Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Why Every Calvinist Should Be a Premillennialist, Part 6
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
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It was back in March when we had the Shepherds Conference here at our church that I decided to give a message on the future of Israel and the issue of eschatology and the doctrine of election and pointing to the fact that if you believe in the doctrine of election, the Old Testament was very clear that God had elected Israel for a future glorious Kingdom and salvation. I gave that in one message, one, I think, very important message that was very well received and stirred up no small amount of conversation. Since that time I realized that I needed to break it out for any future benefit that it might have and so this is part six in what is an expanded version of that single message that I gave in March. And this will be our last look at this important subject.

I originally entitled it, “Sovereign Election, Israel and Eschatology.” It really was a presentation of biblical premillennialism. Or, if you will, biblical Millennialism, that is the confidence that the Scripture indeed does teach a future one-thousand year reign of Christ on the earth explicitly and exactly as Revelation 20 describes it and that in that one-thousand year reign of Christ on the earth, there will be the fulfillment of all God’s promises to Israel in the past given through the Abrahamic Covenant, Davidic Covenant and New Covenant and all of God’s people, not just Israel, but all of God’s people through history including the redeemed church and the redeemed in the time of the Tribulation to come will all enjoy the blessings of that glorious reign. And so we have been looking at this very clear Scripture teaching about a future promise concerning the Kingdom that God would bring, ruled over by Messiah, especially to fulfill His promises to Israel but to encompass all of God’s people.

I’ve been telling you, as well, that there are people who deny that. They call themselves by a strange sort of negative term Amillennialists, as a way to say they deny that there will be an actual earthly Kingdom, they deny that there will be the future salvation of Israel, that there will be a reign of Christ actually, physically on the earth and the “A” being a negative, they negate that.

There are others who call themselves post-millennialists who say there is going to be some kind of kingdom of earth. They don’t like to think of it as a thousand years usually. So in the true sense it’s not a millennium which means a thousand, but that there will be a kingdom on earth of sorts, but Christ will not come until it’s over. So it will not be a kingdom in which He will actually reign on the earth.

So the post-millennialists say there will be a spiritual kingdom and once that spiritual kingdom has run its course, Christ will return. The A-millennialists say there is no spiritual kingdom. Christ will just

come when it is time for Him to come and bring it in to human history.

This is in contrast to what the Bible says. What the Bible says is there will be a thousand-year kingdom, Christ will reign in that kingdom and this kingdom is defined for us both in New Testament passages and Old Testament passages and we have taken some pains to work our way through those passages so that we fully understand what the Word of God says.

Now to go back to the foundation for just a very, very brief moment, you're going to end up as a millennialist. You're going to end up with a real kingdom, with Christ really on earth, reigning in Israel, in Jerusalem to a redeemed...over a redeemed nation of Israel and all the saints gathered around, both those who have been in heaven who return with Christ to the Kingdom, and those who were saved during the time of Tribulation and enter into the Kingdom in physical form, a real kingdom. That's explicitly what Scripture says. And I would just remind you that the plain meaning of a text is always the preferred interpretation. There is never a reason to spiritualize, to allegorize, to try to explain a text away if the plain meaning is clear. Only if the context of a passage gives compelling reason to assume that the language is somehow symbolic or somehow spiritual should you ever look for any other than the obvious meaning. Where the plain sense of Scripture makes good sense, to seek any other sense is nonsense.

For that reason, I believe, that millennialism, or premillennialism, meaning Christ will come before the Millennium and establish it, best reflects the correct and consistent understanding of Scripture. Christ will return to earth to judge the world, establish His Kingdom for a thousand years during which Satan will be bound and his demons, Revelation 20 settles this question definitively and there is no other passage in Scripture that suggests any different scenario. All the Old Testament prophecies and there are many, many of them concerning this final Kingdom harmonize best with literal earthly kingdom. Christ reigning, Israel fulfilling...receiving the fulfillment of all its promises and all the saints gathered there as well. And so, amillennialism is a defection from the clear and straightforward meaning of Scripture and so it postmillennialism.

