfilled in A.D. 70 when the Roman commander Titus conquered Jerusalem, destroying its temple. LaHaye, on the other hand, is a futurist who takes the position that most of the events of the Book of Revelation are yet to be fulfilled. Perhaps the only thing that Hanegraaff's book did accomplish was to accentuate the difference between the amillennial and premillennial viewpoints—a difference so wide that one Christian would have the audacity to claim that another brother is guilty of blasphemy.

reference to it six different times and that both the Old and New Testaments allude to this great event. Instead, they claim that this period is currently being fulfilled *symbolically* and that much of the Bible should be interpreted as such. They hold that Christ's kingdom is in heaven where He is reigning now and that, when He comes again, it will *not* be to usher in a literal kingdom, but, instead, it will be to bring about an end to world history, precipitating a general judgment of believers and non-believers alike. According to this view, God has permanently cast away His ancient people Israel because they rejected their Messiah, the Lord Jesus. Therefore, the promises made to them have a fulfillment in the church, which has now replaced Israel. For this reason, this view has come to be known as "replacement theology" or "supersessionism" since, from their standpoint, the church has superseded Israel, having become an historic continuation of it, inheriting many of its promises. Consequently, they hold that the promises to Israel in the past have no bearing upon the nation today, which is nothing more than an ethnic group among the nations of the world. In short, amillennialists say that national Israel no longer has a place in God's divine plan and program.



Engraving of King Solomon by Gustave Doré

What is amillennialism?

Despite the fact that it has been around for centuries, amillennialism continues to grow in certain theological circles. Without question, it is the predominant end time view of most of non-evangelical Christendom. As the name implies, amillennialists believe that there is no biblical substantiation for a future, literal thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, despite the fact that Revelation 20 makes

How does premillennialism differ from amillennialism?

In contrast, premillennialists argue that the Bible clearly presents a literal, future thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. It sees in the Old Testament promises made to Israel, especially the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants, the basis for making such a claim. Premillennialism teaches that when Christ returns again, it will be in two stages: first,

SYMBOL OR SUBSTANCE? *continued*

when He comes *for* His church just prior to a seven year period of tribulation on earth (1 Thes. 4:13-17) and second, when He returns in glory *with* His church just before His millennial reign. Premillennialists reject the idea that the church has replaced Israel but rather see a distinction between the two, and they staunchly maintain that God has a separate plan and program for each. They claim that the basis for their convictions is a literal interpretation of Scripture, advocating that the Bible should always be interpreted at face value unless the context and common sense dictate otherwise. Herein lies the fundamental reason for the difference between these two main theological positions: whether or not the Bible should characteristically be interpreted literally or symbolically.

Where did amillennialism come from?

Amillennialism first emerged between the second and third centuries A.D. Origen was apparently the first prominent Christian who taught the concept of allegorization or the figurative interpretation of Scripture. This concept was further promulgated by his protégé, Dionysius of Alexandria. However, the main person credited with developing this school of thought was Augustine of Hippo. Up to that point, premillennial thinking was the overriding conviction of the early church. Certainly it had been with the disciples who had asked the Lord the question just prior to His ascension, “*Is this the time that You will restore the kingdom to Israel?*” (Acts 1:6). Further persecution under the Roman Empire only solidified the conviction of the early Christians that there was a bright and glorious age yet to come when Christ would personally return to earth to establish His worldwide kingdom in fulfillment of prophetic Scripture, thus alleviating the severe persecution experienced under Rome. But with the so-called “conversion” to Christianity of the Roman Emperor Constantine, who united the “church” with the world, that persecution was immediately lifted, creating a false impression in the minds of many that Christ’s kingdom had, in some way, arrived, even though

He was not present. This event, coupled with the underlying shift to the allegorical

approach to Bible interpretation, contributed to the development and acceptance of amillennial thinking. Though evidence exists that premillennialism has always remained the firm conviction of many Bible-believing Christians, its prominence waned from the medieval period through the Reformation, as amillennialism increased and became the dominant view of Christendom.

Amillennialism and the Abrahamic Covenant

It cannot be overstated how important the Abrahamic Covenant is in understanding God’s ultimate plans and purposes in the world or how it invalidates the amillennial viewpoint. It is foundational to many of the other covenants of Scripture and to the unfolding of biblical revelation. When God called Abram from the Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. 12:1-3), He promised him seven different things: 1) He would make him a great nation, 2) He would bless him, 3) He would make His name great, 4) Abram would be a blessing to others, 5) He would bless those who would bless Abram, 6) He would curse him who cursed Abram, and 7) all the families of the earth would be blessed through Abram. What God meant and how this would be accomplished are further explained and expanded upon in subsequent chapters. In time, God did, indeed, make of Abram a great nation and He did bless him, both spiritually and materially. He did make His name great and make him a blessing to others, blessing those who blessed him and cursing those who cursed him. All these things God did literally. Consequently, is not unreasonable to assume that God’s expanded promises to Abraham would be fulfilled literally.

In Genesis 13:14-18, God specifically prom-



It cannot be overstated how important the Abrahamic Covenant is in understanding God’s ultimate plans and purposes in the world...

ised a land for Abram's descendents forever. In Genesis 15, in answer to Abram's shrinking faith, God again promised a land to Abram (v. 7) and confirmed it unilaterally (vv. 8-17), thus making it unconditional, according to grace and not Abram's own performance. Then in verses 18-21, God further outlined the dimensions of the land and how it would go to his descendants forever. Finally, in Genesis 17, this covenant is referred to as an everlasting covenant (vv. 7, 19) and the land as an everlasting possession (v. 8), confirming that these would always remain in effect, come what may. God stated five times "I will" when He first gave this promise and afterwards confirmed it with an oath (Gen. 22:16). God confirmed that it would come through Isaac and not Ishmael (Gen. 17:19-21; 26:3-5) and eventually through Jacob (Gen. 28:13-14) and not Esau, further substantiating that the literal, everlasting promises made to Abraham ultimately flow down to Israel. Years later, in Egypt, God remembered the covenant that He had made to them (Ex. 2:24), thus validating that these everlasting promises literally applied to Israel. Knowing their future and eventual failure to maintain a faithful witness through the centuries, God further stated in Deuteronomy 30:3 that He would have compassion on them and eventually bring them back to the land—a land whose dimensions were given in Genesis 15 but has never been fully occupied, even in the days of King Solomon. Furthermore, when God made a covenant with King David (2 Sam. 7), He promised him a place for Israel where they would be planted "to move no more" (v. 10), verifying that Israel had never yet entered into the reality of this covenant even in the days of King David. In addition, God unconditionally promised to David a royal dynasty and a throne that would last forever. David understood it to be a literal "forever" promise (vv. 18-29) for which he gave thanks to God. Scripture substantiates that this would be fulfilled by the Lord Jesus, both prophetically (Isa. 9:6-7) and historically (Lk. 1:31-33).

