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B1001 – January 3, 2010 – Pre-Millennialism

Last week we introduced the millennial issue and the kingdom of God. We're doing this at the end of the OT framework because we're about to begin the NT framework and the NT assumes you understand what kingdom means. So many Christians start with the NT and they read about the kingdom of God and they get all ethereal and think of the kingdom as heaven, just some spiritual reality. We're trying to cut through all that and get situated on the kingdom of God. Last time we introduced the vocabulary; mortal and immortal and the issue of the nature of the kingdom; does the kingdom of God occur inside mortal history or does it occur outside of mortal history in eternity. The Jews debated that even before the Church existed so this is not new with the NT. What's new with the NT was the debate between the three views: premillennialism, amillennialism and postmillennialism and we did an overview of those three views according to three checkpoints. They are not the only differences but they stand out and give us some helpful criteria to see the differences. Today we're going to just work with premillennialism. Remember, premillennialism means before the millennium Christ will return and then He'll establish the thousand year reign. So it takes the catastrophic return of Christ to usher in an era of world peace and biblical culture. The church can't do that.

The origin and the history of premillennialism: It started before Christ. There was a view that originated back in the Jewish era at the end of the OT. The quote I have is by R. H. Charles: "According to the universal expectation of the past the resurrection and the final judgment were to form the prelude to an everlasting Messianic Kingdom on earth, but from this time forth," remember the Exile and what was the next event, after the exile came the Partial Restoration to the land, that's the period Charles is talking about. During the period of the restoration "these great events are relegated to its

close, and the Messianic Kingdom is for the first time in literature conceived of as of temporary duration.” So now they were thinking of it as a limited period.

In 2 Enoch, (this is some of the pseudepigraphical literature that was written ~100BC), the duration of this temporary Messianic Kingdom was placed at one thousand years.ⁱ It declared that the close of the thousand-year period history would end and eternity begin.ⁱⁱ That 2 Enoch book is very important. Why do you suppose it’s important, it’s not Scripture? But what it tells you is what people were thinking when the Apostle John wrote Rev 20. If you had read 2 Enoch and you were already discussing the Kingdom in terms of a thousand years, how would you have interpreted what John says in Rev 20, a thousand years? So this sets up how we interpret these prophecies.

“Whether the final Kingdom was conceived as the last stage of history or as the eternal state, however, Jewish thought has always insisted that it would be material, earthly, and centered on Jerusalem.” That was a question we touched on last time. Please pay attention to this, it is very important. We’re going to see the rise of anti-Semitism in western civilization, and we’re going to watch what happens here. This figures into something that’s coming. Jewish thought has always conceived of the kingdom of God as material, earthly and centered on Jerusalem. It does not conceive of it in a Greek way of thinking which is immaterial, spiritual and heavenly. That’s a Greek form of thinking; it is not a Jewish form of thinking. And the Church knew this, and we’ll have numerous quotes about it.

This is from a Jewish prayer book; it was quoted in every Jewish home on Passover. I do this to show you something. “Proclaim by Thy loud trumpet our deliverance, and raise up a banner to gather our dispersed,” who’s our dispersed? They’re the people that didn’t come back in the Partial Restoration, the people of the Exile. Where are those people? In all the different nations, there are Jews scattered among all the nations. So every Passover they’re asking God to gather our dispersed “and gather us together from the four ends of the earth. Blessed be Thou, O Lord! Who gatherest the outcasts of Thy people, Israel.” Not the Church, Israel! “Even in modern times the Jewish Passover closes each year with the phrase: ‘Next year in Jerusalem!’” So the location of the Kingdom is earthly, it is physical, it is in Jerusalem, it is not in heaven, and it’s not just spiritual, it is that, but it’s

also physical, that's the point, even if it's over in eternity they envisioned it as physical.

That's the Jewish history. They were already conceiving of a literal thousand years before the apostle John wrote Rev 20. Now the Christian history: The Christian passage is Rev 20; we went over that so you're already aware of the key NT passage for Premillennialism being Rev 20. Premillennialists "point out that the Apostles were premillennialists and that the early Church followed apostolic teaching in this regard. Authorities on Church history agree that in the first several centuries of Christianity premillennialism was the early consensus. Justin Martyr (~AD100-165), the foremost apologist of the second century, was clearly premillennial." Listen to him: "But I and whoever are on all points right-minded Christians know that there will be resurrection of the dead and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and the others declare.... And, further, a certain man with us, named John, one of the Apostles of Christ, predicted by a revelation that was made to him that those who believed in our Christ would spend a thousand years in Jerusalem, and thereafter the general, or to speak briefly, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place." There you have it from a guy who was right there with the apostle John.