We have been asking the question then, where do they come up with this? Where do they get this? If God made covenants with Israel, promises to Israel, plans for Israel for a future Kingdom, if they are reiterated again and again in the Old Testament and repeated even in the New Testament, and if this Kingdom is described so clearly in the book of Revelation, along with the salvation of Israel necessarily since 144 thousand Jews in the future will preach the gospel, and since there will be a great awakening in the city of Jerusalem where the whole population will give glory to God as Revelation 11 describes it, if that is what Scripture says so clearly and if the promises of God are unilateral, unconditional and irrevokable where does this come from? In fact several of you have asked me that, in fact somebody asks me that after every one of the first five messages...where do they come up with this? And to answer that, I want you to go back to the text that we looked at this morning, Luke chapter 20, and here is one of the verses that they used...Luke chapter 20...and we

looked at it this morning. It is in the context of a parable that our Lord gave about a man who owned land, agricultural land. He owned a vineyard. He went away on a long journey and he rented out his land to tenant farmers, contract workers. These were people who had skill in developing grapes, the crop but didn't own the land. This was a perfect scenario for them. They worked for an absentee land owner. They get to keep a fair portion of the crop which is a wonderful livelihood for them. And as hard as they worked, that's how productive it could be and that's how well they can do and they pay to the owner a percentage agreed upon in a contract. It comes time, the story tells us in Luke 20, this is also in Matthew 21 and Mark 12 as well, the same story, time comes for the owner to send his slave to collect what is his. It is harvest time so he sends one slave and they abuse him and give him nothing. He sends a second one, they do the same. He sends a third one, they do the same. He says, "What shall I do? I will send...verse 13...my beloved son, perhaps they will respect him. I will now send my son." They have no respect for slaves which could be the case for some people. They will certainly have respect for my son. But when the vine growers saw him, they reasoned with one another saying, "This is the heir, let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours." They threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What therefore will the owner of the vineyard do to them? And the answer, "He will come and destroy those vine growers and will give the vineyard to others."

Very clear story. It's a story about Israel's history. Israel is God's vineyard. That is to say, God chose them to be His special people, to receive His revelation, to be stewards of the covenants and the Scriptures and all divine truth and God put over them certain leaders. Those leaders, the priests, even the kings, the elders, all of those who are responsible to bring leadership to that people with a view toward producing or seeing produced in them fruit unto righteousness which then could be offered to God in an expression of worship and praise. The leaders of Israel failed. The vine growers in the story are the leaders of Israel. They failed, they failed miserably. In fact, they killed the prophets. And you need only briefly to be reminded that Jesus described Jerusalem, it's in Matthew 23, it's again in Luke 13, as Jerusalem, Jerusalem who kills the prophets and stones those that are sent to you. This is their history. Through all their history when prophets came from God demanding some spiritual fruit, demanding that the people give an account for what they owed God by way of obedience and worship, they rejected the prophets. That's their history. Finally God says, "I'll send My Son." He sends His Son, they kill the Son. What will He do? He will give the vineyard to others.

Now there are people who think that this spells out in very clear terms the end of Israel, that all the promises are therefore cancelled, that all of them are brought to naught, to nothing. It's over. He's giving the vineyard to others. He's giving spiritual privilege to others. He's giving the truth to others, the stewardship of Scripture, as we talked about it this morning, the custodianship of divine truth is going to be given to others. And that is absolutely true...that is absolutely true.

But the question is, just exactly who are the others? Very important question. Now Matthew 21:43 in Jesus telling of the story recorded by Matthew, he says, "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation or a people bringing forth the fruit of it." So the vineyard is the Kingdom of

God, it is the sphere where God works. It is the sphere of God's Kingdom. It is the sphere in which God is working His salvation. And the first group of people who could be called God's vineyard, or God's Kingdom, were the Jews. It was the Jews who were so privileged. Their leaders were false. Their leaders did not lead them into righteousness. They themselves were rebellious as well. So God will carve out a new people with new leaders...a new people with new leaders. And as I pointed out in our study of Luke 20, the new leaders are already being formed. The first generation of those new leaders is the Apostles who were given power by Christ and authority by Christ over disease, over death, over demons, who were given insight into the truths that were hidden from everybody else, who were given the explanation of parables and analogies and stories that our Lord told while the others never heard the explanation, so it was darkness to them while it was light to His Apostles and His disciples. They were given, as Matthew 16 says, the keys to the Kingdom. They were given the gospel and the gospel truth to open the doors to salvation. The new stewards then are the Apostles. And following them the New Testament preachers called prophets, New Testament prophets. And following them, according to Ephesians, the evangelists and the teaching pastors, all the way down to today, those who are the guardians and the proclaimers and the teachers and the instructors of New Testament gospel truth...they are the new vine growers. And under their leadership the Kingdom of God has moved from being predominantly in the realm of the Jews to being predominantly Gentile.

