

PASSAGES PROVING PREMILLENNIALISM IS PERNICIOUS

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Many years ago Wayne Jackson observed in a series of tapes he prepared on premillennialism that approximately 95% of so-called “Christendom” believes in premillennialism. Over the years observation has demonstrated the validity of that appraisal. What is premillennialism? Premillennialism holds that Jesus Christ will one day rule on David’s throne in the literal city of Jerusalem for 1,000 years. People living today are in the “last days” or “end times.” Three basic tenets make up premillennialism: 1) the Rapture, 2) the Tribulation, and 3) the 1,000 Year Reign. The Rapture, a term nowhere found in the Bible, is believed to be the silent return of Christ at which time he raises only the sainted dead and takes them to heaven with the Christians who are living at the time. The Tribulation is a seven-year period of fierce wrath upon the earth. Annihilation of the planet narrowly is averted by the “Revelation” of Christ in which evil is destroyed and a 1,000 year reign on earth ensues. Premillennialism is an intricate twisting of the scriptures in general and the books of Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Revelation in particular to make this preconceived story seem plausible (cf. II Pet. 3:16). W. E. Blackstone was its originator; C.I. Scofield was its popularizer through the footnotes in his reference Bible. Marshall Keeble gave the best assessment of it when he defined it this way: “Pre” means “before,” “millennial” means “a thousand years,” and “ism” means “it ain’t so!”

The fanciful fabrication of premillennialism should prove it to be false. For example, fundamental to the position is the belief of not two but three comings of Jesus: 1) his birth, 2) the Rapture, and 3) the so-called Revelation prior to his reign. In addition, it advances not one resurrection of the dead but three: 1) at the Rapture, 2) prior to the 1,000 year reign, and 3) at the end of the 1,000 year reign. Further, premillennialism teaches not one but three judgments: 1) The Lord judges who the sainted dead are that will be raised in the Rapture, 2) the Lord judges who took advantage of the second chance they were given to obey God during the Tribulation and, if killed, they are raised from the dead, and 3) the final judgment following the whole shebang. The word of God teaches only the Second Coming of Christ (Heb. 9:28), only one resurrection of the dead (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15), and only one judgment (Matt. 25:31-46; II Cor. 5:10-11; Rev. 20:12-15). How can anyone who believes his Bible believe premillennialism?

Premillennialism is more than a contrivance designed to frighten people into supposed submission to God; it is pernicious or “highly injurious or destructive in character.” Consider it so under the following discussion with four divisions.

Premillennialism Dethrones Christ

Jesus Christ was raised from the dead for the purpose of reigning on David’s throne. Paul wrote, “And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust” (Rom. 15:12). Really, Jesus Christ was raised to reign in regal splendor in heavenly regions (cf. John 18:36). Put the point to the test by reading the first recorded gospel sermon from AD 33. Listen to Peter say, “Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:30-36). Premillennialism denies that Jesus Christ is presently reigning as king over his kingdom, which is the church (Matt. 16:18-19; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9). Premillennialism tries to dethrone Christ.

Premillennialism Downplays the Church

In the pernicious system of premillennialism there is the perception that Jesus Christ fully intended to establish his kingdom when he began his personal ministry on earth, but when he was rejected by the Jews and crucified, necessity dictated that God devise an emergency measure, a “plan B,” or as an afterthought the church was introduced. Premillennialists speak of the church age being a kind of parenthesis in the Lord’s timetable of final things. Yet, Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 show positively that Jesus knew he would be rejected and crucified by the Jews; therefore, there exists no need nor place for a “parenthesis” of any sort. Additionally, the church conforms to the “eternal purpose” of God’s scheme of things. Paul said, “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”

(Eph. 3:10-11). The blood Jesus shed on the cross purchased the church, and he adds all the ones being saved to it (Acts 20:28; 2:47). The environment of denominationalism is ripe for criticism of what the Bible says about the church since denominationalism castigates those who teach what the Bible says about the terms of membership, organization, work, and worship of the church. Christ saves only those in his church like a ship in the midst of the North Atlantic Ocean in the winter saves its passengers from perishing or a ship in the South China Sea during the storms of summer saves its sailors from sinking into its perilous depths. People trying to convince others that “the church doesn’t save you” might just as well try to convince passengers on the high seas that the ship doesn’t save you (cf. Eph. 1:22-23; 4:5; 5:23).

Premillennialism Disrespects the Cross

Disrespect for the cross of Christ is demonstrated by premillennialism because it holds that the cross was merely a capricious act of contriving culprits that was unforeseen by God and forced him to regroup, as already discussed, and devise “plan B,” the church. In sharp contrast Peter said, “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23). When the Psalmist said, “For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture,” he was writing about crucifixion in general, which was unknown as a form of capital punishment until two hundred years later, and about the crucifixion of Christ in particular (Psa. 22:16-18; Matt. 27:35). Premillennialism disallows the foreknowledge of God.

Premillennialism also disallows the foreknowledge of the prophets of God because it holds that the intention of God was for Christ to be coronated king by the Jews but instead, to the surprise of high heaven, he was crucified by the Jews. The prophets foretold the crucifixion of Christ and of the coming of the church as was presented in the sermon on the first Pentecost after the resurrection as the following chart shows:

Acts 2:16-21	Joel 2:28-32
Acts 2:25-27	Psalm 16:8-11
Acts 2:30	Psalm 132:11
Acts 2:34	Psalm 110:1
Acts 2:39	Genesis 12:1-3

Therefore, premillennialism disrespects the cross of Christ.

Premillennialism Disregards the Context

The 1,000 years vital to the heartbeat of premillennialism is wrenched from Revelation 20. The context of both the book and the chapter are grievously violated by this system of infidelity. The very first verse of the book affirms the symbolic nature of the work, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John” (Rev. 1:1). What does premillennialism do in chapter 20? It literalizes the 1,000 year reference. This move violates the genre of literature styled “apocalyptic,” that is, utilizing signs and symbols to reveal its message.

Premillennialism uses this text to teach seven things essential to it which are not found in the passage: 1) the site being Jerusalem, 2) the restoration of the Law of Moses, 3) the return of the Jews to Palestine, 4) the restoration of Jewish worship under the law, 5) the bodily resurrection of the sainted dead, 6) the throne of David, 7) us. The ones reigning with Christ for the thousand years are “the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God” (v. 4). Since the premillennialist adamantly asserts that this text is literal, when he makes anyone except someone who has been beheaded partake in the 1,000 year reign he violates the context and is branded with inconsistency.

Revelation is about the victory of the cause of Christ over every enemy. The key passage is Revelation 11:15, “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” Christians who were losing their lives mentioned early on in the book as crying out, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” are seen in this latter chapter of the book as serving as priests and reigning with Christ for an extended period of time represented by the symbolic reference to the number 1,000 (Rev. 6:10; 20:4-6).

The mention of the first resurrection in verse five is not a bodily resurrection but the resurrection of the cause of Christ, which is suffering due to the fierce persecution inflicted on the church. Christians who would remain faithful and overcome evil would “not be hurt of the second death” (Rev. 2:11). Those who have part in the first resurrection, a resurrection of devotion to the cause of Christ, would likewise not be hurt by the “second death” (Rev. 20:5-6). John wrote, “And

death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14-15). Therefore, by remaining faithful amid serious challenges to stray from Christ, Christians could avoid “the lake of fire” and enjoy the rich rewards of redemption in Christ (Rev. 21:7).