How does amillennialism square with Scripture?

Quite simply, it doesn't. Because of their symbolic approach to interpreting Scripture, amillennialists fail to see the promises that God made to Abraham and David as literal and unconditional. Instead, they predicate the keeping of these covenants upon Israel's

faithfulness rather than upon God's own inviolable will and character. They disregard the weight of the word "forever" as stated many times by God and erroneously maintain that these promises were temporary for the nation and ultimately transferred to the church. They falsely conclude that God has permanently cast away Israel, even though Romans 11:1 clearly affirms the contrary when the apostle Paul, himself a Jew, clearly proclaims with divine authority, "*I say then, hath God cast away His people? God forbid!*"

Amillennialism also fails to see the distinction between the church and Israel, in spite of the direct and indirect teaching of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Paul's reference to "*the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God*" (1 Cor. 10:32) is prima facie evidence of this truth. The fact that the church is referred to as a "new man" (Eph. 2:15) and not, as some erroneously conclude, the "Israel of God," further substantiates a distinction, as does the description of the city four square in Revelation 21 whose gates are named after the tribes of Israel and foundations after the twelve apostles—a powerful proof that God makes a distinction between the two and will throughout eternity! Consequently, amillennialism leads to inconsistency in the understanding and the application of the Word of God and forfeits a deep appreciation of how God will yet restore the wayward nation through His own wisdom and power (Rom. 11:33). It can lend itself to an anti-Semitic attitude among those who feel that Israel deserves rejection by God.

There are many more important aspects of amillennial teaching that could be considered. But God indeed has a plan and a program for the nation of Israel which He will bring about in the course of time. He also has a separate plan and program for the church as He calls many people out of the world (Acts 15:13-14). Understanding God's work in the world today toward Israel and through the church underscores again the significance of the words of 2 Timothy 2:15: "*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.*" 📖

But God indeed has a plan and a program for the nation of Israel which He will bring about in the course of time.

The Age to Come

Light out of darkness

The phrase “the age to come” (*aiōn mellō*) occurs three times in the New Testament. To what age does it refer? There are only two options: the millennium or eternity. It cannot be a reference to eternity, because one of the passages speaks of men sinning. Therefore, we understand it to be a reference to the coming earthly reign of the Lord Jesus. Recognizing this not only enhances our understanding of the millennium but also sheds light on some difficult passages of Scripture.

The unpardonable sin “*And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in the age to come.*” (Mt. 12:32)

Much interest (and, occasionally, worry!) is generated by this verse. What is the unpardonable sin? Can someone commit it today? Examining the context of the verse gives us the answers. Christ was not speaking of some common event that might occur at any time. The Pharisees were in the physical presence of the Son of God and observed Him performing undeniable miracles. This, in and of itself, sets apart their circumstances from any circumstances a person could be in today. But they took it one step further. Their response to Christ’s miracles was not confusion, debate, or even mild unbelief. Instead, they attributed the miracles to the devil himself.

This sin cannot be committed today because the Lord Jesus is not physically present. This is why He said, “*either in this age, or in the age to come.*” Because He was speaking of the two times when He would be physically present: during His incarnation and during the millennium.

Absolute supremacy “*Which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that*

is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.” (Eph. 1:20f)

Christ has been exalted to the highest place. This is not a temporary arrangement. It is God’s design that at all times—including the coming golden age of earth—Christ should have the preeminence.

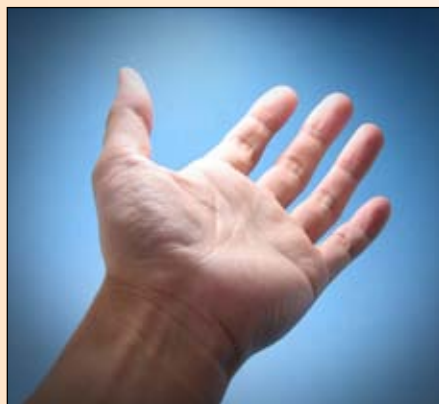
Hebrews 6 “*...and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come*” (Heb. 6:5).

Here we find our phrase at the center of one of the most debated passages of the New Testament. Who is being described in these verses? Many Christians believe the passage is speaking of genu-

ine believers and then conclude that it is possible for a Christian to lose his salvation.

A more complete list of reasons why we know this passage isn’t referring to actual believers will have to await a future column. But, for now, let us simply consider the significance of our phrase in this passage. The people of Hebrews 6:4-6 had “*tasted...the powers of the age to come.*” When Christ was on earth, He performed miracles and signs that gave people a taste of what the millennium will be like. He cured diseases. He calmed the elements. Wild animals were tame in His presence. He performed, on a small scale, what He will one day enact worldwide. Those who were eyewitnesses of His signs tasted the powers of the age to come.

It is those people who were warned against turning their backs on Christ. Similar to the unpardonable sin, the author is not referring to common conditions that any person at any time might find himself in. This is a warning to those who had the rare privilege of being in the physical presence of Messiah and observing His wonderful signs first-hand—conditions that are not possible today, but will be possible again in the millennium. —JAMES MARTIN



Israel's Ultimate King

"Give us a king!"

"And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, 'Jesus of Nazareth The King of the Jews.'"

As the age of the judges came to a close, the political, social, and religious situation in Israel was chaotic. Since the death of Joshua and those that immediately followed him, the people of Israel had been alternately prospering and impoverished, free and enslaved, led and misled. With the last of the judges, Samuel, growing elderly and his sons not following in his ways, the heart of the people of Israel cried out for an effective leader. The end of the book of Judges mentions three great dearths in the land: no king, no magistrate, and no deliverer.

We three kings

The people of Israel declared that they wanted to be like the nations around them. With their eyes off of God and their spiritual condition in decay, the world began to look good. It has ever been this way amongst God's people. But it is never His mind for His people to be like earthlings around them. However, Israel's request was repeated with urgency until God granted them what they wanted. They got as their king a man named Saul. He was physically attractive, but his heart was not right with God. His reign was characterized by constant conflict and by distortion of Israel's relationship with Jehovah. God therefore took the kingdom away from Saul and declared that He would seek out a man whose heart was right.