This is true. This is not arguable. I wouldn't argue against this. This is precisely what the parable means. In fact I read you a verse this morning in Luke...I'm sorry, Luke's writings, but Luke writing in Acts chapter 13, listen to verse 46 again. "Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, 'It was necessary that the Word of God should be spoken to you first because you were God's original chosen nation. Since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles, for thus...verse 47...the Lord has commanded us. I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles that you should bring salvation to the end of the earth.' And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the Word of the Lord and as many as been appointed to eternal life believed." Yes, definitely a turning to the Gentiles, a new leadership and a new vineyard, a new people that embody the Kingdom. In Acts 18:6, speaking again of Paul, "And when they resisted and blasphemed...this is the Jews who were blaspheming the gospel, prior verse...Paul was devoting himself completely to the Word as every minister should, every true and faithful steward, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ, and when they resisted and blasphemed...he shook out his garments and said to them, 'Your blood be upon your own heads, I am clean. From now on I shall go to the Gentiles.'"

This is unmistakable. This is not arguable. Yes there's clearly a transition. There's a new leadership and there's a new vineyard, predominantly Gentile. The church extends to the ends of the earth. The question is, is the displacement of Israel as God's chosen people in the middle of His redemptive plan, is this displacement of the leaders of Israel with the Apostles and prophets and evangelists and teaching pastors of the church, is this permanent? And that gets us to the question that must be answered. Amillennialists say yes..yes. Postmillennialists, just another version of an amillennialist

view, they say yes. Scripture says no. Was there a transition? Absolutely. You can look and see, can't you? You can see that the leaders of Judaism are not the leaders of God's vineyard, that the Jewish people are not the people of God but rather that the leaders of the true church and the true church, they are God's vineyard. The transition unmistakably has taken place. The only question is, is it a permanent one, or is it a temporary one? We have endeavored to answer that question five weeks in a row by looking at all kinds of Scripture. But the one definitive text is Romans 11...Romans 11. So let us look at it just one more brief time...Romans 11. And I want to just draw you down to verse 25. "I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed," or to put it another way, "I do not want you, brethren, to be amillennialists." "Lest you be wise in your own estimation that a partial hardening," only partial because there are many Jews who have come to faith in Jesus Christ, a partial hardening has happened to Israel. Listen to this, "Until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, when all who have been chosen, all who have been appointed unto eternal life," as we read it in Acts 18, or Acts 13:48, "all who have been appointed to eternal life through the ministry of the church when all of them have been gathered in, when the...to borrow the language of our Lord in Luke 21:24...when the times of the Gentiles ends, when the fullness of the Gentiles come and all of them have been gathered in, then...verse 26 says...and thus all Israel will be saved." Because this partial hardening only happens until the church is complete. Then all Israel will be saved, that's exactly what Scripture says just as it is written. And he goes back to Isaiah 59:20, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob and this is My covenant with them when I take away their sins." This is a partial hardening of Israel and it is a temporary one. Yes, from the standpoint of the gospel, verse 28, they are enemies for your sake because they rejected, the gospel came to us. But from the standpoint of God's choice, they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. What does that mean? For the sake of God's promises and covenants made to the fathers in Genesis. For the gifts and calling of God are irrevokable. God doesn't go back on His Word.

It's really unmistakable. And when you look at the future, you see then a time for Israel's salvation. You see a time for all the Kingdom promises to be fulfilled. And I gave you a text this morning and I'll give it to you again tonight because it ought to be on this particular tape or DVD, it's in Zechariah chapter 8, a marvelous look at the future gathering of Israel in the Kingdom. Zechariah 8:1, "Then the Word of the Lord of host came saying, 'Thus says the Lord of host, I'm exceedingly jealous for Zion,'" that's for Israel, "'I'm jealous for great wrath for her.'" I'm angry jealous. "Thus says the Lord, 'I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.'" That is not ambiguous, is it? "Then Jerusalem will be called the city of truth." It's not now, it wasn't the first time Jesus came. Not only will Jerusalem be called the city of truth, but the mountain of the Lord of hosts will be called the holy mountain. Jerusalem will become the source of truth and holiness.

