

## *“That Blessed Hope” Premillennialism*

### **Introduction:**

1. As We Get Back Into Our Sunday School Lessons:
  - On Eschatology - The Study Of The End Times:
    - We Are Going To Keep Looking At:
      - Some Of The Major Approaches:
        - To The Millennium:
          - Which Is The Word We Use To Describe The Reign Of Christ:
            - Which We Find In Revelation 20!
2. So - This Morning:
  - Lets Turn Back There First:
    - Because This Is The Only Place In The Bible:
      - Where That Reign Is Put In Terms:
        - Of A Thousand Years!
  - And Let's Read Revelation 20:1-10 Together:
    - “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. / 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, / 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. / 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and [I saw] the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received [his] mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. / 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This [is] the first resurrection. / 6 Blessed and holy [is] he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. / 7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, / 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom [is] as the sand of the sea. / 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. / 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet [are], and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever!”
3. Now - As We Look At These Verses:
  - In Light Of Premillennialism:
    - I Think It Will Feel Like:
      - We Are In More Familiar Territory:
        - Than When We Were Looking At:
          - A & Post-Millennialism!
  - Because This Is The Approach:
    - Most Of Us Were Taught Growing Up:
      - In Our Baptist Churches & Backgrounds!
  - And So - To Begin:
    - We Are Going To First Look At:
1. **The Meaning Of Premillennialism:**
  - This Approach Simply Believes That:
    - The Second Coming Of Jesus Christ:
      - Will Take Place Immediately **Before**:
        - A Millennial Kingdom - Which Jesus Will Set Up Himself!
        - And This Kingdom Will Be The Visible Kingdom Of God On Earth!
  - Premillennialists Believe This Because:
    - They Read And Interpret The Verses In Revelation 20:
      - In A More Literalistic Way:
        - Than The A & Post- Millennialists Do!
    - And They Believe That:
      - Revelation 20 Provides New Info / Revelation:

- About The End Times:
  - That Is To Be Harmonized With The Other Biblical Texts:
  - On Eschatology!
- Premillennialists Believe That There Will Be:
  - A Period Of No Less Than **1,000** Years:
  - After This Age:
    - **When Jesus Returns & Reigns In & Over** This World:
    - Along With His People!
- Now - Even Premillennialists Allow For:
  - That Round Number Of Years - 1,000:
    - That Is Mentioned 3 Times In Revelation 20:
    - To Be A Symbolic Number:
      - To Refer To A Long, Extended Period Of Time As Well!
- But - Either Way:
  - Jesus Will Return At His Second Coming:
    - Not Yet For The Final Judgment:
      - Which Will Usher In The Eternal State:
        - Of Both Believers & Unbelievers!
    - But To Establish:
      - A World-Wide Kingdom:
        - Of Unprecedented Peace, Progress And Prosperity!
  - And Then - After The Millennial Kingdom:
    - When Satan Is “Loosed Out Of His Prison”:
    - God Will Deal With Him And All Of The Wicked:
      - Once And For All:
        - Judging Them And Casting Them Into The “Lake Of Fire” For Eternity!
  - Now - This Is What Most, If Not All:
    - Premillennialists Have In Common!
      - But - As We’ve Seen From The Other Approaches:
        - There Is Some Variation:
          - In This Approach As Well!
      - And - The Variety Of Premillennialism:
        - That I Want To Focus On This Morning:
          - Is What Has Become Known As:
            - Historic Or Classical Premillennialism! So:

## 2. **The Meaning Of Historic Premillennialism:**

- There Are Two Reasons:
  - Why It Is Described This Way:
- First - It Is Called Historic - To Differentiate It From:
  - What Is, Perhaps, The Most Well-Known Variation Of Premillennialism:
    - Which Rose To Prominence In The 19<sup>th</sup> And 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries :
    - Dispensational Premillennialism:
      - Which We Will Look More Closely At Next Week!
- But Then - Second - It Is Called Historic:
  - Because It Claims To Be:
    - The Millennial Position Believed & Held:
      - By The **Early** Church - In The Centuries Just After The Canon Of Scripture Was Closed!
- Historic Premillennialists (Michael Vlach):
  - Will Point To The Writings:
    - Of Some Early Church Pastors & Leaders:
      - To Show That Up Until 313 - When Christianity Became The Religion Of Rome Under The Emperor Constantine:
        - Most Churches Believed In & Were Looking Forward To:
          - A Personal, Physical Reign Of Jesus On This Earth!
- One Of The Earliest Church Leaders:
  - Was Bishop Papias - Who Lived & Served:
    - In Heirapolis - Just A Few Miles From Laodicea!