God found His man in a shepherd lad named David. Ruled by David, Israel prospered and grew strong. The age and reign of David became the great Old Testament example of the people of God living and prospering while ruled by a godly leader. His reign proved

that God's people could prosper even in times of conflict if only they depended upon Jehovah. When King David died, peace with neighboring nations had been established; the kingdom was at rest as Solomon came to the throne. Solomon's reign exemplified the prosperity and riches that the people of God enjoy when their surrounding enemies are subdued by the power of a godly monarch. While David is the picture of the king in his conflict, Solomon is the picture of the king in his glory.

But Solomon ultimately decayed spiritually. He was initially privileged to build a temple for Jehovah as the great centerpiece of divine worship in Jerusalem. Then, he went astray. Influenced by the nations around him, his human weakness was exposed. The kingdom began to deteriorate and was ultimately divided. A few generations later, Israel's throne was vacated when the final king of the Old Testament era was carried into exile in Babylon.

The rejected King

Following many generations, a true Son of David was born in Bethlehem. He came unto His own people, but His own received Him not (Jn. 1:11). He lived and worked in quiet humility, yet never denied that He was truly David's Son and heir. Toward the end of His earthly ministry, this unrecognized King allowed Himself once to be revealed as the proper occupant of Israel's throne. He rode into the kingly city via the King's Gate, a gate soon thereafter sealed up. Never since has a king passed through it. People thronged Him and cried, "*Hosanna in the highest*," calling out to Him as the Son of David. They declared, "*Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!*" They laid garments and palm branches in His way. They escorted Him to the temple



The Citadel of David in Old Jerusalem

SERVANT SOVEREIGN *continued*

The Golden Gate on
the eastern side of
Jerusalem.



of Jehovah inside the city which He then cleansed of all that was impure. This was a glimpse of His future glory as Israel's coming and rightful Messiah and King.

But, within a few hours, the population of the city rejected Him. Their tone completely changed. When asked by Pilate whether He was the King of the Jews, Jesus readily assented that He was. But His subjects cried out that He should be crucified. They declared that they had no king but Caesar. They robed Him in ridicule, crowned Him with thorns, and gave Him a mocking reed as symbol of His rule. They nailed Him to a Gentile cross, and it is noted that a sign was placed over His head which identified Him as "Jesus of Nazareth, The King of the Jews." There He died, Israel's King—crucified. Unregenerate mankind has never again laid eyes on that King. Most are unaware that He went back to heaven and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High. There, angels and principalities and powers are subject unto Him (1 Pet. 3:22). He was never defeated. He is now the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Meanwhile, Israel has come full circle. In the days when they first yearned for a king, there was no king in Israel. They were a nation essentially leaderless. Their spiritual poverty was so deep that they yearned to be as the nations around them. That is exactly where Israel is today. Her throne is empty. While the remains of King David lie in state in his capital city, the true meaning of that great king is lost to the consciousness of his subjects. Kingless, astray, struggling to accommodate the passions and purposes of the nations around them, Israel today places great pride in being one of the "family of nations." Presently, they have no temple. There is no true worship of Jehovah in the national sense. The nation gropes in its blindness.

The King of glory

But, her King is coming back! The hour approaches when Israel will at last reach the end of its desperation. With two-thirds of its national population destroyed (Zech. 13:8-9), with enemies overwhelming it on every side, with the brief era of the false prophet and false shepherd coming to an end, Israel will at last repent. The people will mourn for the King they crucified. He will come to deliver them. In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, in regal and glorious splendor, He will arrive at the Mount of Olives.

Nations will recognize the wonder of the Creator who is eternally the God of the Universe. He will assume the throne of Israel and establish His earthly kingdom for an initial period of one thousand years.

In the days of His reign, Israel will not be like the nations around her. Rather, those nations will bring their glory and honor to Jerusalem to worship the King who is in residence there (Zech. 14:16). Sin will be restrained, although not eliminated. Via His people, reigning over the earth with Him, every corner of the realm will be subject to His righteous and unalterable reign. Earth's deserts will bloom. The world will prosper. The weather will pose no threat to mankind. Social order will be maintained. Peace will prevail. The throne of the Lord shall be like a fiery flame and all other thrones will be cast down (Dan. 7:9-12). Thousands shall minister unto Him. Ten thousand times ten thousands (the church?) shall stand before Him (Dan. 7:10). Every eye shall see Him. Every tongue will confess Him.

This period of our Lord's reign will be different from His eternal reign over the new earth, which will follow the final conflict between sinners and God. All that would oppose Him will be held down, including Satan, who will be imprisoned for one thousand years. But it will be a period during which the restless and wicked heart of man will still be called upon to make choice between God and evil. When tempted for a final time, at the end of a millennium of wondrous and benevolent rule, vast numbers of mankind will once again follow the blandishments of Satan. They will rush to the banner of the evil one and will suffer the ultimate and eternal destruction of every Christ-rejecter of all time (Rev. 19:19-21; 20:1-5). Time itself will end with that great event. That will be the final stroke of the great victory won at Calvary, when the King put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The King will establish His sovereign rule, never to be assailed by evil again.

This one thousand year reign is a part of Earth's history, as measured in time. It is not part of the eternal condition. It is a dispensation during which Christ is to reign as the Son of David over His earthly people, Israel. It is the period during which Israel, after centuries of wandering and suffering in rebellion against Him, will be restored to earthly glory and prominence, becoming established as Earth's most prominent nation, under the rule of her rightful King. 🕉

The Rise of Postmillennialism

Is the world getting better and better?

“Significant to note is how one’s prophetic view can affect one’s societal view and purpose in life as well as lead to doctrinal aberrancy.”

Of the three main views concerning the millennium, postmillennialism is the most recent. There is no trace of anything in the first two or three centuries of the church which could be classified as postmillennialism. The early church expected the return of Christ before a millennium on earth.

Daniel Whitby (1638-1725) is credited with the rise of postmillennialism. Yet it really didn’t gain momentum until the 1800’s. Optimism about the progress of the gospel caused a flare-up in postmillennial thinking. As the gospel spread around the world in what is called “the modern missionary movement,” verses such as Matthew 24:14, “*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come*” were interpreted by some as reaching fulfillment.

