

KINGDOM CONCEPTS III

“Eschatological Studies”

Lesson Outlines for Students

Materials compiled by

Dr. Kenneth Meadors

BIB443

Eschatology

Syllabus

- 1) Survey of Eschatological Views
- 2) Dispensationalism
- 3) Rightly Interpreting Biblical Prophecies
- 4) Christ: The Fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets
- 5) One Holy Nation: The True Israel of God
- 6) The Second Advent of Christ: Part 1
- 7) The Second Advent of Christ: Part 2
- 8) The Tribulation and the Seventieth Week of Daniel
- 9) Matthew 24: When Will These Things Be?
- 10) God's Future Plan for Natural Israel
- 11) A Thousand Year Reign?
- 12) Concluding Evaluation of Millennial Options

Textbook: *"A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times"*, Kim Riddlebarger. (May be obtained at www.amazon.com for \$13.59 plus \$3.99 shipping)

Other references:

Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth: A Critique of Dispensationalism. John H. Gerstner (a limited number of copies seems to be available. Check the "used books" link at www.amazon.com)

Introducing Covenant Theology. Micahel Horton. (Available at www.amazon.com for 10.87 plus 3.99 shipping)

Dispensationalism. Charles C. Ryrie. (available at www.amazon.com for 10.19 plus 3.99 shipping)

Requirements of course:

- 1) Attendance (video students, view all DVDs).
- 2) Read all assignments from the textbook.
- 1) Final Exam

LESSON ONE

Survey of Eschatological Views

Introduction

- 1) We will be looking at eschatological issues, in particular, different millennial views.
- 2) We will be considering premillennialism, postmillennialism, amillennialism, and preterism, futurism, and dispensationalism.
- 3) There will be a strong critical look at dispensationalism, which is the majority thought of the evangelical world, and contrast it with other schools of thought in theological issues.
- 4) Why study these issues?
- 5) Most of the materials covered in this course will come from *A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times*, by Kim Riddlebarger, which gives a good review of the major schools of thought concerning eschatology, with a slant toward amillennialism.
- 6) You very well could be challenged to be stretched.

Definition of Terms

- 1) Eschatology
 - a) A combination of two Greek words: *eschatos*—"last" and *logos*—"the Word."
 - b) The doctrine of last things.
- 2) Tribulation—future 7-year period of unsurpassed political and spiritual turmoil where those who are left behind suffer from the hands of the antichrist and God's judgment portrayed in Book of Revelation in the seal, trumpet and bowl judgments.
- 3) Millennium.
 - a) Derived from the Latin words *mille*, meaning a "thousand," and *annus*, meaning a "year."
 - b) Refers to a thousand-year period.
 - c) Revelation 20:1-10.
 - d) Three major views of the millennium.
 - i) *Premillennialism* which claims that the return of Christ precedes the millennium.
 - ii) *Postmillennialism* which holds that Christ returns after the millennium.

- iii) *Amillennialism* which holds that the millennium is not limited to a thousand years but includes the entire period of time between the first and second advents of Christ.
- 4) The Rapture.
 - a) Term does not occur in any English translation of the Bible.
 - i) Conveys the idea of a transporting of believers from earth to heaven at Christ's second coming.
 - ii) Dispensationalists say the rapture is Christ's secret coming when all believers are suddenly removed from the earth before the great tribulation.
 - b) These hold to a *premillennial, pretribulational* view of the rapture.
- 5) Preterism
 - a) Preterist understanding of biblical prophecy sees Christ's predictions in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24) as referring to the Roman army's destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70.
 - b) Also argue that John wrote the Book of Revelation before A.D. 70 and describes Nero Caesar's persecution of the church.
- 6) Futurism.
 - a) The opposite of preterism.
 - b) A futurist is "one who centers his theological beliefs around national Israel, and believes that most prophecies concerning Israel are to have a literal fulfillment in the future, after the Church has been taken out of the world.
- 7) Historicist interpretation of the Book of Revelation.
- 8) Progressive parallelism is the idea that the series of visions in Revelation describe the course of history between the first and second comings of Christ, each from a different prophetic perspective, although these visions intensify before the time of the end.

A Survey of Eschatological Views

- 1) Dispensationalism.
 - a) Distinguishes between seven distinct periods or "dispensations" in biblical history.
 - b) Dispensationalism is a comprehensive theological system with a distinct hermeneutic that colors how one reads any biblical text.
 - c) The church age becomes a parenthesis.
 - d) According to Dispensationalists, the millennium is marked by a return to OT temple worship and animal sacrifices to commemorate the redemptive work of Christ.
 - e) Important Dispensational leaders.
 - i) John Darby.

- ii) C. I. Scofield.
 - iii) Charles Ryrie (Ryrie Study Bible.
 - iv) Hal Lindsay.
 - v) Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, writers of *Left Behind* series, which sold over 50 million product units.
 - vi) Jack Van Impe.
 - vii) John Hagee
- 2) Historic Premillennialism.
- a) Often believed they were Dispensationalists with a different idea of the timing of the rapture, but it represents a very different theology than Dispensationalism.
 - b) Basic features of historic premillennialism.
 - c) Historic premillennialism gets its name from the fact that many of the early church fathers, such as Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, and Papias believed and taught that there would be a visible kingdom of God on earth after the return of Christ.
- 3) Postmillennialism.
- a) The term postmillennialism is derived from the belief that Jesus Christ returns to earth after the millennium to judge the world, raise the dead, and make all things new.
 - i) Divided over whether this period of time is a literal 1000 years or this age begins abruptly or gradually.
 - ii) Some understand the millennial age to be entirely future, while most argue for it to begin some time during this present age.
 - b) Affirm that the millennium is a period of universal peace and righteousness yet to come.
 - c) Look forward to all nations becoming Christian and living in peace with one another.
- 4) Amillennialism
- a) Not recognized as a distinct position until around the turn of the twentieth century.
 - b) Amillennialists hold that the promises made to Israel, David, and Abraham in the OT are fulfilled by Jesus Christ and his church during this present age.
 - c) The millennium is the period of time between the two advents of our Lord with the thousand years of Revelation being symbolic of the entire interadvental age.