- He Lived From 60-130!
- According To An Early Church Historian:
  - Papias Had Close Connections With Some Of The Apostles - Including John! (Eusebius)
  - And He Believed: “That There Will Be A Millennium After The Resurrection Of The Dead, When The Kingdom Of Christ Will Be Set Up In Material Form On This Earth!”
- Another Early Church Leader:
  - Was Ireneus - Who Became:
    - The Bishop Of Lyon - Lived From 130-202!
  - He Was A Student Of:
    - Polycarp - Who Was A Personal Student:
      - Of The Apostle John!
  - He Too Was A Strong Believer & Proponent Of Premillennialism - And Used This Doctrine:
    - In The Church’s Battle Against Gnosticism - Which Was The Belief That:
      - Matter Was Evil & God Was Not Interested In Redeeming The Earth!
- Essentially - Historic Premillennialists:
  - Look Back To The Early Church Fathers:
    - And Their Close Connections To The Teachings Of The Apostles - Especially John:
      - To Show That This Was The Intent Of Their Inspired Writings About The End Times!
- However - That Approach:
  - Started To Wane - As Time Marched On:
    - And Jesus Had Not Returned!
  - Postmillennialism:
    - Became Prominent:
      - When Things Were Going Well:
        - For The Church & The Progress Of The Gospel!
  - And It Seems Like Amillennialism:
    - Became Prominent:
      - When Things Were Not Going So Well:
        - For The Church!
  - So - Even Though All Approaches:
    - Claim To Be Historic:
      - There Seems To Be A Consensus That:
        - Premillennialism Is The Earliest View Held By The Church!
- And Even Though Premillennialism:
  - Has Had Its Proponents All Throughout Church History:
    - It Seems To Have Made A Come Back Only:
      - In The Last 300 Years Or So:
        - And Has Returned To Become A Significant View Of The Church!
  - But - Historical Premillennialism:
    - Has Some Distinctive Features:
      - That I Think We Should Be Aware Of!
        - So - Lets Look At:

### 3. ***The Marks Of Historic Premillennialism:***

- There Are Some Views:
  - That Historic Premillennialists Hold To:
    - That Make It Distinct From The Others! First:
- **The View Of The Return:**
  - Of Christ!
  - They Believe That:
    - The Timing Of Christ’s Return:
      - Cannot Be Known!
    - In Matthew 24 - As Jesus Is Teaching His Disciples About His Second Coming - He Says:
      - 24:36-39 - “But of that day and hour knoweth no [man], no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. / But as the days of Noe [were], so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. / For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, / And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be!”

- However - They Also Believe That:
  - The Coming Of Christ's Return:
    - Is Not Necessarily ***Imminent!***
      - That Is - That It Can Happen "At Any Moment!"
- Because - Jesus Also Describes Certain ***Signs:***
  - That Indicate His Coming Is Near!
    - Also In Matthew 24 - Jesus Describes "Wars And Rumors Of Wars" (24:6) & How "Many False Prophets Shall Rise" (24:11) & How Even "This Gospel Of The Kingdom Shall Be Preached In All The World For A Witness Unto All Nations!" (24:14)
  - And Then Jesus Says:
    - "And Then Shall The End Come!"
- The Apostle Paul Also Indicates This:
  - In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 - "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and [by] our gathering together unto him, / That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. / Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition!"
    - So - Paul Teaches That "That Day Shall Not Come" - What Day? The Day Of the "Coming Of Our Lord Jesus Christ!"
      - Until Two Main Things Come On The Scene:
        - A Great Apostasy!
        - The "Man Of Sin!"
- So - Historic Premillennialists:
  - Believe That Its Not Just The Coming Of Christ:
    - That Is Imminent - But Also:
      - Everything That Jesus Said Would Lead Up To It!
  - These Things Can All:
    - Break Through At ***Any*** Time:
      - So - Christians & Churches Need To - 24:42 - "Watch Therefore, For Ye Know Not What Hour Your Lord Doth Come!"
- But Even These Signs Will Be Accomplished:
  - In Such A Way - That:
    - Neither The Day Nor The Hour Of Jesus' Final Return:
      - Can Be Known!
  - A Second Distinction:
    - Of Historic Premillennialism Is:
- **The View Of The Resurrections:**
  - By Christ!
  - All Premillennialists Believe:
    - That The Resurrection Of The Dead:
      - Both Of Believers & Unbelievers:
        - Will Happen In Stages - And Will Not Be - A "General Resurrection" As A & Posts Believe!
      - These ***Two*** Resurrections Are Found:
    - In Revelation 20:5-6 - Where We Are Told That:
      - There Is A "First Resurrection!"
        - And Those Who Take Part In That Resurrection:
          - Will Be "Blessed & Holy!"
      - And - Since There Is A "First Resurrection":
        - There Will Also Be A "Second" Resurrection!
          - Which We Find In 20:5 - "But The Rest Of The Dead Lived Not Again Until The Thousand Years Were Finished!"
      - Both Resurrections - They Believe:
        - Are Physical Resurrections!
          - Whereas A & Posts Believe The First Is Spiritual & The Second Physical!
      - So The First Resurrection:
        - Is The Physical Resurrection Of Those Who:
          - Died ***In*** Christ!
            - And Include All Saints - Both Old & New Testament! Old - Looked Forward