However, postmillennialism almost died out after two world wars left only a handful of advocates. John Walvoord wrote in 1959, “In general it is fair to say that postmillennialism is not a current issue in theology.”¹

Postmillennialism rebounds

The last 30 years have witnessed a renewed emphasis on postmillennialism. There are three areas that have helped to fuel the resurgence of postmillennial thinking.

1. Theological: Dominion (or Kingdom) Theology:

The early 1980’s saw the meteoric rise in what is termed the charismatic movement. Within this movement is the viewpoint that God has called the believer to “take dominion.” Peace, prosperity, health and wealth, and social change are believed to be the inherent right and responsibility of believers as children of the kingdom. One can easily see how this fits with postmillennial thinking. The emphasis

on the continuation of miraculous, revelatory sign gifts causes most charismatics to be anti-dispensational in their interpretation of Scripture. Oddly enough, however, many, if not most, within the movement are premillennial in their belief regarding Christ’s return.

2. Political: Right-wing evangelicalism:

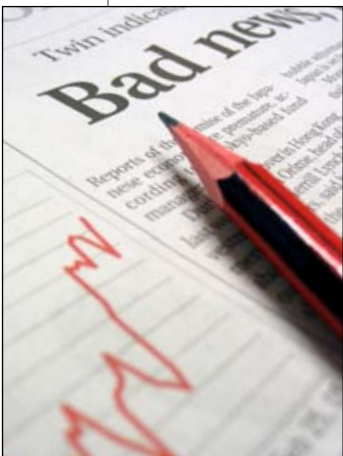
In America, the 1980’s also saw the rise of what is termed “right-wing political evangelicalism.” The rapid erosion of societal morality was seen in part as stemming from ungodly legislation. Concerned with electing righteous rulers and living in a righteous nation, the “religious right” has had significant impact on the political landscape. This group’s agenda includes the preservation of “Christian” society by political means as well as prayer.

3. Societal: The homeschool movement: This is neither a blanket criticism of homeschooling nor an attempt to paint all with the same brush. The writer and his wife have homeschooled their children at various stages in their educational development. However, if we are not careful, a social agenda can dovetail with certain fallacious interpretive views.

Concern over both academic and moral decline in the public school system drove many people, the vast majority of whom are professing Christians, to educate their children themselves. Separation from what are considered ungodly influences lends itself to utopian thinking. There is a desire for a righteousness that permeates societal and political life as an “ideal” environment in which to raise children.

A step further

These views also dovetail with Christian Reconstructionism.² Christian Reconstructionism is against state-run schools, promotes



LIKE MEN THAT WAIT *continued*

the “Christianizing” of society through establishment of the Mosaic law, and is rabid in its anti-dispensationism. The Christian Reconstruction movement of the last three decades has been the primary catalyst for the recent resurgence of postmillennialism. The father of this movement, Rousas J. Rushdoony, said, “I hold to postmillennialism because...the Bible tells me all things shall be put under Christ’s feet before the end.”

The brand of postmillennialism espoused by the Reconstructionists differs from classic postmillennialism. The older form of postmillennialism placed its hope in the gospel changing the world and “bringing in the kingdom.” Christian Reconstructionism has at its core theonomy, or living under God’s Law. It teaches that not only is the Christian sanctified by the Law (Galatians 3:1-4 refutes this), but every aspect of society is to be brought under the Mosaic Law. They see the prophecies of a visible Israelite theocratic kingdom as a blueprint for all nations. The abolition of democracy and the reinstatement of slavery are only some of the radical views they actually propose for society.

Once considered an eccentric, marginal viewpoint, this view has become one of considerable influence. It has been called the dominant system of thought in the religious right in America. Its chief proponents have been frequent guests on many religious television shows.

Postmillennialism rejected

We must ask ourselves if this system can be supported by Scripture. Another stated, “Its advocates have not been able to meet the challenge...to produce one Scripture which teaches a millennium before the advent of Christ, or that teaches an advent of Christ after the millennium.”³

1. Spiritualizing method of interpretation: The parables of Matthew 13 are interpreted by postmillenarians as presenting the progress of the gospel and the triumph of the power of God over evil. The mustard seed becomes a great tree, speaking of the growth of the kingdom of God. The leaven is the gospel and spreads to convert the whole world. Postmillennialism is based on the figurative interpretation of prophecy which permits wide freedom in finding the meaning of difficult passages.

Yet, the Lord’s main point in these parables is to show us that evil would not only exist until He returns, but to “let both grow”—that our purpose is not to try and rid the world of evil (Mt. 13:30, 41, 49).



2. Statements concerning latter days, apostasy, and decline:

Ironically, one of the chief verses used by postmillennialism (Mt. 24:14) is followed by the Lord’s description of what will take place prior to His return in power and glory. Rather than earth’s golden age, He says, “*then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be*” (Mt. 24:15f).

The Bible declares the Lord Jesus Christ will come, “*In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (2 Thes. 1:8). It is clear from this that the world will not be converted at that time. 2 Thessalonians goes on to declare that, prior to the Lord’s coming in power and glory, there shall be widespread apostasy and the manifestation of the man of sin (2 Thes. 2:3). This hardly describes a utopian scene.

3. Failure to fit historical facts: Is society being transformed into a utopian state? Is the world and society becoming a better place through man’s efforts? Is true Christianity even the dominant belief system in the world?

Postmillennialists and Reconstructionists would assure us that it will happen, even if it takes 200 or 2000 years. They claim there are periods of decline and growth. But if we follow their view of Matthew 13, how does leaven (yeast) work on dough? An on-again, off-again action? Any bread maker will tell you that’s not how it works!

4. Societal or individual reformation?: Every true believer is concerned with righteousness and is repelled by unrighteousness. But what is our purpose in this age? God has called us to catch fish, not clean up the fishbowl.

The Lord Jesus will return for His church to remove her from this world (1 Thes. 1:10; 4:13-18). There will then be a time of tribulation as unfolded in Revelation chapters 6-18. At the end of that period, the Lord will come in power and glory and establish His kingdom on earth where He will rule and reign for 1,000 years. To this all the prophets bear witness. Maranatha! 🔴

Endnotes

1 John Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Dunham Publishing Company, 1967), p. 34.

2 See the pocket booklet *The Reconstructionists* by Rodney Clapp, Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL 60515.

3 Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 4 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1978), p. 281.