LESSON TWO

Dispensationalism

Soteriology—The theology of salvation. The doctrine of salvation, especially the Christian doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ.

- 1) Issues of Dispensationalism.
- 2) Antinomianism—is the belief that Christians are liberated from the observance of moral laws when God’s grace is active.
- 3) Dispensationalism does have good points.
 - a) Inerrancy of Scripture.
 - b) The deity of Jesus Christ.
- 4) Reference Bibles that support Dispensationalism.
 - a) The Scofield Reference Bible.
 - b) The Ryrie Study Bible.

A Brief Survey of Dispensationalism Prior to the Nineteenth Century.

Introduction

- 1) Dispensationalists recognize that it was mainly a nineteenth-century phenomenon.
- 2) The Early Church.
- 3) The Second Century.
 - a) Justin Martyr, Hermas, Papias,, and Irenaeus may have been premillennialists, but the following must be considered..
 - b) Others find no chiliasm in Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Athanasius, or Theophilus.
 - c) Louis Berkholf—“It is not correct to say, as Premillenarians do, that it was generally accepted in the first three centuries. The truth of the matter is that the adherents of this doctrine were a rather limited number.” (Gerstner, p. 10)
 - d) Ryrie’s premillennialism.
- 4) The Third Century and Beyond
 - a) Augustine put a virtual end to millennialism for a millennium of church history.

- b) There was some premillennialism at first, but it died out after Augustine.
- 5) The Middle Ages.
 - a) The medieval period was not noted for its eschatological writings, but there were a few including Thomas Aquinas.
 - b) Some, such as Hildegard, looked for the fulfillment of apocalyptic hopes in the reform of the church.
- 6) The Reformation Period.
 - a) With the Reformation came a resurgence of eschatological thinking and preaching.
 - b) John Calvin may never have written a commentary on the book of Revelation but that does not imply indifference to apocalyptic notions.
- 7) The Post-Reformation Period
 - a) The modern period has seen a resurgence of premillennialism.
 - b) Although premillennialism in the eighteenth century was becoming more prominent, it was free of the modern dispensational theology.
 - c) Dispensational premillennialism represents quite an innovation over against historic premillennialism and traditional Christian eschatology in general.
- 8) Dr. Wick Broomall, "The Bible and the Future" gives a helpful list of ten distinguishing features of modern Dispensationalism as over against the older premillennialism:

Older Premillennialism

- 1) The church was in the forevision of the Old Testament prophecy.
- 2) The great burden of OT prophecy was the coming of Christ to die and the kingdom age.
- 3) The First Advent was the specific time for Christ to die for man's sin.
- 4) The present age of grace was designed by God and predicted in the OT

Dispensationalism

- 1) The church is hardly mentioned , if at all, by the OT prophets.
- 2) The great burden of OT prophecy is the kingdom of the Jews.
- 3) The earthly kingdom should have been set up at the First Advent for that was the predicted time of its coming.
- 4) The present age was unforeseen in the OT and thus is a "great parenthesis" introduced because the Jews rejected the kingdom.

- 5) One may divide time in any way desirable so long as one allows for a millennium after the Second Advent
- 6) The Second Advent is one event.
- 7) Certain signs must precede the Second Advent
- 8) Two resurrections—the righteous before the Millennium; the unrighteous after.
- 9) Hold a “historical-symbolic” view of the book of Revelation. Makes Revelation a picture in symbolic form of the main events in the present age.
- 10) The general attitude of older premillennialism was on the whole mild and reverent in its approach to Scripture.
- 5) Seven dispensations. Presently, 6th; 7th will be the millennium.
- 6) The Second Advent will be in two sections—“The Rapture” and “The Revelation.” Between those two events is the unfulfilled seventieth week of Daniel 9:23-27, which they call the “Great Tribulation.”
- 7) No sign precedes the “rapture-stage” which may occur “at any moment.” The “Revelation takes place after the seven years of tribulation.
- 8) Introduces a third resurrection—“tribulation-saints” at the “revelation-stage of the Second Advent.
- 9) Generally holds to the “futurist” view, which makes almost the whole book (chapters 4-19) a literal description of events to take place during the “Great Tribulation.”
- 10) Dispensationalism has assumed a far more dogmatic attitude. It has introduced a number of novelties in prophetic interpretation that the church never heard of until about a century ago

Modern Dispensationalism in England

Plymouth Brethren History

- 1) The influence of John Nelson Darby.
- 2) Darby was ordained as an Anglican priest in 1826.
 - a) Darby returned to Plymouth in 1845 after extensive travel throughout Europe.
 - b) Darby visited the U.S. twice; connected with James H. Brookes, who became the chief Dispensationalist in the U.S.
- 3) B.W. Newton and the Issue of Clericalism
- 4) Newton's soteriology (the doctrine of salvation, especially the Christian doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ) differed from that of Darby's.
- 5) Bethesda and the Issue of Separation
- 6) IN spite of divisions, the Brethren movement continued to grow.
- 7) Darbyites remains one of the two major divisions of the Brethren movement; the other being the Bethesda or Open Brethren being the other and larger division.
- 8) F.W. Grant and Soteriological Dissension.
 - a) Came to hold some views which were out of line with Darby's.
 - b) To illuminate the nature of the doctrinal struggle: A young man had been converted on a sick bed, and he asked to receive communion. It was determined that he had truly believed in Christ, but he was not qualified to take communion because he had not been "Sealed by the Spirit."
 - i) Grant argued that the sealing of the Spirit accompanies the saving exercise of faith.
 - c) The Grant controversy spread and assemblies in England as well as America split.