There's more. Everyone agrees that the early view of the church was Premillennialism. Here's Daniel Whitby. Whitby isn't a friend of Premillennialism, he's generally said to be the founder of Postmillennialism but listen to what he says, "The doctrine of the Millennium, or the reign of the saints on earth for a thousand years...passed among the best Christians, for two hundred and fifty years, for a tradition apostolical; and as such, is delivered by many Fathers of the second and third century, who speak of it as the tradition of our Lord and His apostles, and of all the ancients who lived before them..." So he says the first 250 years of the Church Premillennialism was what the early church fathers believed, it's what the Lord believed, it's what the apostles believed; its even what people before the Lord believed, the ancients.

Let's move to another point: the decline of Premillennialism or chiliasm, (that's another vocabulary word that means the same thing), comes right out of Rev 20. It's the Greek word for "a thousand" so if you run across that term

it's just the ancient term for a Premillennialist. Here what we're asking, "Why did it decline? If everyone believed that until the third and fourth centuries why did they stop believing it?"

There are a number of reasons; we'll just touch a few. The first is Greek philosophy. As the church moved from a Jewish majority to a Gentile majority Greek philosophy took a prominent role in Christian thought. Philosophically, Neo-Platonism exercised influence through Origen (ca. 185-254) and Augustine (354-430). "A key Platonic idea that affected the millennial discussion was that all matter is evil and anything good is immaterial." How does that impact the Jewish idea of the Kingdom? What was the Jewish idea of the Kingdom? It was material, it was in a land, it was in a city, it involved politics, it involved rain, not an otherworldly abstract idea. So now we begin to have a little tension develop inside the Church because you have a lot of people that have become Christians but they aren't very well-versed in the Scriptures; they're better versed in Plato. What do they do? They mix the Bible with Plato and the end of that is this screwy eschatology. They reason that a material kingdom would be evil, and Christ could not rule something evil: His Kingdom had to be 'good.' So to get around the material ideas in the Bible they started to interpret them allegorically, a later discussion.

A second reason was the collision between Judaism and Christianity. Remember, after the first century Judaism continued and Christianity began to grow alongside it, a Christianity dominated not by Jewish thought from the OT but by Gentile thought from Greek philosophy. These differences caused antagonism between the two groups to the point that Gentile Christians went to the extreme of rejecting the Jewishness of the Kingdom. The kingdom as you read it in the OT is very Jewish. But they didn't like the Judaism they were facing so they said phooey with the Jewish kingdom, we don't like Jews.

A third reason was political, the Church had become powerful. I want you to think this through. I want you to think in your head, visualize the flow of history, because I want you to see some connections here. These ideas are not theory; these ideas have swayed men, women and nations. Eschatology is a powerful influence, and it's all the more powerful when it's not understood. "Politically, the Church had become powerful." Who was the Roman Emperor

who made Christianity the official religion? Constantine. He jumped on the back of Christianity to unite the empire. "The Church had become powerful. It was declared the state religion of the Roman Empire." Isn't that kind of ironic that 50 years before Diocletian was killing Christians in the coliseum because they wouldn't worship the Emperor, now the Emperor claims to be a Christian? "A far-off Kingdom was no longer as attractive when a present Kingdom seemed possible."

Look at these three together here: we've got Neo-Platonism and Greek ways of thinking thoroughly in the Church. We are concentrating on an ideal spiritual thing, we don't like those Jews and we've got the church and the state together. That's the rise of something we'll see later, it's the rise of anti-Semitism inside Christianity. And not just anti-Semitism but anti-Semitism with the power of the sword behind it. Ideas have consequences.

"Although mainline Roman Catholic thought continued to oppose premillennial eschatological thinking," - Rome has always been anti-premillennial. Roman Catholicism with all of its might, power and scholarship has tried for centuries to destroy Premillennialism. As Rome's influence grew Premillennialism's influence waned in equal proportion. However, you can trace a narrow line of premillennial groups from the fourth century into the late Middle Ages. Charles Ryrie cites the Waldensians, the Paulicians and the Cathari. George Peters cites the Albigenses, the Lollards, the Wycliffites, and the Bohemian Protestants as small circles which continued to think in premillennial terms despite Rome's ubiquitous influence.