ELDER HELPS *To feed, to take heed, and to lead*

Leadership Starts at Home – Part 3

Fostering growth

We've been considering the elder's duty to first be a godly father; to prove himself in his own house before he accepts the responsibility to lead in God's family. Our first article dealt with the father's own spiritual life and the necessity of a godly example. Next, we suggested that we carefully examine our motives for our children. Is their spiritual well-being our first priority? Do we long to see them not only get saved, but flourish spiritually?

In this article, we desire merely to make some suggestions of practical ways a father can help his children to prosper in their spiritual lives. The list is far from exhaustive. Also, there is no doubt that the list could differ from child to child. But there are some general areas that a father would do well to consider and periodically evaluate in his efforts to raise his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

- Read the Bible and pray together daily as a family.
- Teach them the truths of the Word of God so that they have a well-rounded knowledge of the Bible. This is not the job of Sunday school.
- Train them to be discerning and to apply the Scriptures to daily decisions.
- Take opportunities to speak about spiritual matters informally—"when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."
- Teach them how to read the Bible and pray for themselves.
- Train them for outreach: how to clearly give their testimony; praying for opportunities; etc.
- Encourage the singing of spiritual songs.
- Be devoted to hospitality so that the children grow up in the constant enjoyment of Christian fellowship.
- Impress upon them that attendance at church meetings is not less important than attendance at school or work.
- Encourage not only attendance at meetings, but atten-

tiveness and appropriate participation. Impress upon them that it is not only important to be attentive, but to look attentive.

- Teach them that they are to be active in serving in the assembly and help them to find a role.
- Train them to handle their finances in a godly matter. Faithful in little, faithful in much. Children who have

never been in the habit of giving to the Lord won't suddenly develop that habit at age 25.

- Teach them to seek out friends who are not only saved, but serious about spiritual matters (1 Cor. 15:33).
- Encourage healthy spiritual habits: listening to recorded Bible messages, reading good Christian books, writing missionaries, attending conferences, etc.

- Foster Christian character. This is essential even in what might be considered "little" areas: cheerfulness, manners, helping others, etc.
- Ensure that they treat their siblings with love and respect. Harmless bickering isn't harmless. The church is a family. Children who have been raised to think family squabbles are acceptable will be difficult and irritating in the local church as well.
- From an early age, give them appropriate chores and expect them to complete those chores properly and cheerfully. In doing so, we are preparing them to be pleasant and productive workers throughout their lives.

Certainly both father and mother are vital in each of the above. But, as those entrusted with leadership in the home, the father is ultimately accountable. The personal work, discipline, prayer, and burden required to help our children in these areas will serve a man well as he seeks to also lead in the local assembly.

We appreciate the comments and questions we receive. They help us deal with current needs. Please keep them coming to elders@uplook.org

"An elder must be...one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)"

(1 Tim. 3:4f)

What Will the Millennium Be Like?

The reign of the King of glory

**Jesus shall reign
where'er the sun
Does his succes-
sive journeys run,
His kingdom
stretch from
shore to shore,
Till moons shall
wax and wane
no more.**
— Isaac Watts

The Millennium: a term of recent popularity as we moved from the second millennium into the third millennium A.D. just 8 years ago. However, to the student of God's Word, it holds much greater significance than the present day calendar. The millennium is the literal, earthly reign of the Lord Jesus Christ for 1000 years (Rev. 20:1-20).

Its beginning is marked by the second coming of Christ to defeat the Gentile nations that have waged war against Israel (Rev. 19:17-20). The Satanic Trio is also brought to judgment: the beast (Satan's political leader) and the false prophet (Satan's religious leader) are cast into the lake of fire, and Satan is cast into the bottomless pit (Rev. 19:20; 20:1-3). The end of the millennium will be marked by the release of Satan from the pit, followed by his final rebel-

lion against God and his eternal judgment in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:7-10).

Although not exhaustive, the Bible does give us some details about life on earth in the millennium. The primary passages are Isaiah 11, 12, 65, 66; Ezekiel 40-48; Zechariah 14, and Revelation 20.

The millennial temple

God has always been the architect of the places from which He would receive man's worship, such as the tabernacle of the wilderness wanderings and the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem; however, God has designed a temple of even grander proportions for His Son's mil-

lennial reign in Jerusalem. It is known as the house of God and is the center of Israel's corporate worship of the Messiah (Ezk. 40-46).

The millennial temple will have some similarities to Solomon's temple. The temple building is surrounded by the inner court and outer court (40:20, 27). It has a porch with pillars (40:48, 49). The dimensions of the sanctuary are the same as Solomon's temple (41:1-4). The sanctuary is divided into the holy place and the most holy place (41:4). It is decorated with palms and cherubim (41:18-20).

The millennial temple will also have some unique aspects that make it distinct from Solomon's temple. There is no mention of the veil; it was rent at Calvary by God. Likewise, there is no mention of the ark of the covenant.

The worship of God

With the millennial temple erected, the worship of Jehovah will resume. The glory of the Lord will enter through the eastern gate and fill the house (Ezek. 43:4). All things pertaining to the worship of God are consecrated by animal blood sacrifice (Ezek. 43). Worship will be conducted in accordance to specified rules and order (Ezek. 44:4-5). No uncircumcised person, of both the heart and the flesh, shall enter into the sanctuary of God (Ezek. 44:9).

The Levitical priesthood will be restored, with some noted modifications. The Levites, who led the nation of Israel astray into idolatry, will continue to bear the shame and iniquity of their error and will not be allowed to come near to the holy things or the most holy place of God. They will be made servants of the temple and the preparatory tasks associated with the sacrifices (Ezek. 44:10-14). God will choose the sons of Zadok, who were faithful to God and His holy place when Israel



JUBILEE! *continued*

departed into idolatry, to be the priests allowed into His most holy place (Ezek. 44:15-16). Here is a powerful lesson for the saints in every generation—God honors faithfulness (1 Cor. 4:2; Rev. 2:10, 13; 3:4, 8).