LESSON THREE

Rightly Interpreting Biblical Prophecies

Dispensational Hermeneutics

- 1) Two basic presuppositions of Dispensationalism.
 - a) The “literal” interpretation of prophetic sections of the Bible.
 - b) The recognition of a distinction between the church and Israel.
- 2) Since the prophecies concerning Christ have been literally fulfilled, other eschatological themes must also be literally fulfilled.
 - a) The restoration of the nation of Israel, the revival of the roman Empire, a reign of Christ on earth after his return, and the land promises of the Abrahamic covenant.
 - b) “The nondispensationalist position is simply that the literal principle is sufficient except for the interpretation of prophecy.
- 3) Hal Lindsey: “Amillennialism...became a philosophical basis for anti-Semitism. Amillennialism teaches that the Church has been given the promises made to the Israelites because they crowned a history of unbelief by rejecting the Messiah. Therefore, since in this view the Israelites have no future in God’s plan, and since they believe that “the Jews engineered the execution of Jesus,” a subtle justification for the persecution of the Jews resulted...This kind of teaching is demonic and heretical. I am thankful to say that no person who believes in the premillennial view can be anti-Semitic.” (Riddlebarger, p. 36).
- 4) According to dispensationalists, the use of nonliteral hermeneutic leads to a failure to distinguish between the church and Israel.

Historic Protestant Hermeneutics

- 1) Three major presuppositions.
 - a) The New Testament should explain the Old.
 - b) The OT prophets and writers spoke of the glories of the coming messianic age in terms of their own pre-messianic age.

- c) The “analogy of faith,” refers to the importance of interpreting an unclear biblical text in light of clear passages which speak to the same subject rather than taking the literal sense in isolation from the rest of Scripture.
- d) The historic Protestant (or amillennial) position holds that the NT is the final arbiter of the OT.

A Literal or Literalistic Interpretation

- 1) Differences between the two millennial viewpoints are largely due to the hermeneutical presuppositions that their adherents bring to the study of the data.
 - a) Dispensationalists see OT prophecy as the determinative category through which NT prophetic data is interpreted. For example, the Book of Revelation must be interpreted by the Book of Daniel.
 - b) The amillennialists see the NT data as the determinative category by which OT and future eschatology is to be interpreted. They see the Book of Revelation as the God-given interpretation of Daniel.
- 2) Dispensationalists insist on an OT interpretation of a prophetic theme that has been reinterpreted in the NT in the light of the messianic age which dawned in Jesus Christ.
- 3) The dispensationalists’ practice of interpreting all prophetic texts in a literalistic fashion amounts to a repudiation of the historic Protestant hermeneutic and the principle of the analogy of faith.

“The Language and Symbols of the Apocalypse”

(from *The Apocalypse Conspiracy*, John Noe)

Four Keys to Unlock the Mysteries of the Apocalypse

- 1) The revelation uses figurative language and symbols to reveal spiritual/physical realities.
- 2) The revelation is timeless.
- 3) Let the Bible interpret itself.
- 4) Judge any interpretation by the fruit it produces.

Right Interpretation Produces Good Fruit

- 1) Good Fruit: Godly Character
- 2) Good Fruit: Expansion of God's Kingdom.
- 3) Worshiping God, developing godly character and expanding His kingdom are the kinds of

fruits God sought to produce by giving us the Revelation, not the fruits of anxiety and dissension over the future.

Conclusion

- 1) Our difficulty in unraveling the mystery of the Apocalypse is not in the book's strange symbols and language. Rather, our problem is that most of us have been conditioned to think of the Revelation as a book about the future--not as the unveiling of Jesus Christ as a present, ongoing reality.
- 2) We must receive God's message as revealed knowledge made alive to us by the spirit of prophecy, which is the ongoing testimony of Jesus.

LESSON FOUR

Christ: The Fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets

Introduction

- 1) The proper place of eschatology is equally concerned with the past, the present, and the future.
- 2) We must have a panoramic view of redemption.
- 3) The moment paradise was lost and the curse declared on the race, God promised final redemption (Gen 3:15).
- 4) OT covenants were often framed in terms of promise; the NT in terms of fulfillment.
- 5) The Law of Moses represented a covenant of works.
- 6) This redeemer must establish a covenant of grace whereby God would deliver Adam's fallen children
- 7) The history of redemption is the progressive unfolding of a covenant of works and a covenant of grace throughout the whole of Scripture.
- 8) What God demanded of humanity under the covenant of works, he gave us in Jesus Christ.
- 9) The progress of redemptive history reflects the unfolding of God's plan of salvation throughout Scripture.
- 10) Jesus' humble entrance into human history lies at the center of biblical eschatology, the last things, and the millennial age.
- 11) The central character of the story, even in the OT was the Redeemer, Jesus Christ.
- 12) The story of redemption is nothing less than the story of Jesus Christ and his kingdom.

The Coming Prophet, Priest, and King

- 1) OT people recognized three special offices: prophet, priest, and king.
- 2) The coming redeemer was expected to be the culmination and fulfillment of all three of these special offices.
- 3) Moses prophesied that God would raise up a prophet like himself from among the brethren.
- 4) The coming Redeemer was also the consummate high priest.
- 5) Throughout the testimony of Israel's prophets, the coming Messiah was also to be a great king.