Unfortunately, there were also radical groups," (now watch this one, this is a very important point of history. You won't get this in the college textbook) "There were also radical groups who seized upon the millennial vision as a justification for radical social upheavals. Although they are closer to postmillennial thoughts of ushering in the 'golden age,' in the popular mind they became associated with Premillennialism." In the popular mind, because people held out for a "golden age" they thought this was coming from Premillennialism, but if you look closely these radical groups were trying to bring in the golden age themselves. They thought by political reform and social upheavals they could usher in a golden era. Does that sound like

Premillennialism? Christ brings in the golden age in Premillennialism.
Radical social agendas bring it in in Postmillennialism.

Let's work on this idea. These guys were radical people, they wanted to overthrow some of the kingdoms and dynasties of Europe and they did so because they saw evil in them and they wanted to bring in the Kingdom. Which of the three views would promote radical socialism, revolutionary type activity? Postmillennialists. But what does postmillennialism have in common with premillennialism? Where does postmillennialism agree with premillennialism? They agree that the kingdom of God will come about inside history. So these radicals made a bad name for millennialism of any kind, post or pre. What do you suppose the Catholic Church is? Post or pre or "a"? Amillennial, Catholicism is amillennial. Some historical things will start to make sense as we work our way through this. I'll show you some things; things that you observe in your own families will start to click when you start putting this together. Roman Catholicism is amillennial, always has been amillennial.

Roman Catholic thought continued to oppose premillennial eschatological thinking; you had the radical social upheavals. "Thus Thomas Munster" (he was one of the guys that you read about in history), "and his followers brought premillennialism into great disrepute by their unbiblical exaggerations of the millennium and by their works-centered schemes to bring in the millennium through radical human revolution. From them..." listen to this; this is why I'm telling you eschatology is not theory only, "From them came later visions of a great historical climax through human works such as Communism and Nazism which, ironically, as anti-Christian movements find their foundation for historical progress in Christianity."ⁱⁱⁱ

Isn't this amazing? Do you remember what Hitler quoted to justify the Third Reich? What does He mean the Third Reich? The 3rd Kingdom. Nazi's dedicated themselves to a Kingdom movement, it wasn't just one little soldier here and there, this was a passion in the German soul - to bring about a kingdom, centering on Germany that would dominate the world. And where did they get the idea? Who was the guy that formulated the German language as we know it today? He had more to do with it than anybody else. Martin Luther, 1522. And Martin Luther did what? He translated and printed and distributed the Bible in the German language. And guess where

Thomas Munster lived, and these guys with their radical reforms? They lived in Germany.

So what they did is they began to read Daniel 2, they began to see that there was a kingdom program in history, and they said the first kingdoms are past and now we're on the threshold of bringing in a new and better kingdom. Now we can easily see how that eventually worked into the Nazi vision. But it also moved into the Marxist vision. So here you have European politics, the right and the left, borrowing their ideas of historical progress from the Scriptures, unjustifiably of course. And here they come. Marx borrowed it because he read about Munster. Marx read about those early radicals and he said those guys had the right idea, what a wonderful thing, we can do away with sin, what we need is a good revolution to do it with. And we all know how that worked out. Human works + energy of the flesh + a vision of a better kingdom = WWI, add anti-Semitism to the equation and you get = WWII.

Remember, because ideas are extremely powerful, the next time somebody laughs at you because you're a Christian, carrying your little Bible, just say well, all the great thinkers of the world stole from it so I decided I'd like to go to the original source material instead of getting it second hand from the atheists and Marx and Hitler. I decided I would get it first hand by reading Daniel myself, which is where they stole it from. By the way, there are two lines, Marx got it two ways. He got it through the radical social movement, Munster and co. and he also got it through a philosopher of Germany. Who was the philosopher in Germany that developed the theory that history had a movement to it and it was progressing, and you have thesis, antithesis and synthesis, and you move one step forward, thesis, antithesis and synthesis and go forward, on and on? The famous German philosopher was Hegel. Where did Hegel get his ideas of kingdom? Daniel, of all places. Holy mackerel! Isn't this sweet? We have Daniel writing the prophecy, we have Munster taking it, we have Marx taking it, we have Hegel taking it; they're all stealing from Daniel, twisting it into their philosophy. They were all radical revolutionaries. They were all living their eschatology. So eschatology is not just a little thing for prophecy nuts. This is serious business.