Millennial worship will involve literal animal sacrifices on the temple altar, with the sprinkling of blood and animal fat presented before the Lord (Ezek. 44:15; Zech. 14:21). Many believers struggle with this and seek to spiritualize the practice rather than to take it literally. The point of difficulty is in relation to the complete and finished work of Christ on the cross, after which no other sacrifice is needed (Heb. 10:10-14). However, such detailed specifications citing the offerings and feasts of the millennium can hardly be denied to be literal. One cannot not ignore the presence of the Levitical offerings of the Old Testament with identical rules of the altar: the burnt offering (Ezek. 43:18), the sin offering (Ezek. 43:19), the peace offering (Ezek. 43:27), the meat offering (Ezek. 44:29), the trespass offering (Ezek. 44:29), the first-fruits offerings (Ezek. 44:30), and the daily offerings (Ezek. 46:13) In addition to the Levitical offerings, some of the Old Testament feasts of Jehovah are re-instated, such as the Passover (Ezek. 45:21-24), the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ezek. 45:25), and the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14:16). The millennial offerings are not an addition to the work of Christ any more than the Old Testament offerings were. Just as the Old Testament offering pointed forward to the cross, these millennial offerings point back to the cross, commemorative of the finished work of redemption obtained at Calvary by Christ.

During the millennium, Gentiles will come to Jerusalem to worship Christ as King and participate in the Jewish feasts. Disobedient nations who refuse to give such honor to Christ will be immediately punished (Zech. 14:16-19; Isa. 11:4b). The prevailing theme of the reign of Christ will be “Holiness unto the Lord.” The world of the “sacred” and the “secular” will be made one, as all things resound to the glory of the Lord (Ps. 89:17f).



Model of the Second Temple and the surrounding ancient districts in Jerusalem.

The political government

The millennium will usher in the kingdom and, with it, the King. Israelites will not only experience a spiritual revival when they embrace Christ as their Messiah, but they will also be gathered politically as a nation to their King. Yes, the King of the Jews; but His reign will then extend from sea to sea. The Lord Jesus Christ, the carpenter's son of Nazareth, will be enthroned with worldwide authority as the King of kings and Lord of lords, holding the title deed to earth (Rev. 5:1-10; 19:16). His world capital will be Jerusalem where He will sit on the throne of David, ruling the nations (Ps. 89:3-4, 18; Isa. 9:7; 11:9; Zech. 14:9).

The administration of His kingdom will be characterized by the nature of the King: righteous judgment, justice, and equity (Ps. 89:14-18; Isa. 9:7; 11:3-5; Heb. 1:8). The glory of His reign will be a reflection of the personal glory and beauty of the King (Isa. 9:6; 11:2). The blessings of the kingdom were described by our Lord in His sermon on the mount, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*” (Mt. 5:3ff). Peace will prevail throughout His reign. Every enemy will be quickly subdued and every overt act of rebellion will be swiftly disciplined (Zech. 14:11, 17-19; 1 Cor. 15:24-25; Rev. 19:15).

The physical environment

The earth will be reshaped by the sovereign Lord whose rule and authority is world-wide. Some of these changes will reflect a pre-flood condition, before God permitted man to rule the earth by a human government. The millennium will put the government back on Christ's shoulders and reflect His glory (Isa. 9:6; Zech. 14:6; Ezek. 43:2). Some of the changes given in Scripture are contained in verses difficult to interpret. Therefore, we shall only suggest that the following are some of the conditions which could potentially occur during the millennium.

- There could be changes in the hours of daylight and the intensity of the sun's light upon the earth (Zech. 14:6-7; Isa. 30:26).
- Mountains and seas could be relocated and rivers could disappear while new rivers appear connecting existing seas (Isa. 11:15-16; Zech. 14:4, 8).
- The seasons of summer and winter will continue (Zech. 14:8).
- God will withhold rain upon the disobedient nations while blessing the obedient with rainfall (Zech. 14:17-18).
- The fear of man will be removed from the animal world. Likewise, beastly hostility will be changed. Peace and tranquility will unite man and beast, as in Adam and Noah's day before the flood (Gen. 2:19-20; 7:13-16; 9:1-3; Isa. 11:6-9).

The physical earth, though inanimate, seems responsive to the power and authority of God's rule (Mk. 4:39; Lk. 19:40). Such a display was evident when our Lord died upon the cross, as the sun refused to shine for three hours and the earth quaked. Paul reminds us that even the earth "groaneth and travaileth in pain" with us in this fallen sinful world. However, when our Lord sits on the throne of the earth and His kingdom stretches from shore to shore, the sun will refuse to stop shining and the earth will no longer quake. All things will exist in peaceful order under the supreme rule of the King.

Who will be in the millennium?

Although the Scriptures do not provide complete details on this topic, God's Word does offer some guidance to the question at hand. We shall take groups up in the order of certainty, leaving for last the less certain.

The surviving Jewish remnant. Israel will be tried in the wrath of God's great tribulation. Two-thirds will die while one-third will be preserved, refined, and purified as gold. This last third is faithful, believing Israel that accepts their Messiah. They will be spiritually united to Christ and gathered back as a nation (Zech. 13:7-9; Isa. 11:11-13). They shall sing the praises of God as described in Isaiah 12.


The surviving Gentile nations. The millennial earth is populated with both Jew and Gentile. The distinction is made often in Scripture (Zech. 14:16-19). This is the Gentile population that survived the great tribulation (Isa. 11:10; Ezek. 44:9). In some cases, they are invited

to worship the King. In other ways, they are restricted from the holy things of God.

The tribulation saints. These are the believers in Christ, both Jew and Gentile, who have not received the mark of the beast during the tribulation; they may have been martyred or have suffered for the name of Christ (Rev. 7:14-17; 20:4).

The New Testament saints. God's Word indicates that the saints in heaven will accompany the Lord Jesus as He descends to earth to defeat His foes and establish His Kingdom on earth. We would interpret these passages to include the New Testament saints which have already been raised, raptured, glorified, and married to Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Zech. 14:5; Rev. 19:14). The role of the New Testament saints in the millennium is unclear. However, Scripture repeatedly states that we shall "reign with Him" (Mt. 25:21; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 1:6; 2:26; 4:9-10; 20:4). It could be that the crowns and rewards to the faithful stewards of Christ are symbolic of actual positions of authority assigned within His millennial government.

The Old Testament saints. It was to these saints that the unconditional covenants of God's promises in the Old Testament were given. The millennium will be the fulfillment of these covenant provisions. The Old Testament saints would be part of the "first resurrection," which includes the righteous raised to "the resurrection of life" (Jn. 5:29). The first resurrection has many stages, the last of which would occur at the end of the great tribulation, likely the time when the Old Testament saints are raised (Dan. 12:1-3; Rev. 20:5).