A New and Better Covenant

The Restoration of Israel

- 1) According to Reformed theologians, the promised restoration of Israel pointed ahead to the church.
- 2) The prophets predicted a glorious and redeemed Israel which the New Testament writers contended was fulfilled in the church, the mystical body of Jesus Christ.

Prophetic Perspective

- 1) There are specific instances in the Scriptures when a prophet foretold what appears to be a single future event, but as history unfolded it became clear that the original prophecy referred to multiple events.
- 2) Prophetic perspective—prophecy fulfilled multiple times.
- 3) OT prophets also spoke of the coming restoration of all things.
- 4) The panoramic view of the history of redemption takes us from creation to the fall of humanity, to the promise of redemption, to the renewal of all things.

The Coming Redeemer

- 1) The entire OT is filled with the expectation and promise of a coming Redeemer.
- 2) Dispensationalists expect Jesus to reign over the nations in the future millennial kingdom; the Jews expected the Messiah to establish a political kingdom whereby Israel would rule over the Gentile nations.
- 3) The New Testament sees the coming of Christ as two events, the first and second advents.
- 4) Three basic elements of New Testament eschatology.
 - a) The OT promise of a coming Redeemer was realized in Jesus Christ.
 - b) What was understood as one glorious messianic age predicted in the OT unfolded in two different ages: “this age” and the “age to come.”
 - c) The present blessings of the coming Redeemer are the pledge of greater blessings to come.
- 5) The Finished Work of Christ.
- 6) All the OT promises of redemption were complete in Jesus Christ.

- 7) In the NT the age to come was realized in principle with the coming of Jesus Christ, though the “future age and world fully realized in solid existence” awaits the Parousia.
- 8) NT writers understood that believers are now in “the last days,” but there is still an “age to come” which will mark the final consummation of all things such as the resurrection of dead, the final judgment, and the recreation of all things.
- 9) If OT prophecies have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, much of the dispensational case for a future earthly millennium evaporates.
- 10) The prophets anticipated a time when Israel would be restored to her former greatness.
- 11) Peter told of how “the prophets, who spoke...sought intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow (1 Peter 1:10-12).
- 12) In Jesus Christ, the heavenly Jerusalem has already come, even now (Heb 12:18-24).

Christ, the True Temple

- 1) “One greater than the temple is here” (Matt 12:6).
- 2) “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days” (John 2:19).
- 3) Ezekiel prophesied that the temple will be rebuilt, the priesthood will be reestablished, sacrifices will be offered, and the river of life will flow from the temple.
- 4) “The glory of the Lord filled his temple” (Exodus 40:34).
- 5) The prescribed NT commemoration of the ratification of the new covenant will not be found in a new order of temple worship, which includes a new temple, a new priesthood, and further animal sacrifices, supposedly in an earthly millennial kingdom.
- 6) The OT prophecies regarding Jerusalem and the mountain of the Lord are fulfilled in Christ’s church.

LESSON FIVE

One Holy Nation: The True Israel of God

Introduction

- 1) “There is one people of God in both testaments, all members of the one covenant of grace whose one mediator is Jesus Christ.” (p. 118).
- 2) OT prophecies regarding the land, the temple, and the Davidic throne were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
- 3) God promised to take his redemption to the ends of the earth in the messianic age, and this includes the Gentile nations.
- 4) “I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth” (Is. 49:6).
- 5) The Church is not “plan B” or a contingency developed by God in hasty response to Israel’s rejection of Jesus and his messianic kingdom.
- 6) God’s purpose from the beginning was to create a church and defend it against all forms of satanic attack until Christ’s second advent.

From *What on Earth Are You Doing Here?* By Dr. Kenneth Meadors

Who Is the Chosen Elect of God?

The purposes of God in the earth are not divided between two groups of people. While some recognize the church as the chosen elect of God, others consider natural Israel. Who is the chosen people of God? Who is the holy nation? Is it Israel, or is it the church?

In order to know who God desires to reveal His purposes through, we need to know something about these purposes. What are some of these purposes?

The word elect in Matthew 24 is the same as the word chosen in I Peter 2:9. Many are called, but few are chosen. *"They that are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful"* (Rev. 17:14).

The Church Is Not God's Plan B

Is the church an afterthought in the mind of God? Are believers second-rate citizens in the kingdom of God? Is the Body of Christ second-rate?

I Peter 2:9 states, *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God..."*

God's Eternal Plan to Reveal Himself through the Church

The revelation of the church is New Testament. The church has been in the earth through the centuries. It was in the Old Testament.

God's Promise to Abraham

"Your seed will be great", the Lord told Abraham. His seed was to be as the stars of the heaven and the sand of the sea. This typified a spiritual seed and a natural seed. Abraham is the father of a natural people. Among this natural seed are two groups of people; one a seed of the flesh and one of promise. One is Ishmael, and the other is Isaac.

Jacob and Israel

Who Is the Seed of Abraham?

"Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children" (Rom. 9:7).

"If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."

The Seed of Isaac

It is not the *"children of the flesh, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed"* (Rom. 9:8).

"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise" (Gal. 4:28).

"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven" (Heb. 12:22).

Heirs According to the Promise

"And if ye be Christ then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29).

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his

seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect" (Rom. 4:13-14).

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed" (Rom. 4:16). The law was to the Jews and for the Jews. If the promises of God had come through the law, guess who would have been the only recipients of these promises? The only inheritors would have been the natural Jews. But it is by faith, and not by law. If it is by faith, it is to all who believe. (Note: The law was 430 years after Abraham).