In Faith / New - Look Backward In Faith / With Christ Jesus As The Same Object!

- This Resurrection Will Take Place:
  - At Jesus' Return - And All Believers:
    - Will Have Their Bodies Restored & Glorified, So That They Can Be Ushered Into The Millennial Kingdom And Reign With Christ!
- The Second Resurrection:
  - Is The Resurrection Of Those Who:
    - Died *Apart* From Christ!
      - And Include All Unbelievers!
  - This Resurrection Will Take Place:
    - At The End Of The Millennium:
      - And The Wicked Will Have Bodies That Are Equipped For An Eternal Consumption In The Flames Of The Lake Of Fire!
- Even In The Old Testament:
  - There Seems To Be A Distinction Between:
    - The Resurrections - Daniel 12:2 - "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame [and] everlasting contempt!"
  - And So - Revelation Gives Us More Information:
    - About The Timing Of Those Resurrections!
- But - At The Same Time Of The "First Resurrection":
  - We Also Find Another Distinction - Which Is:
- **The View Of the Rapture:**
  - By The Lord!
  - All Bible-Believing Christians:
    - Believe In A Rapture Of Believers In Christ:
      - Who Are Living At His Return!
  - So - 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 Is A Comfort:
    - To Us All - "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: / Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. / Wherefore comfort one another with these words!"
  - Historic Premillennialists Believe:
    - That This Rapture Will Take Place:
      - Immediately *After*:
        - The First Resurrection:
          - Which Occurs At The Time When "The Lord Himself Shall Descend From Heaven!"
  - This Means That - Whatever Tribulation Period:
    - There May Be In This World:
      - Whether It Is:
        - General Tribulation - Which Is A Mark Of The Church's Entire Existence - John 16:33 - "In The World Ye Shall Have Tribulation!"
      - Or - Whether It Is:
        - A *Great* Tribulation - Which Is One Of Those Signs Of Jesus Return In Matthew 24:21-22 - "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. / And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened!"
- **The Church Will Be Called To Endure:**
  - That Time Of Tribulation:
    - Until The Coming Of The Lord:
      - Which Will Take Place At "The *Last* Trump" - Which Paul Tells Us About!
    - In 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 - "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, / In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed!"
  - So - For The Historic Premillennialist:
    - The Church Needs To Be Prepared To Go Through Tribulation!
      - Some Will Be Martyred - Others Will Be Preserved & Kept Until The Coming Of The Lord!

