

Premillennialism: The Past is the Future

Eschatology: Study of God Developing
People in His Image
Dr. Leon L. Sanders

Worldview Review



Gnostic Worldview Filter

- Understand Gnosticism, how it affects your worldview (which it does)
- Understand why you chose to accept premillennialism
 - Were you *just* taught a view
 - Did you eisegete or exegete the Bible texts



What is Premillennialism?

- The understanding that Christ will return to earth to establish His Millennial Kingdom
- There are two major views of premillennialism
 - Chiliasm
 - Historic (Classic) Premillennialism
 - Dispensational Premillennialism

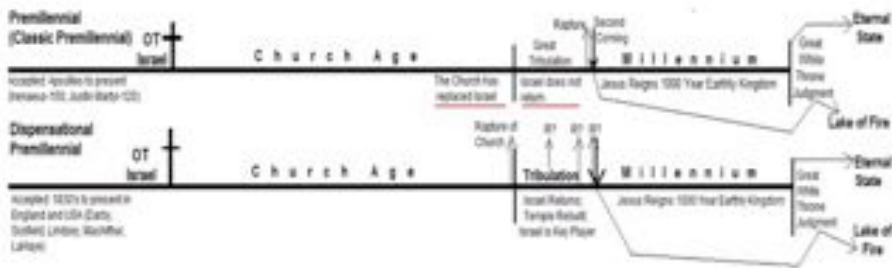
Chiliasm

- Belief that man's history is limited to 7,000 years based on 2 Peter 3:8:
 - But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.
- No correlation between this verse and eschatology
- Verse is taken out of context to "prove" this view

Chiliasm

- Peter was discussing that God will fulfill *all* that He promised in *His* time, not our time
 - Time is not a factor with God, He is outside of time
 - God is always in present tense though we are not
 - From God's perspective all is fulfilled **rapidly**
 - From man's perspective all is fulfilled **slowly**
- Some early church writers held this view

Gnostic Premillennialism



What is Classic Premillennialism?

- Belief that God will establish His Kingdom on earth
 - The Kingdom occurs after the Great Tribulation
 - Rapture occurs at end of Great Tribulation
 - Rapture involves the resurrection of “alive” & “dead”
 - The Church has replaced Israel becoming spiritual Israel similar to Amillennialism and Postmillennialism

Problems of Classic Premillennialism

- Belief in New Testament priority – the New Testament *reinterprets* the Old Testament
 - OT prophecies to Israel now belong to the Church
 - Millennial Kingdom may be only a spiritual kingdom
- There are some clear instances where the NT *does* negate something in the OT
 - The cultic Judaism sacrificial system & ceremonies

The Problem: Hermeneutics

- The Classic Premillennial system requires the same defective hermeneutical system as does
 - Amillennialism
 - Postmillennialism
- A “spiritualizing” approach that borrows heavily from gnostic practices promoting “spiritual” over material

The Problem: Hermeneutics

- This makes prophecies concerning the first advent “literal” while those concerning the second advent “spiritual”; how is that determination made?
- This is eisegesis: reading one’s worldview into the Scriptures rather than uncovering God’s message
- Violates Re 22:18-19 – Blasphemy = Gnosticism

(<http://theologicalstudies.org/blog/414-how-does-historic-premillennialism-differ-from-dispensational-premillennialism/>)

Dispensational Premillennialism

- Dispensationalism is a theological system that recognizes historical periods ordained by God to order the affairs of the world
 - *Consistent* normative hermeneutical methodology
 - Millennial Kingdom *revives* God’s plan for Israel
- This is the minority viewpoint in Christendom because of these two points

History of Dispensationalism

- Developed by J.N. Darby in 1830s in Ireland
 - Borrowed from Irenaeus who developed the concept of dividing history into divisions
 - Introduced to America by James Inglis
 - Popularized by C.I. Scofield in his study Bible
 - Fundamental movement developed to combat “higher criticism” movement that was liberalizing Protestantism in mid 1850s from Germany