We are the children of Abraham by faith (Gal. 3:7). By faith, Christ is the end of the law. *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4).*

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16).

Who Are the Real Jews?

"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter" (Rom. 2:28-29).

One New Man

Those who were sometime far off from the promises of God are now made nigh by the blood of Jesus. Jesus is our peace, and He has made of one those who were outsiders and those who were insiders (Eph. 2:13-14). There is one man; one church; one body; one chosen; one elect; one holy people of God; one seed of God, and that seed is Christ. It is those in Christ. That which was twain or two is now made one in Christ Jesus.

Paul said this new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him, and there is neither *"Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all"* (Col. 3:10-12). Then Paul goes further to declare this new creation man as the ELECT OF GOD (Col. 3:12).

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). A further statement is given in Ephesians 3:5-6: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel."

Romans 10:12 - *"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."* The word Greek refers to more than the inhabitants of Greece. It refers to all those who are not Jews. *"And that he might make known*

the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (Rom. 9:23-24).

"As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God" (Rom. 9:25-26). Peter said concerning the holy nation and chosen people, "Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God" (I Pet. 2:9-10).

Being Grafted In

God Is Looking for One Holy Nation

The important thing to remember is that God from the beginning has had a purpose in mind, and that is to have a people who would be the expression of His glory in the earth. He is looking for His one holy nation who will bring restoration to a world which has fallen under the dominion of Satan.

The nation of Israel has been special to God and to all the world. It was through them that we received the law and the prophets. It was through them that we received the greatest gift to all the world--the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The purpose of God is intended to be fulfilled through the church, the Body of Christ. *"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. 3:21).* God's eternal purpose is and has been the church. That was what it was when He called Abraham, when He sought out a people among the Israelites, and when He purchased the church with the precious blood of His son Jesus. We as the Body of Christ are that chosen people; the elect of God; ONE HOLY NATION.

WEEK EIGHT

The Second Advent of Christ

Introduction

- 1) The most significant event yet ahead in redemptive history is the second advent of Jesus Christ—the blessed hope.
- 2) The Lord’s return marks the final consummation of redemptive history, and the dawn of the eternal state in which there are no more tears, no more suffering, and no more pain; when the old order of things finally passes away (Rev. 21:4).
- 3) Specific events associated with the return of Jesus Christ: 1) the resurrection, 2) the judgment, and 3) the renewal of all things.

The Purpose of the Second Coming: Final Redemption

“Look up, your redemption is drawing near.

- 1) “He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matt. 24:31).
- 2) “How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate” (Matt 23:37-38).
- 3) Separation of wheat from tares (or weeds).

The Resurrection

- 1) Hope of a bodily resurrection has always sustained the faithful in the face of death, depravation, sickness, and suffering.
- 2) Both Daniel and Jesus spoke of one resurrection in which two distinct groups simultaneously participate—believers and unbelievers.
- 3) Paul: “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” It is because of Christ’s death and resurrection that the shroud of death is removed from God’s people and the great prophetic hope of life after death is fulfilled.” (1 Cor. 15:54).
- 4) Isaiah: “Your dead will live; their bodies will rise...the earth will give birth to her dead” (Is 26:19)
- 5) The resurrection hope of the prophets became a glorious reality when Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

- 6) Paul: “We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever” (1 Thes 4:14-17).
- 7) This event is the long-anticipated redemptive historical climax, not a secret rapture which is but the prelude to the “real” second coming, some seven years later.

“I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory’” (1 Cor 15:50-54).
- 8) Resurrection of the last day.

The Purpose of Christ’s Coming: The Resurrection (from *Restoration Theology*)

- 1) Resurrection of those in Christ who have died..
- 2) There is an interim period between death and the final resurrection.
- 3) Those who have gone on will be with Christ and will return to be raised from the dead in their bodies! The last day is portrayed as the time when the spirits of the returning saints are reunited with their resurrected bodies.
- 4) Jesus had a spiritual body.
- 5) We groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (Rom. 8:23).
- 6) “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11)

The Purpose of Christ’s Coming: Translation

- 1) When Christ returns, believers who are living will be translated—conveyed into the life of the age to come, without ever dying physically.
- 2) All the saints of all times, past and present, as one vast multitude totally united at the glorious Parousia!

- 3) “Catching up” will be “in the clouds.”

The Purpose of Christ’s Coming: Glorification

- 1) Paul speaks of our being glorified with him (Rom. 8:17).
- 2) Christ has already been glorified in His resurrection, ascension, and exaltation at the right hand of the Father and will manifest that glory at His Parousia.
- 3) In regard to resurrection, this is the glorification of the body that has died.
- 4) Glorification is actually of the total person—body, soul, and spirit.
- 5) Peter spoke of being “a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed” (1 Peter 5:1).

A Secret Rapture?

- 1) According to J. Dwight Pentecost, the pretribulation conception rests upon several essential presuppositions.
- 2) The dawn of the messianic age and the kingdom of God does not constitute a parenthetical period in redemptive history until such a time when God is ready to deal with national Israel and finish his original plan of redemption.
- 3) Premillennialists base their assumption of the rapture and second coming as being distinct events on the presupposition that the Gentile church must be removed at the start of the tribulation period.
- 4) Specific terms used by Biblical writers to describe the return of Christ.
 - a) The first is *apokalypsis* which literally means “an unveiling” and refers to the removal of those things which presently obstruct our vision of Christ.
 - b) The second term is *epiphaneia* a word which means “appearance” or manifestation.
 - c) The third term is *Parousia* which literally means “presence.”
- 5) All three terms were used interchangeably of both the rapture and the second coming.
- 6) The problem is that this event is not supposed to happen until after the seventieth week of Daniel (the so-called “great tribulation”) comes to an end.