“During the later Reformation period the Protestant leaders continued the Roman Catholic amillennial doctrine.” Please notice this: another important

idea that ripples all the way to the present. The Protestant Reformation did not reform eschatology. What area of theology did the Protestant Reformation reform? Soteriology, the doctrine of salvation. The Reformists couldn't do it all in one generation, give the guys a break. They had all they could do to figure out how you get saved, and they should be commended for that. They couldn't do everything so they continued the Catholic amillennial doctrine. Most Protestant denominations are amillennial, just like Rome. There's not much difference between the average Protestant church and the average Catholic Church when it comes to eschatology; they're both amillennial. Only one group came out of the Reformation that was not amillennial. Allis, an amillennialist says, "It [Premillennialism] reappeared in extravagant forms at the time of the Reformation, notably among the Anabaptists." The Anabaptists, that's our heritage. You can tell by Allis' quote there's a bit of disdain there. Where's that coming from? The same forces that worked in the third and fourth centuries against Premillennialism resurfaced in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to destroy it. They're still trying to destroy it. In the Augsburg Confession, Article XVII, look at the language. I want you to see how the Protestant Reformers attacked premillennialists and why they did. They condemned premillennialists as Jewish. Here's the quote. "They condemn others also, who now scatter Jewish opinions, that, before the resurrection of the dead, the godly shall occupy the kingdom of the world, the wicked being ever suppressed."

"In the Second Helvetic Confession, one reads these significant words: 'We condemn the Jewish dreams, that before the day of judgment there shall be a golden age in the earth....'" We'll have to stop there, but you can see anti-Semitism. These ideas of eschatology are tied in with vast powerful movements of history.

Alright, let's shift from the history of Premillennialism over to its features.

We've boiled them down to three checkpoints, so let's look at that again. We are interested specifically in how Premillennialism has handled these three points. The first checkpoint: **Christ Returns To End History.**

Premillennialism says no, they're the odd man out on this point.

Postmillennialism and amillennialism both say yes, that when Christ returns that's the end of earth history and we advance immediately into the eternal state. Premill's say no, there's still earth history for a thousand years. We studied Rev 19-20 last time, that's the key passage; Christ's return does not

end history. There are people who actually survive Christ's return and go into the millennium in mortal bodies, others are resurrected into immortal bodies and they reign with Christ for a thousand years. Let's go to Rev 19:11. Premill's are saying this is chronological, once you get history moving in verse 11 these things just happen, boom, boom, boom, one after another. Rev 19:11, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war...etc..." this is the Second Coming of Christ. Chapter 20:1. "Then I saw" (this is a progression, this happens after the Second Coming say the premill's), "an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ²And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time." Notice what goes along with Christ returning to set up His kingdom in history. What is it? Satan is bound. He's not present? What do you do with that if you're an amillennialist or a postmillennialist? If the kingdom is right now then how do you interpret Satan being bound right now? That's a question you have to deal with if you're not premillennial.

Verse 4, "Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. ⁷When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison," another time marker, after the thousand years Satan's released, this is all chronological. Verse 8, "and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. ⁹And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰And the devil who

deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” So there’s the final battle: Armageddon isn’t the final battle; Armageddon is a thousand years before the final battle. Then what happens? Verse 11, “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds. ¹⁴Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” So we have the final judgment.

What next? Rev 21:1, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.” And he goes on to describe the beginning of the eternal state. So Christ’s return in this case does not end history. Jesus Christ comes into history, He reigns for a thousand years, and after that eternity begins. That’s premillennialism.

The second checkpoint, **The Kingdom Of God Will Triumph Over World Culture**. Turn to Isaiah 65:17; we’ll see how Isaiah conceives of this future kingdom. ¹⁷“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸“But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem *for* rejoicing And her people *for* gladness. ¹⁹“I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying. ²⁰“No longer will there be in it an infant *who lives but a few days*, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Will be *thought* accursed. ²¹“They will build houses and inhabit *them*; They will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²²“They will not build and another inhabit, They will not plant and another eat;” by the way, that’s a refutation of socialism here; evidently capitalism prevails, “For as the

lifetime of a tree, *so will be* the days of My people, And My chosen ones will wear out the work of their hands. ²³“They will not labor in vain, Or bear *children* for calamity; For they are the offspring of those blessed by the LORD, And their descendants with them. ²⁴“It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. ²⁵“The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpent’s food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain,” says the LORD.” That’s how Isaiah thought of this kingdom. And the debate of course is, is this in eternity or is this inside history? Well, what do you see in verse 20? You see death at this point has not been removed. So the OT saint, his vision of the future new heavens and new earth included death, life is prolonged but there’s still death. It isn’t till John’s Revelation that we come to understand that the new heavens and new earth come in two phases, a millennial phase where there’s still death and suffering, though greatly diminished, and then a final ultimate phase where it’s absent altogether. Our point being here that world culture in the millennium has been overcome by a greatly improved culture.