History of Dispensationalism

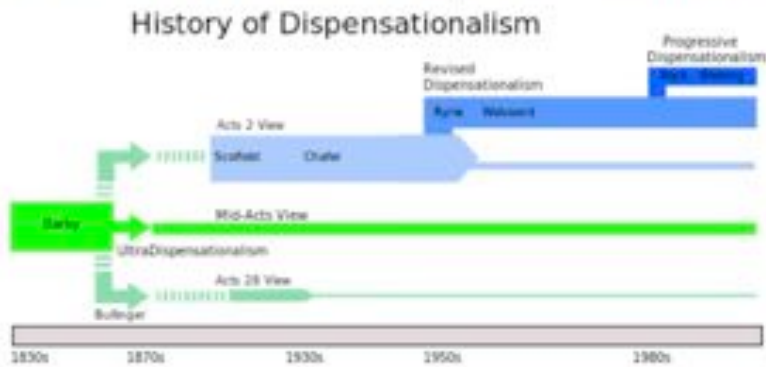
- Fundamental movement began as a union of various denominations organized around the fundamentals of the Bible
- Dispensationalism percolated throughout this movement until it became the dominate view alienating opposing viewpoints
- Modern fundamental movement vastly different from original fundamental movement (The Fundamentals)

Fundamentals of the Bible

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| • Sola Scriptura | • Substitutionary atonement |
| • Inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture | • Bodily resurrection of Jesus |
| • Virgin birth of Christ | • Imminent, personal bodily return of Christ |

This was a compromise position because it allowed Gnosticism to taint the movement because of the lack of a position on the Millennial Kingdom – most Fundamentalists today would be Dispensational Premillennialists

Various Views of Dispensationalism



Rejection of Dispensations

- Dispensationalism rejected mainly because it is a “modern” movement unfamiliar to the early church according to its critics – lacks orthodoxy
- Invokes the logical fallacies:
 - Orthodoxy—Old must mean legitimacy
 - Majority—Majority must mean legitimacy

What is a Dispensation?

- Based on Greek word *oikonomia* (οἰκονομία): to “put in order” or economy (Ep 1:10 KJV)
 - The early churches used this word to define two economies
 - Divine – God’s dealings with the world in all matters; especially, salvation, redemption and judgment
 - Ecclesiastical – Churches handling of various pastoral and disciplinary issues

Historicity Too!

- Irenaeus was the first to apply oikonomia to history
 - Most of Christendom divides history into two economies
 - OT — Law
 - NT — Grace
- Oikonomia commonly used in Church Age, Darby did not arbitrarily assign this word its meaning, he *broadened* it
- Therefore, Dispensationalism can claim orthodoxy but this does *not* prove legitimacy

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Seven Dispensations



Problems with Dispensationalism

- Small God – Believes God’s original creation was *perfect* until man sinned (surprised God), now God must *fix* the problem through the dispensations
 - God is not sovereign in this viewpoint, elevates man
 - God is not omnipresent or omniscient nor omnipotent
- Sensationalism – Since formation of Israel in 1948 Dispensationalists have been “predicting” the end of the world, and getting rich in the process

Problems with Dispensationalism

- The Rapture
 - Does not correlate with the parousia of Christ
 - Where to place the Rapture?
 - Before, during or after the Great Tribulation (Trib)?
 - The word “rapture” does not occur in Scripture though the action is described
 - There are actually two raptures”: Pre- & Post Trib

Progressive Dispensationalism

- An attempt to bring Dispensationalism in line with the Gnostic views of Christendom
 - Views only two dispensations
 - Promotes the Church as “spiritual Israel”
- Thus Gnosticism seeks to destroy normative understanding of the Scriptures, from the inside

Which Millennial View Do You Believe?

Normative Hermeneutics

- Dispensational Premillennialism

Gnostic Hermeneutics

- Amillennialism
- Postmillennialism
- Preterism
- Classic Dispensationalism
- Progressive Dispensationalism

Epilogue

- Completes our study of the foundation and synopsis of the eschatological views
- Eschatology is not the end of the Bible but its beginning & hermeneutics
- We will delve into the specifics of Dispensational Premillennialism*