And then go down to verse 20. "Peoples will come, nations will come, inhabitants of many cities will come." This describes the Kingdom, they'll come from all over the world. "They'll go to one another saying, 'Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord, to seek the Lord of hosts I will also go. So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and entreat the

favor of the Lord.'" I love this, the twenty-third verse, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, in those days ten men from all the nations, ten Gentiles, will hang on the garment of a Jew saying, Let's go with you for we have heard that God is with you." God will come back to Israel, save Israel, dwell in the presence of the people of Israel gathered in the Kingdom. This is the future promise of God, unmistakable, unambiguous and not really arguable from any text of Scripture. Listen to Micah 4, "And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills and the people will stream into it and many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths for from Zion will go forth the Law, even the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Jerusalem again, the center of the Kingdom of Christ over this whole earth, will be the source of truth and from it will go the Word of the Lord and from it will go holiness and He will rule with righteousness and peace over the whole earth. And the Jews will be at the center of that in the fulfillment of everything God promised to the fathers.

So it's fine if you want to point out a transition in Luke 20:16, there clearly is one, we're living in it. Anybody who knows anything at all knows today, anybody today who understands the Bible at all knows that today the Jews as a nation and their spiritual leaders have been set aside and that God is doing His work through the New Testament. And those who are faithful proclaimers and guardians of the New Testament are being used by God to cause His vineyard to grow and produce the fruit of righteousness. The only question is, is it the last chapter? The answer is no.

Now let's go back to our questions for just a moment. We had a series of questions to kind of get at this truth. Is the Old Testament amillennial? And the answer was no. We asked the question, were the Jews who had the Old Testament and read it and understood it amillennial? And the answer is no.

The third question we asked was, was Jesus amillennial? And the answer was no. And the fourth question, were the Apostles amillennial? And the answer was no. So you don't find replacement theology in the Old Testament, in the Intertestamental period or among the Jews in the time of our Lord, Jesus didn't teach replacement theology and none of the writers of the New Testament taught it either. And we looked at the writings of Peter and John and Paul and James and the writer of the book of Hebrews, there's nothing in the writings of the New Testament that says the promises to Israel are cancelled and transferred to the church. There's nothing that says that whatever God had once planned for Israel was permanently cancelled. Nothing says that. There is nothing that cancels the future earthly reign of Jesus Christ in favor of some spiritual reign from heaven.

One other passage I would draw your attention to that amillennialists use is at the end of the book of Galatians. Galatians 6:16, this is a very popular one, but shouldn't be a problem. Galatians 6:16, Paul says, "Those who walk by this rule," that is those who walk in genuine salvation, those who walk according to the salvation in the cross, according to grace, those who are new creations, "For them peace and mercy be upon them and upon the Israel of God." Amillennialists say the Israel of God,

that must be the church...that must refer to the church. That's certainly not apparent in the text. The very simple meaning here is Jews who are saved, they are the Israel of God, as contrasted with those who are the subject of this Galatian letter, Judaizers, came in and corrupted the churches of Paul, spreading their salvation by circumcision, salvation by ceremony, salvation by keeping the Law. They didn't flagrantly deny Christ, they just wanted to add law-keeping and circumcision. They are not the true believers. They are not the Israel of God.

This is language that is not unfamiliar, by the way, to Paul. Romans 2:28, "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh, he is a Jew who is one inwardly and circumcision is that which is of the heart by the Spirit." He's talking about the Jew who really belongs to God because he has been transformed by belief in the gospel on the inside. Again, it's reminiscent of Romans 9:6, "It is not as though the Word of God has failed, they are not Israel who are descended from Israel. Not all Israel is Israel." The Israel of God simply means genuine Jewish believers and there are in the church many genuine Jewish believers. In fact, when the church began in Jerusalem and three thousand were saved, the church began with three thousand Jews and expanded in Jerusalem to as many as twenty thousand or more and they were Jews until the gospel went to Antioch and from there was launched into the Gentile world. But even when the gospel was taken to the Gentile world, they went, first of all, to the synagogue and preached the gospel to the Jews.

So the Apostles didn't teach Amillennialism. Jesus didn't teach it. The Old Testament doesn't teach it. Where did it come from?