God is both a holder of secrets and a revealer of secrets (Deut. 29:29). As is often the case in the area of prophecy, one must be content with what has been revealed and refrain from speculating on what has not been revealed. His ways are often past finding out and not intended for our finite minds (Rom. 11:33). In our observations about the millennium, our intent was to stay with only what has been revealed in Scripture. Beyond this, we will wait to see what else He has "prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9). 

...one must be content with what has been revealed and refrain from speculating on what has not been revealed.

Israel and the Church

One of the essential principles in interpreting the Bible is to recognize the difference between Israel and the church. Failure to do so leads not only to error in understanding future events, but also to practical problems today, especially in the practice of the local church. Robes, altars, tithing, candles, holy days, etc.—these are all the result of failing to distinguish between Israel and the church and therefore creating some mixture of the two.



The Scriptures clearly distinguish between Israel and the church (1 Cor. 10:32). In particular, Israel is characterized by that which is physical and earthly, whereas the church is marked by that which is spiritual and heavenly. The following chart illustrates this contrast in a variety of key areas.

CONTRAST	ISRAEL	THE CHURCH
Calling	Gen. 12:1-3	Heb. 3:1
Origin	Gen. 12:1-3	Acts 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:18
Entrance	physical birth	1 Pet. 1:23 – spiritual birth
Inheritance	Dt. 8:7-9; Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 17:7-8	1 Pet. 1:4
Adoption	Rom. 9:4; Ex. 4:22	Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5
Citizenship	earthly	Php. 3:20
Wars	Dt. 28:7	Eph. 6:12
Rewards	Dt. 28:1-14	Eph. 1:3
Destiny	Lk. 1:31-33; Jer. 16:14f; Isa. 14:1	Jn. 14:2f; 1 Thes. 4:15-17
As numerous as (Gen 22:17)	the sand of the seashore	the stars of heaven
Lord comes for	to the earth (Zech. 14:4)	to the air (1 Thes. 4:17)
Slavery & redemption	physical (to Egypt – Ex. 1:11)	spiritual (to sin – Rom. 6:17)
Sacrifices, worship	Lev. 1-9	1 Pet. 2:5
Priests	Ex. 29	1 Pet. 2:5, 9
Tabernacle	Ex. 25-40	Heb. 9:11
Circumcision	Lev. 12:3	Col. 2:11
Temple	2 Chron. 2-7	Eph. 2:21f
Golden altar with incense	Ex. 40:5	Rev. 8:3
Manna	Ex. 16:31	Rev. 2:17

Why Does This Matter?

Rightly dividing the Word is not splitting hairs

The way we deal with biblical prophecy influences our approach to the rest of Scripture, and that affects all we believe and do.

Whether you realize it or not, you hold to a system of theology. Your system of theology may be well-developed or it may be quite rudimentary. It may be consistent or it may be random. It may be orthodox or it may be not-so-orthodox. But each of us holds to a system of theology, and that system of theology is at the core of how we view reality.

Amillennialism is a system of theology which teaches that there will be no literal millennium. In this view, the millennium is a spiritual concept and there will be no future reign of Christ on earth for 1000 years. It teaches that Revelation 20:1-6 is to be taken spiritually and not literally. While amillennialists believe Christ will some day return, the millennium is deemed to be identical to the church age. Amillennialism is common



within the Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and many mainline Protestant denominations like the Lutherans, the Anglicans, and the Presbyterians.

Amillennialism must be contrasted with the dispensational premillennialism which

is taught in most New Testament assemblies. Dispensational premillennialism teaches that Revelation 20:1-6 is to be taken literally and that Christ will one day physically reign on earth for 1000 years. We also believe that the Old Testament passages that deal with the millennium will be literally fulfilled.

So?

These are deep questions and one is tempted to ask, "Why does this matter?" If this is just one small technical detail of Bible prophecy, why should we treat the matter seriously? After all, prophecy has suffered from a great deal of speculative interpretation over the years and has divided true Christians one from another. Is it not best to leave these issues to work themselves out and to concentrate on practical Christian living? If we were only talking about one small technical detail of Bible prophecy, I would be tempted to agree. But whether we hold to amillennialism or premillennialism will have a powerful influence on how we live the Christian life because our view on the millennium reflects our attitude towards interpreting the Word of God.

The system of dispensational premillennialism taught by most New Testament assemblies rests on a foundation of literal Bible interpretation. Our system of theology is flexible enough to freely acknowledge that the Bible uses figures of speech and literary devices. We must be honest enough to freely acknowledge that we have not always interpreted the Bible as literally as we should. But despite imperfections and whatever charges are laid against us, of all the theological systems, premillennialism most consistently holds to literal Bible interpretation.

THE BIG DIFF *continued*

Figurative interpretations

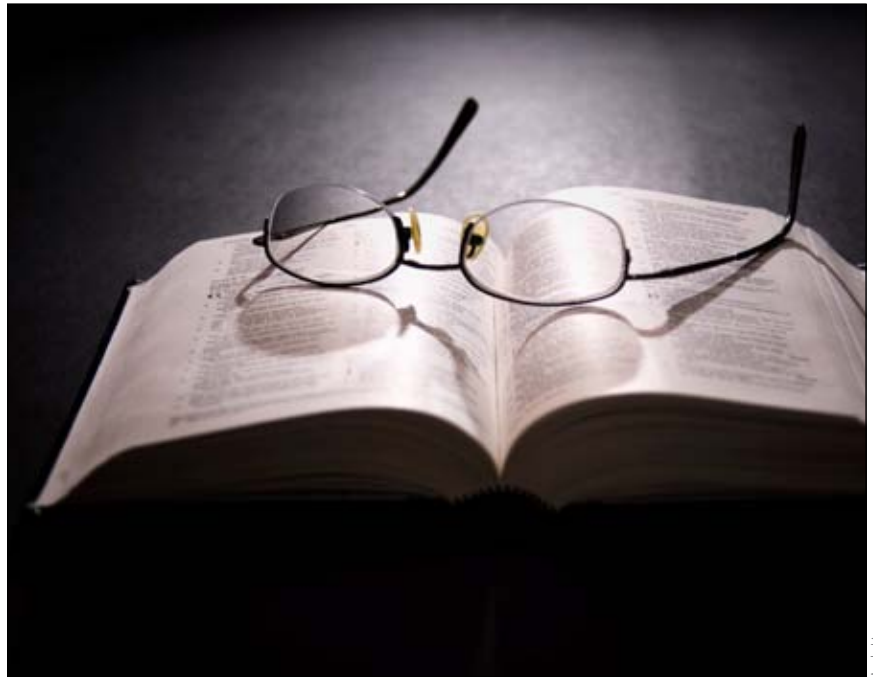
Amillennialists will admit that their system does not rest on a foundation of literal Bible interpretation and, as such, they tend to spiritualize the Bible. Rather than a verse meaning what it plainly says, they will often go looking for some deeper, hidden meaning. The “church father” Origen was an early proponent of this method. An example is Origen’s interpretation of Matthew 24:30, “... and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Origen said this referred to Christ’s appearing to mature believers when they read the Bible. In such a system, the Bible can be made to say anything the human interpreter wishes.