WEEK NINE

“The Tribulation and the Seventieth Week of Daniel”

Introduction

- 1) The Scriptures say nothing about a seven-year period called the Great Tribulation.
- 2) To make this work, a number of prophetic passages are either ignored or twisted out of proportion.
- 3) Must recognize that these prophecies are figurative and timeless, not literal, physical, and chronological.

What Scriptures Actually Teach about the Great Tribulation

- 1) The word “tribulation” appears in Bible one time; Rev. 7:14.
- 2) Translated in other scriptures as affliction, persecution, trouble, or suffering.
- 3) Daniel and the revelation.

The Big Gap Theory

- 1) History records precisely sixty-nine weeks of years between the time of Daniel and the coming of Christ.
- 2) Then you have to jump over nearly two thousand years to make the Great tribulation a future event for our, or a future, generation.
- 3) The time-liners say there is a gap, a postponement, an interruption of time between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks of years.

How Do the Scriptures Interpret These Scriptures?

- 1) There are three things to remember as we seek to grasp the meaning of Daniel's seventy weeks.
 - a) Does it reflect the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus? In other words, what kinds of fruit does it produce?
 - b) Is it consistent with the teachings of Jesus about the kingdom of God? Does it fit the principles and patterns of Jesus' kingdom teachings?
 - c) Is it consistent with all other Scriptures--whether from the Old or New Testament? Does it stand in harmony with the themes and types of the entire Bible?
- 2) The time-line theory of a seven-year tribulation period and a precise future Millennium do not measure up to those criteria.
- 3) The time-line theory comes apart at the crucifixion of Jesus.

The Seventieth Week of Daniel Symbolizes the Timeless Kingdom of God.

- 1) It is at hand.
- 2) It is an ongoing spiritual kingdom.
- 3) The sixty-nine weeks ran from Cyrus' decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the rebuilding was complete.
- 4) The seventieth week started immediately after the sixty-ninth week ended.

LESSON NINE

Matthew 24: When Will These Things Be?

Introduction

- 1) In the Olivet Discourse, we find the most significant record of Jesus' teaching about the end times and the future course of human history.
- 2) How one ts this important text will go a long way in determining one's view of the millennial age, *pre*, *a*, or *post*.
- 3) Difficult to interpret because of the tension between signs which precede Christ's return and the suddenness of the coming judgment.
- 4) Jesus' words were spoken against the backdrop of the eschatological expectation of Israel's prophets which he interpreted in light of his own messianic mission.
- 5) Some elements of the Olivet Discourse are common to all three Synoptic Gospels—Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.
- 6) Questions:
 - a) How much of the Olivet Discourse was fulfilled by the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (the preterist view)?
 - b) How many of these events will be fulfilled in the future (the futurist view)?
 - c) Or could there be a double fulfillment with the events of A.D. 70 as shadows of a universal and final cataclysm at the end of the age?

An Exposition of Matthew 24

- 1) In Matthew 23, Jesus pronounced seven woes upon the Pharisees and teachers of the law and then announced that Israel would become desolate.
- 2) The Olivet Discourse served as the beginning of the fifth and final discourse in Matthew.
- 3) The discourse can be divided into three main sections.
 - a) The disciples' questions to Jesus in verse 3 followed by Jesus' discussion of the signs of the end.
 - b) The prophecy of great distress to come on Jerusalem.
 - c) Exhortation to keep watch for our Lord's return in verses 29-51.
- 4) Although many different interpretations of the Olivet Discourse, three schools of thought are germane to our topic.
 - a) The preterist view emphasizes that Jesus spoke about events associated with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
 - b) Futurism.

- c) Third school sees the key to interpreting the passage in looking closely at the questions put to Jesus by his disciples.
- 5) Jesus had just left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings.
 - a) Jesus prophesied that the temple would be destroyed so thoroughly that not one stone would be left on another.
 - b) Jesus made it clear that the coming destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem, while connected to God's judgment on Israel, was not the Parousia nor the end of the age.
 - 6) Jesus warned of many false christs.
 - 7) Wars, famines and earthquakes would be the beginning of "birth pains."
 - 8) Jesus then changes subjects to the persecution which God's people must endure before the end of the age.
 - 9) And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.
 - 10) Instead of trying to connect the signs of the end to current events, the church is to be about its divinely commissioned task of preaching the gospel.
 - 11) The tragedy was that Israel's hope was in an earthly temple with its rituals, animal sacrifices, and worldly splendor instead of that to which the earthly temple pointed—the all-sufficient, once-for-all sacrifice for sin which our Lord himself was about to make through the shedding of his own precious blood.
 - 12) The "abomination of desolation" is a Greek transposition of a Hebrew word and conveys an idea of something being detestable to God.
 - 13) "For then there will be great distress (great tribulation) unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—never to be equaled again."
 - 14) "If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened." The elect were the Christian Jews of that time period.
 - 15) Jesus coming will not be a secret or isolated event.
 - 16) Matthew 24:29-44 constitutes the third section of the Olivet Discourse, in which Jesus spoke directly to the disciples' question about his coming at the end of the age.
 - 17) This generation shall not pass.
 - 18) What does the Olivet Discourse mean for us?
 - a) The nation of Israel was cut off and left desolate.
 - b) The Jews dispersed into all the earth.
 - c) The city of Jerusalem was destroyed, as was Herod's magnificent temple, by Rome's army in A.D. 70; not one stone was left upon another.
 - d) It was a time of tribulation unsurpassed in Israel's history.
 - e) Jesus' words about his coming were put in such a way as to create a tension between the signs preceding his coming and the fact that his coming will be sudden and unexpected.