Well let me give you a simple answer. It came after the Bible was finished. It came after the Bible was finished. If it's not in the Bible, then it has to be after the Scripture. Did it come in the early centuries? It did. But it's kind of strange if you just kind of track the history. I'm not going to get you all involved in this, believe me, as you're not going to remember it. Suffice it to say this, when you read the early fathers, and we're talking about really early...say 60 to 135, people like Papias. It is said of Papias that he says, Papias does, who lived right at the close of the apostolic era, he was born and John was still alive, he says there will be a millennium after the resurrection from the dead when the personal reign of Christ will be established on the earth.

And that would have been perhaps under the influence of John and the Revelation. There are others who said the same thing, there definitely will be a Kingdom. Even Justin Martyr who lived from 100 to 165 said, "But I and others who are right minded Christians on all points are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead and a thousand years in Jerusalem which then will be built, adorned and enlarged as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare." On and on the history goes. Phillip Shoft(?), one of the great historians who died in 1893, looked back at what's called the pre-Nicene fathers, 325 and before...325 being the Council of Nicaea, just a good sort of fixed point. Behind that, for those 300 years behind that, Shoft writes, "The most striking point in the eschatology of the anti-

Nicene age is the prominent millenarianism, that is the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years before the general resurrection and the judgment. It is the widely held opinion of distinguished teachers such as Barnabas, Papias, Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Mythodias(?), Lectantious(??)and on and on and on. Couldn't believe anything else because the Bible was clear, there would be a Kingdom.

Now the Jewishness of that Kingdom was another issue. John Chrysostom lived about 400, he said regarding the fact that they, the Jews, shall believe and be saved, Paul brings Isaiah to witness who cries aloud and says, "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. If then this has been promised but never yet has happened in their case, nor have they ever enjoyed the remission of sins, certainly it will come to pass." Because that's what the promise was. Isaiah 59:20 and I read it to you as it's quoted in Romans 9. They took a literal, normal, natural approach to Scripture and they came up with a millennium. And Christ coming first, establishing the Kingdom, followed by, of course, the general resurrection and judgment. Even John Calvin could not ignore this. And Calvin, by the way, was hard on any allegorical interpretation of any passage. He wrote, "The error of allegory has been the source of many evils, not only did it open the way for adulteration of the natural meaning of Scripture, but also set up boldness in allegorizing as the chief exegetical virtue." Now you could come up with such wild things that you were celebrated by your imagination. Calvin, of course, resented all of that. He was instrumental in the Geneva Bible, 1575, the Geneva Bible says this, "The blindness of the Jews is neither so universal that the Lord has no elect in that nation, neither will it be continual, for there will be a time in which they also will effectually embrace that which they now so stubbornly and for the most part reject and refuse." There's no other way to interpret Scripture.

Many of the church fathers who interpreted the Scripture, of course, accurately all came to the same conclusion. There will be a Kingdom and there will be a future salvation of Israel. Unless you change the meaning of Israel and Israel doesn't mean Israel, or unless you come up with some wild allegorical interpretation of what is otherwise simple and straight-forward language, you can't have the church replacing Israel and receiving some spiritual fulfillment. But even though some of these fathers saw an actual reign of Christ to some degree or another, a growing anti-Semitism began to crawl through the early church and cause some to resent the Jews and seek to replace them. There were actually early church fathers who called the church the new Israel like Justin Martyr, from 100 to 165, who wanted to hold on to a millennium, but wanted the church to replace Israel. He was followed by another somewhat familiar church father named Origen, spelled O-r-i-g-e-n, who established the allegorical method for interpretation of Scripture and he allegorized the text related to Israel. But perhaps the most notable contributor to making the church the new Israel was Augustine in the fifth century. And it did come from, as we talked about a few weeks ago, a growing resentment toward Jews related to the fact that they had rejected Christ.

