
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **What's wrong with the doctrine of premillennialism?**

The answer to this question depends on which doctrine of premillennialism you are considering. Premillennialism comes in two flavors—one is poisonous, toxic, and dangerous, while the other flavor is not.

Historic Premillennialism

Let's begin with the non-toxic, non-lethal variety called "***historic premillennialism.***"

Historic premillennialism has been around since the late first century and early second century. This doctrine was held by Papias, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian and others. In more recent times this doctrine has been promoted by men like George Eldon Ladd, Francis Schaeffer, and D. A. Carson. Barton W. Stone, a contemporary of Alexander Campbell believed in historic premillennialism.

Historic premillennialism believes that Jesus will return some day and reign literally in the earth for a thousand years.

- It does not believe in a pre-tribulation rapture wherein God's people are raptured off the earth so they will not have to suffer during the great tribulation. God never promised His people would not have to suffer (read Revelation 2:10).
- Historic premillennialism does not believe the nation of Israel is God's specially chosen people who are blessed above all others on earth. Rather, the "Israel of God" is and has always been "spiritual Israel" which, in Old Testament times was called "the remnant" (Romans 11:1-5) and that same group of faithful believers is now called the Lord's church (Galatians 6:16).
- Historic premillennialism teaches that the Lord's kingdom is the Lord's church—and that is correct (Colossians 1:13).

Historic premillennialism is incorrect in thinking that the Lord will reign on the earth for a literal thousand years. Instead of a future reign, the Lord reigns right now, from heaven, over the entire earth and His kingdom is His church—the church of Christ (Colossians 1:13; Romans 16:16). When the Lord returns to the earth, it will be to then take His people away from the earth after all the tribulations of the earth are over (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), end His current reign, and return the kingdom to His father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

Dispensational Premillennialism

The toxic version of this doctrine is called "***dispensational premillennialism***." This doctrine was never taught until John

Nelson Darby in the mid 1800s. This alone should cause people to stop and think: Were all Bible scholars so stupid that no one understood the Bible until John Darby came along in the 1800s? Darby's doctrine was made popular by C. I. Scofield's reference Bible and is the root of the popular books and movie series titled, "*Left Behind*"—promoted by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins.

- This dangerous doctrine teaches that the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish nation, which resulted in the Lord's death, was unexpected and took God by surprise. Such a thought is ludicrous, for God knows everything from beginning to end. Jesus is called the "*Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*" (Revelation 13:8) because God knew from the very beginning Jesus would be rejected and slain.
- Dispensationalism teaches the ethnic nation of Israel still has a special place in God's plans. This belief is wrong and gives false hopes to Jewish people. No one can be saved and have eternal life—not even Jewish people—without being baptized and becoming members of the Lord's church (Acts 2:38, 41, 47). The New Testament plainly teaches that, in the eyes of God, there is no longer any differences between Jews and other nationalities (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11).
- Dispensationalism also teaches a pre-tribulation rapture. The idea here is that, God would not want His people to suffer during the great tribulation, and so He will rapture His people off the earth before any tribulation comes. This is false simply because God never promised to protect His people from hardships (see Revelation 12:11).

Dispensationalism is dangerous because it gives false hopes to Jews—that they can be saved as Jews without becoming

Christians. It gives false hopes to others by promising a pre-tribulation rapture. And this doctrine blasphemes the death of Jesus as if His death on the cross were unforeseen by God. Believers of this false doctrine cannot be saved. This is not an innocent doctrine.

Summary

In summary, the Bible teaches:

- Jesus' kingdom is His church (Matthew 16:18-19; Colossians 1:13).
- Jesus began reigning on the throne of David on the Day of Pentecost after His resurrection (Acts 2:29-36).
- Both Jews and Gentiles must be baptized in water and into the Lord's church in order to be saved (Acts 2:38, 41, 47).
- The thousand year reign of the Lord is mentioned in only one passage (Revelation 20:4-10) and that reign is a spiritual reign of the Lord in heaven with those saints who remained faithful until they died. Upon their deaths, their bodiless spirits ascended to heaven to be with the Lord and to reign with him throughout the gospel age until the Lord returns (Revelation 20:4-6).
- When the Lord returns, He will not be setting foot on the earth at all—no passage teaches this. There will be no literal earthly reign of the Lord on the earth, because the earth will be burned up (2 Peter 3:10-12), the saints will meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), and there (in the air) they will be forever with the Lord—being taken away to heaven where the Lord

has prepared a heavenly home for His people (John 14:1-4; Hebrews 11:16; 12:22).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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