LESSON TEN

God's Future Plan for Natural Israel

Introduction

- 1) Paul's desire was for his fellow Israelites to be saved.
- 2) The question of Israel's place in redemptive history took on major importance (Rom 10:1)
- 3) Most premillenarians and postmillenarians contend that in this passage, Paul taught that national Israel has a place in God's future redemptive purposes—this role lends support for a future earthly millennium.
- 4) Jewish writers as well as certain evangelicals argue that denying a future role for ethnic Israel and equating the church with Israel is at the root of contemporary anti-Semitism
- 5) Dispensationalists' interpretation:
- 6) Amillennialists do not see a future role for ethnic Israel.
- 7) Paul does not tell us when or how this era of blessing will occur, nor does he explain how the salvation of Israel is accomplished.
- 8) A future role for national Israel is also essential to postmillennialism.

An Exposition of Romans 11

- 1) Paul made no mention of the Jews returning to the promised land, nor do we find any reference to a millennial kingdom in which Jesus rules the earth as a Davidic king during an earthly millennium.
- 2) Paul is answering questions concerning God's faithfulness that all Israel would be saved.
- 3) Who are the true Israelites?
- 4) Paul makes a distinction between those who are Jews by birth (biological children of Abraham through the line of Isaac and Jacob) and those who are Jews by virtue of faith in Christ (children of the promise).
- 5) Who are the children of promise? The recipients of God's grace.
- 6) Did God reject his people?
- 7) If Israel's rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead (God is able to raise the dead!).
- 8) Postmillennialists' interpretation.
- 9) The olive tree was a metaphor of Israel from the OT.
- 10) Israel's rejection is neither total nor final.
- 11) Is there a future for ethnic Israel?

LESSON ELEVEN

A Thousand Year Reign?

Introduction

- 1) Revelation 20 is the most important biblical passage dealing with the subject of the millennium and is the only place in the Bible which specifically mentions the “thousand years.”
- 2) Different interpretations.
 - a) Premillennialists.
 - b) Postmillenarians agree with premillenarians that the events of Revelation 19 precede the events of Revelation 20.
 - c) Preterist.
 - d) Amillennialism.

How to Understand the Symbols in Revelation

- 1) Revelation is a book much like Ezekiel, Daniel, or Zechariah, combining distinct and unique biblical genres for the purpose of explaining the course of redemptive history from God’s perspective.
 - a) The Book of Revelation has three distinct literary elements: Apocalyptic, prophecy, and epistle.
 - b) The key to understanding the writer’s interpretation of history is to understand the symbols that he uses.
 - c) We must not read apocalyptic literature without due regard for the historical context.
 - d) The Book of Revelation is apocalyptic in character, prophetic in authority, and epistolary in style.
 - e) Instead of reading Revelation as though it was written to Christians living in the 21st century, we need to understand what the symbols and numbers would have meant to the original audience.
 - f) Revelation 20 uses terms (symbols) such as *chain*, *abyss*, *dragon*, and *serpent*.
 - g) Even though John may have seen these things, the context tells us that the things he saw are symbolic of something else.
- 2) We need to consider four levels of communication.
 - a) The first level is the *linguistic*, which has to do with the words themselves.
 - b) The second level of communication is called the *visionary*—what he saw.

- c) The third level, the *referential* level, the vision points to the actual historical referents of the images in the vision, i.e., the actual dragon, and actual serpent, the reality of the abyss, the passage of a thousand years, people raised from the dead, etc.
- d) The fourth level is the *symbolic* level.
- 3) The image of an angel with a chain and key points to something beyond the referential level, to other biblical-theological themes elsewhere in Scripture.
- 4) When reading historical narrative, you start at the beginning and read through the narrative until you come to the end.
- 5) The fact that Revelation is a series of consecutive visions, each depicting the course of the present age from a different perspective (recapitulation) should warn us to not read Revelation with the assumption that because something appears in an earlier chapter, the historical fulfillment of that vision must occur in history prior to that which is revealed in later chapters.

A More Careful Analysis of Revelation 20

- 1) The binding of Satan and the reign of the saints for one thousand years are also physical symbols of a spirit-realm/physical-realm reality.
- 2) Why one thousand years?
- 3) The psalmist spoke of God owning the cattle “on a thousand hills.
- 4) To translate a thousand years literally contradicts many other Scriptures that refer to the reign of Christ.
- 5) When thousand years is up (when Kingdom not abounding), Satan is loosed.
- 6) When does Millennium begin?
- 7) The thousand years is a temporal symbol of the ongoing, timeless, eternal kingdom of God.
- 8) That Jesus is indeed ruling His kingdom now is consistent with every prophetic Scripture and represents the highest spirit of Jesus' teachings about the kingdom of God.

The Binding of Satan

- 1) The symbolism of Satan being bound and thrown into the abyss is a parabolic description of Jesus' promise to His disciples, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”
- 2) When we live in this timeless kingdom of God, we have authority to bind up Satan and all his evil spirit-realm forces in our spheres of influence.
- 3) When we either step out of this kingdom or refuse to exercise the authority we have been given, Satan is loosed to wreak his havoc.
- 4) The only limitation to the total control of Satan in the world is the willingness (or unwillingness) of Christ's blood-washed saints to accept and exercise the authority we have been given.
- 5) God desires that His kingdom to come, His will to be done on the earth, and His saints to continue to defeat Satan through Christ's limitless power. That has been and is the most

relevant, pertinent application of this prophecy.