Now we’ll look at a quote from Alva McClain, a great teacher of the word of God at Winona Lake for many, many years. He wrote a book that’s probably one of the finest books ever written on the kingdom. If you can get it read it - it’s called *The Greatness of the Kingdom*. What McClain is addressing here is if we really believe this, and there’s going to be a thousand years of near perfect history on earth, then when we get there where do we start with knowledge? Do we start at zero again and build from zero? Or are there ideas and knowledge that are transferred over as a base and we work from there? What happens if you’re a believer in the present era and you developed a new technology? You developed a new technique in art? You developed a new instrument unto the Lord? Is that stuff totally destroyed? Because if it is then what’s the motivation to be creative unto the Lord? The answer premillennialism has, and this is something you want to notice because I’m quoting from McClain. This quote has been around for two or three decades, and it’s inexcusable that after twenty or thirty years of this quote being around we still have critics of premillennialism say, oh, that premillennialism is so pessimistic, it has no motive for developing new things, no motive for having dominion, they’re all just looking for Jesus to return. Excuse me, look at this quote:

“It [Premillennialism] says that life here and now, in spite of the tragedy of sin, is nevertheless something worthwhile; and therefore all the efforts to make it better are also worthwhile. All the true values of human life will be preserved and carried over into the coming kingdom; nothing worthwhile will be lost.” Remember back at the Flood we said with Noah and his sons the new civilization rose very rapidly? It was not a slow, gradual upward development. Suddenly advanced civilization burst on the scene. We have evidences of this all over the world in architecture and maps. The whole earth was mapped in the first two or three centuries after the Flood, great achievements we still don’t understand were made in those first few centuries after the Flood. How did they get civilization going again so rapidly? Because Noah, his sons and their wives carried over the great achievements of the prior world. They didn’t start with a blank slate. They knew how to build, they knew about engineering, they knew about metals and metallurgy, they knew about time and navigation, they were brilliant. So we already have a pattern laid down in history for how new civilizations arise. And McClain is suggesting that the things of the present era that are great human achievements will be carried over as a base. Yes, all the sinful elements will be shed, they’re not going to come over, but the great achievements, the things done in accordance with divine wisdom and for God’s glory, come over. So there is a motive to produce great medicine, great art, great music in the here and now. Jesus isn’t just going to hand it all to us on a silver platter: oh, we’re in the millennium now, here you go! That’s there for us to do under His watchful eye, just as Adam named the animals under His watchful eye. But it’s there for us to do. That’s what the human race was created to do - to generate culture. Jesus’ job isn’t to generate culture. His job is to save the human race and set up an environment in which the human race can bring it to fruition. But He’s not going to go plant the vineyards, He’s not going write the music, He’s not going to build all the buildings, He’s not going to invent all the technology. That’s us! The great things perpetuate into the millennium and civilization once more rapidly accelerates into high productivity. We’re not going to just chunk every thing from this era in the junk pile and start over. There’s partial continuity from one age to the next. That’s what McClain said thirty years ago and we still have people that just don’t get it.

To finish this point the postmillennialists agree with the premillennialists that the kingdom of God will triumph over world culture, they just place it in

the present history rather than the future history. They say that's going to happen now and if we premill's would get off our duff and become postmill's we would see this. In their eyes we're blocking the development of godly culture and in some cases we have to admit they're correct. There are Premillennialists that all they do is just stare at the sky all day looking for Jesus to come back. We are to be watchful but that doesn't mean staring out in space all day, that means doing something for the Lord, having dominion, developing new technology, writing godly music, etc...it's a part of our sanctification, learning loyalty to Him in every area. I think you get the point.

The third checkpoint: **Evil Will Increase Before Christ's Return.** Who says yes? Premillennialism and Amillennialism say yes. Postmillennialism disagrees. They say no, evil will decrease. The point premill's and amill's are making is what do you do with the pessimistic passages in the Scripture? And there's a whole pile of them. We need not go into them. If you're familiar with the NT you know about them. In the last days men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, evil men will proceed from bad to worse, scoffers will come, etc. It's hardly a resume of godliness. How do postmill's handle these? We'll see later when we deal with it how they try to handle them. They have a slick maneuver that's winning people over to their position.