In preparation for this study, I have read a book called Israel and the Church by Arnold Deprose(?). This is a fascinating book and exceptionally well done. First printed in Italian, in 2004 it was translated into English. It shows the effects of this idea that the church was the new Israel and Israel was out. It had a very, very profound effect on the church in the Middle Ages on the church in the Dark Ages. Here's how. Israel had altars, right? Worship in the Old Testament, Israel, altars, sacrifices, a sign at birth, a priesthood, a jubilee year. Israel had rituals, rather than preaching. Where do you think Roman Catholicism came from? It came right out of that concept. If the church is the new Israel, we need an altar. You'll never see an altar in a Christian church. We don't offer sacrifices, even a repeated supposed sacrifice of Jesus Christ, horror of horrors. We don't have a priesthood. We don't have a Jubilee Year. We're not caught up in symbols and ceremonies and ritual. But all of that got imported out of the worship of the Old Testament into quasi-Christianity in the Medieval church. From the formation of the church in those early centuries through to the present day, Roman Catholicism is Judaism recast. All its trappings demonstrate an Old Testament system of shadows and symbols. Priests, who are the intermediaries, ceremonies...the Roman Catholic Church is sacramental, you commune with God through rituals, sacraments, it is sacerdotal, that is it is in the hands of priests. It is hierarchical as Old Testament Judaism was with a High Priest and descending orders of priests. It is institutional. It is not personal. It is not a spiritual organism. It is not centered on the proclamation of the Word of God and it doesn't deal with spiritual reality, it deals with symbol and shadow. These are the effects of designing the church as the new Israel and justifying the transition of all those components of Old Testament shadowy worship into this new quasi-Christianity. It is a recast kind of Judaism where it's more important to have an altar and somebody die every time you meet than to celebrate a risen Christ who died once.

There's another effect of replacement theology, it has a damaging effect on Jewish evangelism...on Jewish evangelism. Now if I was an Amillennialist and I have many friends who are and I love them, if I was an Amillennialist, I would be in a dilemma. Let's say that I decide that I'm going to go to Israel and become a missionary and I'm going to meet a Jew who is orthodox and I'm going to say to him this, "My friend, Jesus is your Messiah, Jesus is your King, Jesus is your Messiah." He may say to me, "Really! Where's the Kingdom?" If the King has come, where's the Kingdom? If I'm an Amillennialist, my next line is, "Oh, it's here." "It is? It's here. What do you mean it's here?" We are not a holy people. We're not a blessed people. We're not a protected people. Was it yesterday where the president of Iran said he's going to obliterate Israel off the face of the planet? This is the Kingdom? If this is all there is to the Kingdom, that is a hard sell. You mean to say the Messiah came and established His Kingdom and this is it? In what sense does righteousness prevail? In what sense does peace prevail in the world? Where is the Son of David reigning on the throne? Where is truth and holiness?

To which you must say if you're an Amillennialist, "Well, it's not for you."

“What do you mean it’s not for us? All the promises were given to us.”

“Yeah, I know, but you’re out and I’m in. But Jesus is still your Messiah.”

“Sure.” So this is the Kingdom, huh?

And Jews are being killed every day and hated and Israel is under siege, this is not the Kingdom. This is not the Kingdom. Therefore, friend, Jesus is not...what?...a Messiah. There’s no leap. You understand the problem. And if you then say, “Well, God cancelled all His covenants and promises with you and He’s given them to us and we’d like to share them with you. We’re just that kind of folks. We’re God’s new elect people, chosen by Him for eternal salvation and blessing, and you’re out.” But what about His promises? What about His Covenants? Then the Old Testament isn’t true, it can’t be trusted. And if God did that to us, this Jewish friend might say back to you, “I hope you don’t end up where we are. If God can’t be trusted for what He said to us, why could He be trusted for what He said to you?”

You really end up with serious issues here, and I’ve just given you a couple of them. Roman Catholicism and the difficulty of evangelism. Now if I believe in a millennial future and I go to the same Jewish person and I say, “Dear friend, Jesus is your Messiah.” And he says, “Where’s the Kingdom?” And I say, “It’s waiting and let me show you what it’s waiting for.” And I go back to Zechariah, it’s waiting for you to look on Him whom you’ve pierced and embrace Him as your true Savior, and then a fountain of cleansing will be opened and then your Kingdom will come. You mean God will keep His Word? You mean what God promised He will do? Yes, the future of Israel is all glorious. You’ll have the land that was originally promised to you. You’ll have a Kingdom beyond your imagination. You’ll be the influence of the world. Ten Gentiles will be hanging on your cloak, on your garment, wanting you to take you to the mountain of the Lord to hear the truth that you’ll believe. But you’ll never have that Kingdom until you’ve embraced the King. That’s reasonable. You can show that through the whole Old Testament. You can even take them to Isaiah 53 and say, “Look, He came and He was wounded for your transgressions and bruised for your iniquities and the chastisement producing your peace with God was placed on Him. He was led to slaughter so you can be forgiven. You just need to put your trust in the one who paid, the one who was God’s final, full offering.” And then you could take him to the book of Hebrews and lay it all out.