It should come as no surprise then that allegory is common among amillennialists. An allegory is a story where each person, place, thing, and event is meant to reflect something else. A modern example is George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* in which a story about animals on a farm is really a parody of the Bolshevik Revolution and Stalin’s subsequent rule. Allegory is a legitimate literary device, but it makes for a rather poor system of interpreting the Bible. Like spiritualizing, it can be used to make the Bible say anything the reader desires. Since it has no foundation of reasonable rules for literal Bible interpretation, who can say that any particular interpretation is the meaning God intended? Allegory may have some use for personal devotion but, as a system for understanding the meaning of the Bible, it is subjective and misleading.

Literal Bible interpretation is important to a correct understanding of the Scriptures. This is why we are not talking about a small detail of Bible prophecy. And this is why it matters. When we depart from literalism, we don’t know where we will end up. It may be in some harmless state where we don’t know what the Bible

means, but we still love the Lord Jesus Christ. Or it might be in some cult which uses a spiritualized explanation of the Bible to win over their converts. When we abandon literal Bible interpretation, we can end up anywhere.

Finally, for all the criticisms of “wooden literalism” and the complaints that we are missing out on the blessings of spiritualized interpretation, it must be acknowledged that dispensational premillennialists tend to hold firmly to the gospel message and to the basics of the evangelical faith. It is no mystery why modernism swept through amillennialist



Andy Lim

circles a hundred years ago. Similarly, it is no mystery why the denominations which hold to amillennialism are fighting battles today that would be quickly settled if they held to literal Bible interpretation. There are many within the amillennialist camp who are our brothers and sisters in Christ and who are fighting against modernism. But their method of interpretation is working against them. While we seek to deal graciously and lovingly with them, faithfulness to the Bible demands that we reject their system of interpretation. 📌

Literal Bible interpretation is important to a correct understanding of the Scriptures. ...this is why it matters.

Tossed Out

How much force does He have to use?



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What would it take to throw you out? To throw you out of your career path trajectory? To throw you out of your comfy North American lifestyle orbit? To send you on an entirely new journey into some neglected corner of the harvest field?

That's what the Master asked us to pray for.

To my knowledge, the Lord Jesus gave us only one prayer request.* Do we treat it like we sometimes treat others' requests? Someone ventures to ask us to intercede for them at a prayer meeting, then waits expectantly for anyone to mention it audibly before the Lord—only to wait in vain. Are we guilty of this with our Master's only prayer request?

"When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest" (Mt 9:36-38). What stirred Him to make this request?

- *He saw the multitudes*—do we take in the vastness of the need around us?
- *He was moved with compassion on them*—do we care about their hopeless plight?
- *because they fainted*—do we see that they, like we were, are without strength to change?
- *and were scattered abroad*—do we know that the alienation is only getting worse?
- *as sheep having no shepherd*—do we grasp how vulnerable and defenseless they are?

What was His remedy? It was to pray to *"the Lord of the harvest"* to increase the number of *"laborers"* who would work in the harvest fields. The word translated "send forth," *ekballo*, is explained as meaning "to drive out, cast out, to expel, to draw out with force, with the implication of force overcoming opposite force." Sounds a bit drastic, doesn't it?

But what would it take to throw you and me out? To throw you out of your career path trajectory? To throw me out of my comfy North American lifestyle orbit? To send you or me on an entirely new journey into some neglected corner of the harvest field? What would it take to send a young college student half way across the continent on a bus to take the gospel to some hopeless Native American young people? What would it take to move a retired couple to become residents in a run-down project so they could reach the little kids there? Yes, these are real examples. And that's the sort of thing the Master asked us to pray for.

Those *"sheep having no shepherd"* will soon have a visit from a different kind of laborer if we don't get there first. I came across some startling web sites that show the strategies, statistics and global seriousness of the cults. One of them, called "Statistics of Jehovah's Witnesses" (www.jwic.com/stat.htm), asks and answers the following questions:

"How many publishers (a "publisher" is their name for a JW door knocker) does it take to convert a person to a Jehovah's Witness?...in Iceland, it takes **145** publishers' work for **one year** to convert one person, whereas in Albania it takes **only 7** publishers" for one year.

"How many preaching hours does it take to convert a person to a Jehovah's Witness?...in Japan, it takes about 18,000 **hours** of preaching to gain **one** baptism, whereas in Nepal it takes **only 2000** hours" (emphasis mine). Do we quit if a few doors close on us? Perhaps we don't even begin for fear of imagined rejection. What do we think a soul is worth? What are we willing to expend for one? Oh, Lord of the harvest, give us compassion on the multitude! Of course, the enemy always marshalls bigger armies than the Lord's little troop. And in the end he always loses *"for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few"* (1 Sam 14:6).

*The Lord also instructed us that we *ought* to pray (Lk 18:1), *how* to pray (Mt. 6:9), *for whom* to pray (Mt. 5:44), and *through whom* to pray (Jn 14:13-14), but only here did He tell us *what* to pray.



Crowning Achievements

“AS THE EARLY DAYS OF CREATION MOVED FORWARD TO THE CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT—ADAM AND HIS BRIDE OVER ALL, AND RESTING WITH GOD ON THE SEVENTH DAY AND BEYOND—SO SHALL THE LONG SIX DAYS OF MAN’S HISTORY BE CROWNED WITH A MAN, THE LAST ADAM, AND HIS BRIDE, REIGNING OVER A RENEWED SCENE, AND DURING THE LONG MILLENNIAL DAY OF REST FOR THE EARTH, AND BEYOND, INTO A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH.”

— NEIL M. FRASER, *THE GLADNESS OF HIS RETURN*