- 6) Ruling accomplished through:
 - a) Yielding to the Lordship of Jesus.
 - b) Holding the testimony of Jesus.
 - c) Doing the supernatural works of Jesus.
 - d) Binding up Satan.

Summary

- 1) Will there be tribulation in the world?
- 2) Will we reign and rule with Christ for a thousand years?
- 3) When does it all start?
- 4) The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

LESSON TWELVE

Concluding Evaluation of Millennial Options

Summary

- 1) Reasons why so many Christians do not accept amillennialism.
 - a) Amillennarians do not relate current events to the Bible.
 - b) Amillennialists are accused of not taking prophecy seriously.
- 2) Problems with Premillennialism.
 - a) Evil in the Millennium.
 - b) How do people living on the earth at the time of Christ's second coming escape the resurrection and the judgment?
 - c) The presence of evil and the mixing of redeemed and unredeemed individuals living together on earth during the millennial age makes the premillennial interpretation highly untenable.

Is the Millennium a Return to Old Testament Types and Shadows?

- 1) Dispensational interpretation of the millennium shows a lack of understanding of the flow of redemptive history.
- 2) Premillennialism believes in the return back to the types and shadows.
- 3) The supposed return to type and shadow during the millennial age is seen in the dispensational interpretation of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants.
 - a) The land promise of the Abrahamic covenant was not fulfilled until Israel was reborn as a nation in 1948.
 - b) Dispensationalists insist that Christ has not yet fulfilled the Davidic covenant of 2 Samuel 7.
- 4) Dispensationalist interpretation of redemptive history hinges on a distinctive reading of the great messianic prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27.
- 5) The millennial age is not depicted in the Bible as a return to the types and shadows of the OT, complete with temple worship and animal sacrifices, while Jesus rules the earth from David's throne in Jerusalem.

Problem with Postmillennialism: A Golden Age for the Church?

- 1) Postmillennialism and Amillennialism.

- a) Does the NT anticipate a future golden age for Christ's kingdom in which the nations are effectively Christianized, resulting in economic, cultural, and religious advances unsurpassed in human history?
 - b) Or does the general eschatological expectation of the NT center in Christ's direct intervention to a wicked and unbelieving world like in the days of Noah (Mat 24:37-38)
 - c) Postmillennialists take the first view, while Amillennialists take the second view.
- 2) Amillennialists say that the NT writers do not anticipate a millennial age to dawn on the earth but instead anticipate an eschatological age to come in which the temporal gives way to the eternal; sinful flesh gives way to resurrection life.
 - 3) If postmillenarians are correct, then when does the millennial age begin?
 - 4) Postmillennialists are correct to be optimistic about the triumph of Christ's kingdom and the influence of Christianity on the cultures of the world.

The Problem with Preterism

Introduction

- 1) Paul warned the church about two men, Hymenaeus and Philetus, who taught that the resurrection was already passed (2 Tim. 2:17-18).
- 2) Full preterists teach that the resurrection occurred in A.D. 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem.
- 3) Partial preterists do not believe that the second coming and the resurrection occurred in A.D. 70.
 - a) They did believe that Jesus did come back in judgment on Israel to bring about the end of the Jewish age (this age) and to usher in the age to come.
 - b) This resolved the tension between the texts which teach that Jesus and his apostles expected the Lord to return within their lifetimes and living again at the end of time when Jesus will return to judge the world, raise the dead, and make all things new.
- 4) To teach that our Lord returned in judgment in A.D. > 70 and then at the end of time leads to the belief in two second comings of Jesus.
- 5) There is an eschatological tension between things which are already fulfilled in Jesus Christ and things which yet remain to be fulfilled (resurrection of the body).
- 6) The full preterists leave no place for eschatology.
- 7) Dispensationalists deal with the already and not yet upon eschatology by emphasizing that the fulfillment of Christ's promises to his disciples will occur in the last days immediately before the Lord's return as well as in the millennium which dawns after the second advent.
- 8) Partial preterists believe Christ came in judgment against Israel in 70 A.D.
- 9) The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple do not mark the end of the age; the final consummation does (Mat 13:40).

Potential Problems with Amillennialism

- 1) A number of potential interpretive problems have been raised by proponents of other views in response to amillennialism.
 - a) Spiritualizing the prophetic parts of the Bible.
 - b) Another objection is the amillennial position that Satan is presently bound, even though the NT also teaches that Satan is the “god of this age.”
 - c) Another interpretive consequence amillennarians must face is the fact that the nation of Israel presently exists in Palestine.

Conclusion

- 1) Lingering questions concerning premillennialism.
 - a) Why is the millennium characterized by a return to types and shadows?
 - b) If Jesus is the true temple, why would the temple be rebuilt during the millennium?
 - c) Why would animals be sacrificed during the millennial age, when Christ’s death upon the cross did away with them?
 - d) How can there be people on earth in unresurrected bodies after Christ comes back and raises the dead?
 - e) Why are those who claim to take prophetic passages literally forced to insert gaps in Daniel’s prophecy of the seventy weeks and in Jesus’ teaching about judgment occurring at his second coming?
- 2) Postmillennialism.
 - a) Objected the amillennarians teaching that the millennial age is a period of defeat for the church and that it leads Christians to neglect the cultural mandate.
 - b) The history of western civilization has shown that Christian influence on the surrounding culture is pronounced at times and in full eclipse during others.

Amillennialism

- 1) NT teaches that immediately before the end, God will cease to restrain Satan, and things will go from bad to worse.
- 2) It is in the tumult of these days that Jesus Christ will return to raise the dead, judge the world, and make all things new. This is not only the heart of the Bible’s teaching about the future, but this is the heart of amillennial prophetic expectation as well.