The clear teaching of Scripture is there is a Kingdom and there will be in the future salvation for the nation Israel. You know, even those...even those many of those historic Reformed theologians can’t avoid this reality. Even those who don’t want to acknowledge an actual literal and don’t want to acknowledge the Jewishness of that Kingdom can’t get away from what Scripture says. William Perkins says, “I gather that the nation of the Jews shall be called and converted.” It was almost like it’s going to happen, it’s contrary to the system but it’s going to happen. Richard Sibbs(?)a wonderful Puritan died in 1635, when the fullness of the Gentiles is come in, then comes the conversion of the

Jews. Why may we not expect it? They were the people of God. Samuel Rutherford, died in 1661, “O to see the sight next to Christ coming in the clouds, the most joyful. O day, O longed for an lovely day, O dawn, O sweet Jesus, let me see thy sight which will be as life from the dead. Thee and Thy ancient people in mutual embraces.”

John Owen when preaching before the House of Commons in 1649 spoke of the bringing home of his ancient people, the Jews, to be one fold with the fullness of the Gentiles. Matthew Henry, “That though for the present time the Jews are cast off, yet the rejection is not final. They are not cast off forever.” I’m reading some of these because I want you to know that not everybody wiped this off the slate theologically. Cotton Mather, “I lay before the Lord, I lift up my cries for the conversion of the Jewish nation.” Thomas Boston, died in 1732, “There’s a day coming when there shall be a national conversion of the Jews, converted into the faith of Christ.” John Guille(?)died 1771, “The space of a thousand years in Revelation is to be taken definitely, for just this number of years exactly as appears from having the article prefixed to them, THE thousand years and are called afterwards no less than four times Ta Killia eth(???), the thousand years, these thousand years are to be understood literally and definitively as before of just such an exact number in term of years.

And I say those things and I go back with that because sometimes you get accused, “Well this is some deal that only arrived in this century, somebody in 1800 invented this. Nobody has ever believed this.” No, this goes way, way back. Even our beloved Jonathan Edwards says the Jews and all their dispersions shall cast away their old infidelity and shall have their hearts wonderfully changed and hate themselves for their past unbelief and obstinacy. And it was...it was Edwards who said the church was the new Israel, but he still couldn’t deny the future conversion of Israel. And there are many, many others that I won’t read to you.

The future salvation of Israel is established unmistakably in Romans 11. Why not the Kingdom with all the promises? Why not the full thing? Why would you say we believe in the future salvation of Israel but not the fulfillment of all the Kingdom promises in the Old Testament and not the thousand-year Kingdom? Why not take it all? Why not take it all?

And I close with some things to put in perspective. What is the benefit of getting Israel right? Getting your eschatology right? The benefits are significant. First of all, God is glorified. God is glorified. We glorify Him in advance of what is coming. Our hearts are filled with hope of the coming glory of God in the reign of Jesus Christ. He gets all the glory. His Word is true. He is faithful. The Covenants are unconditional. He will fulfill all His promises. They do not depend on human inability. They depend on sovereign grace.

Christ is exalted, secondly. He reigns in glory on the earth. The last vision of this earth, seeing Jesus, was hanging on a cross. They’ll see Him again when He comes in blazing glory. Every eye sees Him, fills the earth with His glory and judgment and the Kingdom. Getting it right in the future glorifies God

and exalts Christ.

The Holy Spirit, thirdly, is honored in the mighty work of regeneration of that final nation Israel, that final group of ethnic Jews who according to Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 and 37, will be given the Holy Spirit. He is the glorious agent who empowers the final salvation of Israel and leads to the glory of the Kingdom.

Another benefit of getting it right is Scripture becomes clear. A uniform hermeneutic or set of principles is maintained, not arbitrarily set aside to eliminate Israel and substitute the church which leads to all manner of eschatological confusion and spiritualization of redemptive history.

Number five, you keep intact the greatest historical illustration of sovereign election. You keep intact the greatest historical illustration of sovereign election. Israel, God has elected Israel, we see it. He's preserved them to their final salvation. This is how His election works. He keeps His promise and His Covenant.