But those passages present a problem for them. Another problem is where do you have in history this progress the postmillennialist talks about? Because you've got to have built the kingdom before Jesus gets here, it's got to get better and better in order to get it good enough for Jesus to come back to accept it. Do we see this progress? Just think of the world? Boettner, a postmillennialist spokesman, admits: "On postmillennial ground it hardly seems that even in the most advanced nations on earth we have anything that is worthy of being called more than the early dawn of the millennium." He wrote that fifty years ago and imagine if he was around today. Do you see the problem? If the world is supposed to be getting better and better then where do we see that? Even in the most advanced nations technologically in the world you have spurts of spiritual progress but it's only for limited time or in pockets. Think of the 20th century - what did the most advanced nations of the 20th century produce? WWI and WWII. Does that sound like spiritual progress? The postmill's of the time didn't think so. WWI and WWII were the death knell of postmillennialism in the early half of the 20th century and it

wasn't till a couple of decades later that it had resurgence with Rushdoony and his followers. And in fact, in areas of the world where Christianity in the past had a great influence, such as North Africa and England, once it was rejected it has never come back again. Go talk to the guys trying to minister in England today. It's a dark place, churches are empty, and nobody is interested. And yet if you go back a hundred years they had the great Charles Spurgeon, hundreds of thousands of evangelicals flocked to hear him preach the word of God. England produced Lord Balfour who was so convinced of the Scriptures teaching a final restoration of Israel that he had the Balfour Declaration drawn up in 1917 to secure the nation Israel a homeland. And now if you go to England, it's pathetic. So even in places where the word of God has seen tremendous progress they've always fallen away. So on Scriptural and historical grounds premill's and amill's say, no, evil will not decrease before Christ's return, it will increase

Alright, we've gone through the history of premillennialism. It goes back to Jews before the time of Christ, it comes through Christ and the apostles, the early church fathers, it fades out with the rise of anti-Semitism, Neo-Platonic thought in the church and the state-church under Constantine but it remained in small pockets till the Reformation when the Anabaptists took it up and since then it's been growing and developing. We've also looked at the three features of premillennialism. Christ's return does not end earth history, there's still the thousand years, during that thousand years the kingdom of God will triumph over world culture and finally evil is going to increase in the present age, that's why Paul called it this present evil age, it's not getting better, it's getting worse until Christ returns.

Next time we'll look at Amillennialism, we want to understand what's being said and the historical repercussions of this way of thinking. Then we'll look at Postmillennialism after that and then we'll try to discover the real issue, what's going on and we'll resolve it and say why we believe what we believe.

¹ The actual text of 2 Enoch 33:1-2 reads, "And I appointed the eighth day also, that the eighth day should be the first-created after my work, ² and that *the first seven* revolve in the form of the seventh thousand, and that at the beginning of the eighth thousand there should be a time of not-counting, endless, with neither years nor months nor weeks nor days nor hours." *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*. 2004 (R. H. Charles, Ed.) (2:451). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

ⁱⁱ R. H. Charles comments, “From the fact that Adam did not live to be 1,000 years old, the author of the *Book of Jubilees*, 4. 30, concludes that the words of Gen. 2:17 ‘In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die’ were actually fulfilled. It is hence obvious that already before the Christian era 1,000 years had come to be regarded as one world-day. To arrive at the conception of a world-week of 7,000 years—6,000 years from the creation to the judgement, followed by 1,000 years, or a millennium of blessedness and rest—it was necessary to proceed but one step further, and this step we find was taken by the author of our text.” *Commentary on the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*. 2004 (R. H. Charles, Ed.) (2:451). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

ⁱⁱⁱ In Munster’s sermon [1521] he outlined. . . his view that they were all living in the last days and what was about to happen. It is an exposition of Daniel 2, the story of Nebuchadnezzar’s vision of the great image which was destroyed by a stone. The book of Daniel...provided Christian interpreters with...the scheme of the five kingdoms or monarchies. Four had gone: Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The fifth he identified as the contemporary obscene mixture of sacred and secular power in the coalition of the Holy Roman Empire and Holy Catholic Church. The ending of this fifth monarch, he proclaimed, was in full swing...Münster saw himself as a new Daniel...He was totally convinced that God was about to end things...He detected the beginnings of God’s final judgment in the Peasant uprising of 1524-5 and saw in the rebels God’s elect who were gathering to carry out God’s apocalyptic judgment on all unbelievers...” Walter Klaassen, *Living at the End of the Ages*: (1992)

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