- So - Though There Are Two Resurrections:
  - There Is Only One Rapture!
- But - At The Time Of:
  - The First Resurrection & The Rapture:
    - All Believers In Christ - From All Time:
      - Will Go To “Meet The Lord In The Air!”
- Historic Premillennialists Will Note That:
  - The Word Translated “Meet” Is Drawn From A Military Concept:
    - In Which The People Of A City Will Go To Meet Their Victorious General On The Way Home From His Exploits:
      - And Then Return With Him To Enjoy His Triumph!
- This Is What Historic Premillennialists Believe Will Take Place When Jesus Returns:
  - Believers - Dead & Alive:
    - Will Go Up:
      - To Meet Jesus In The Air, As He Returns! And Then:
    - Will Come Back Immediately:
      - With Him To Share In His Triumph!
- But Then - There’s Also:
  - **The View Of The Reign:**
    - Of Christ!
    - Historic Premillennialists Believe In A:
      - Multi-Stage Reign Of Christ!
        - As Do Most All Premillennialists!
    - The Past Reign Of Christ:
      - Was On Display:
        - At The First Coming Of Christ!
      - As Jesus Said In:
        - Matthew 12:28-29 - “But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. / Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house!”
      - Jesus Did Come To Bind The Devil:
        - In A Limited Sense:
          - So That He No Longer Had Control Over The Nations As He Once Did!
          - But He Is Still The “Prince Of The Power Of The Air” & The “God Of This World!”
    - The Present Reign Of Christ:
      - Is What Is Going On:
        - “Already” In Heaven!
      - As Jesus Said In:
        - John 18:36 - “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence!”
      - So - Right Now - The Kingdom Of God:
        - Is A Spiritual Kingdom:
          - In The Hearts Of Those Who Believe In & Belong To Jesus!
          - And He Reigns Over Us From His Home In Heaven!
      - But - There Will Still Be:
    - The Future Reign Of Christ:
      - For Which We Still Pray:
        - Matthew 6:10 - “Thy Kingdom Come!”
      - And Which Jesus Promises His People:
        - Matthew 25:34 - “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!”
  - So - Along With The Amillennialists:
    - Premillennialists Believe In The:
      - “Already” & “Not Yet” Aspects:
        - Of Christ’s Kingdom!
    - But - The “Not Yet” Will Be:
      - A Real Kingdom On This Earth:
        - With Jesus Physically & Visibly Reigning For 1,000 Years!

- **This Diagram:**
  - Might Help You See These Marks:
    - All Together! (Handout)
  - And That Leads Us To:

#### 4. **The Methods Of Historic Premillennialism:**

- A Couple Of Their Methods Of Interpretation:
  - Are Worth Nothing! First:
- **Their Understanding Of:**
  - **Scripture!**
    - They Seek To Harmonize The Scriptures:
      - In A More Natural & Literal Way!
  - They Look At The:
    - Prophecies About The First Coming Of Christ:
      - And Show How Many Of Those:
        - Were Fulfilled In Very Specific & Material / Literal Ways!
        - Virgin / Bethlehem / Even The 69 Weeks Of Daniel - Not Symbolic!
  - Then - They Look At:
    - The Prophecies About The Second Coming:
      - And Try To Interpret Them In As Literal As Possible:
        - Recognizing That There Is Still Symbolism In Those Prophecies!
  - So - When You Come To Passages:
    - That Talk About A Time & Place:
      - Of Unprecedented Peace, Progress, & Prosperity:
        - They Seek To Interpret It As Literally As Possible!
    - As In - Isaiah 11:6 - "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them!"
      - This Would Fit Quite Well In A Millennial Kingdom On Earth!
      - But Also Worthy Of Notice Is:
- **Their Understanding Of:**
  - The **People** Of God!
    - They Tend Not To Divide:
      - The People Of God:
        - Into Different Groups:
          - In The End Times!
  - Though The Church Is:
    - Different & Distinct From:
      - The Nation Of Israel!
    - When It Comes To The People Of God:
      - There Is A Spiritual Israel - In Which:
        - "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!" (Galatians 3:28)
  - This Means That:
    - Though There Does Seem To Be Some Future Plan In Place For The Nation Of Israel:
      - The Church Is Included In Those Plans!
  - For Example - In Romans 11:26 - When Paul Says That:
    - "All Israel Shall Be Saved!"
      - He Means That - At Some Point In The Future - All Of Those Who Identify Themselves With Israel:
        - Will Become Part Of The One People Of God! The Church! The True Israel!
  - This Means That:
    - The Tribulation:
      - Is Not Something Reserved:
        - Just For The Nation Of Israel To Go Through:
          - But Is Something All Of God's People Will Be Called To **Endure!**
  - This Also Means That:
    - The Millennial Kingdom:
      - Is Not Something Reserved:
        - Just For The Nation Of Israel To Enjoy:

- But Is Something All Of God's People Will Participate In & ***Enjoy!***

**Conclusion:**

1. And This Premillennial Approach:
  - Was The Earliest Understanding:
    - Of Eschatology In The Church!
2. Any Questions:
  - About This Approach:
    - Historic / Classical Premillennialism?
3. **Key Verse:**
  - Titus 2:13 - "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ!"

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