Number six, another implication...could spend some time on this, I won't...the meaning of mystery in the New Testament is maintained. Over, and over, and over in the New Testament we are told that the New Testament is the mystery hidden in ages past, now revealed. The church is not just Israel moved into a new segment. The church is a mystery hidden, not seen. It is something brand new, unknown in the Old Testament. The meaning of mystery kept intact.

Number seven in my little list. Normal language serves to interpret all Scripture including eschatology. Just take what it says. Revelation 1:3, look at it for a moment, this is probably a good point to make toward the end, Revelation 1:3, "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy and heed the things which are written in it, for the time is near." You know, this is a real great glimpse of something. Do you notice, "Blessed is he who reads" is in the singular, and "those who hear and heed" are in the plural. What do you have here? You have one reader and many listeners. What you have here is a picture of exactly what happened in the early church. Somebody read and everybody heard. That's how they would be exposed to the book of Revelation. The reader would be blessed and those who heard the words of the prophecy would also be blessed and who heeded the things that are written in it. Blessing is pronounced upon the reader and the hearer. This is how the early church worked. They had at best...at best...one copy of Scripture. One copy, probably seven copies of Revelation were taken and distributed to the seven churches so that each of the seven churches had one copy and somebody read it. And the people understood it and were blessed.

What am I saying? I'm saying the book of Revelation is not written for mystics, it's not written for allegorists. It's not written for people who are academics. It's not written for people with wild and vivid imaginations. It is written for the life of the church. Somebody stands up and reads it and the people

understand it and obey it. That means it has to be taken at face value.

Number eight, you get your eschatology right, get Israel right, get the doctrine of election right and the chronology of Scripture is left intact. The chronology of Scripture is left intact. For example, just take the book of Revelation, chapters 1 to 3, you have the church on earth. Chapters 4 and 5, the church appears in heaven, which means the church has been Raptured, they're now in heaven. Chapter 6 through 19, back to earth, the Tribulation, divine wrath explodes on the earth. Chapter 19, the Tribulation ends with the return of Christ. Chapter 20, He sets up His Kingdom, reigns for a thousand years. Chapter 21 and 22, the New Heaven and the New Earth. Simple chronology left intact.

And the ninth thing to think about, the truly biblical and historical world view is complete...a truly biblical historical world view is complete. We know the full story from creation to consummation, from creation to uncreation and new creation. We know the whole story. And knowing the whole story becomes doxological...and we're back to where we started, the glory of God, the honor of Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the Word. And I don't know about you but I want that complete understanding of all that Scripture has revealed.

So in final summary, a millennial theology is laid out in Scripture is the only view that honors sovereign electing grace and God's promise and covenant, that honors the truthfulness of His Word, that honors the teaching of Old Testament prophets, Jesus and New Testament writers. It is the only view that allows Christ to be honored as supreme ruler over His creation now in the hands of Satan temporarily. It is the only understanding that looks to the earthly millennial Kingdom established at Christ's return as the true and necessary bridge from human history to eternal glory.

History will not dribble to an end. We will not build the Kingdom. The Kingdom is not here yet. As we are faithful to what the Word of God teaches, we light the fire of glorious hope. We ignite the flames of biblical clarity and we lead people to the most vast and comprehensive doxology. This truth, I think, has to be taken at heart and return to the church for its own edification and the honor of its Lord and head, Jesus Christ. Let's pray.

Father, we know that we have no capacity to understand the future unless You reveal it to us. We thank You that You have. We thank You that as Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 15:24, when the end comes the Kingdom will be delivered to You. It all resolves in the end to You and You will reign forever. We thank You, O God, that You've given us this vast and comprehensive and complete understanding of the history of redemption from its beginning in the six-day creation of Genesis 1 to its consummation in the new creation of Revelation 21 and 22, and all the stops along the way. For this biblical clarity and this glorious hope, we offer You our praise. We thank You that we don't have to deal with these things by way of fantasy or fiction, or even indifference, or confusion, but we can know the truth as it unfolds in Your Word and we want to be loyal and faithful to that Revelation because You deserve our praise and our honor and all glory, not only for what You have

done and what You are doing, but for what we know now that You will do in the future. We praise You for that, even now, and we live in joyous anticipation of it. Thank You for being with us and giving us direction as we've looked at these things, and we thank You and we praise You because of Christ. Amen.

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