

Is Premillennialism a Defensible Academic Theological Position? Yes, *But...*

By Luke T. Geraty

## Introduction

In this essay I consider whether or not premillennialism is an academically<sup>1</sup> defensible position. I will trace the lines and explore the historic, biblical, and theological foundations of premillennialism to make the case that premillennialism *is* defensible *but* that we should not insist that it is the *only* academically defensible viewpoint. Rather, our exegetical, theological, and epistemological sensitivity should lead us to conclude that there is diversity in what can be considered academically defensible, especially in light of eschatology.

### The Historic, Biblical, and Theological Foundations of Premillennialism

Premillennialism is the eschatological view that states: “the millennium follows the return of Christ, which therefore makes his return ‘premillennial.’”<sup>2</sup> Blomberg and Chung expand this definition by writing that:

[P]remillennialism refers to the conviction that Christ will return at the end of human history as we know it, *prior* to a long period of time, depicted in Revelation 20:1-7 as a thousand years, in which he reigns on earth, creating a golden era of peace and happiness for all believers alive at the time of his return, along with all believers of past eras who are resurrected, and glorified at this time.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003) defines “academic” in the sense of “relating to, or associated with an academy or school especially of higher learning,” “based on formal study especially at an institution of higher learning,” or “conforming to the traditions or rules of a school (as of literature or art) or an official academy.” Additionally, the term is often used in connection with scholarly work and is related to whether a view is considered “reasonable” or “convincing.” I acknowledge that the use of the words “reasonable” and “convincing” require a bit of epistemic humility. Whether this paper is considered a convincing academic defense will be up to the reader!

<sup>2</sup> Stanley Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 94.

<sup>3</sup> Craig L. Blomberg and Sung Wook Chung, eds., *A Case for Historic Premillennialism: An Alternative to “Left Behind” Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), xii.

Premillennialism currently has two primary types, historic<sup>4</sup> and dispensational premillennialism,<sup>5</sup> while scholars also acknowledge differences between the premillennialism of the early church and the more recent Protestant premillennialism.<sup>6</sup>

Premillennialism is found early within the Patristics, “including Papias (c. 60–c. 130), Justin (c. 100–c. 165), Irenaeus, Tertullian, Victorinus of Pettau (d. c. 304) and Lactantius (c. 240–c. 320).”<sup>7</sup> Walvoord states that “not one adherent, not one line of evidence is produced sustaining that any first-century Christians held Augustinian Amillennialism. . . . Further, there is no evidence whatever that premillennialism was even disputed [because] it was the overwhelming-majority view of the early church.”<sup>8</sup> Kaiser writes that “nearly everybody will agree that the major millennial view of the early church in its first three or so centuries was a premillennial position”<sup>9</sup> and Allen states that “premillennialism was the dominant position among the ante-Nicene church fathers.”<sup>10</sup> Vos, though not a premillennialist, suggests that “[t]his

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. George Eldon Ladd, *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 135-183; Ladd, “Historic Premillennialism” in Robert G. Clouse, ed., *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, ed. Robert G. Clouse (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1977), 17-40; Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1109-1139; Robert Duncan Culver, *Systematic Theology: Biblical and Historical* (Ross-shire, UK: Mentor, 2005), 1138-1152; Blomberg and Chung, eds., *A Case for Historic Premillennialism*; Michael F. Bird, *Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 275-291.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. John Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom: A Basic Text in Premillennial Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 119-120; Jack S. Deere, “Premillennialism in Revelation 20:4-6,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 135 (1978), 58-73.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Hans Bietenhard, “The Millennial Hope in the Early Church,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 6 (1953), 12-30; Alan Patrick Boyd, “A Dispensational Premillennial Analysis of the Post-Apostolic Fathers (until the Death of Justin Martyr),” Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1977; Richard J. Bauckham, “Millennium,” in Sinclair B. Ferguson and J.I. Packer, eds., *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 428–430.

<sup>7</sup> Bauckham, “Millennium,” in *New Dictionary of Theology*, 428; see also Donald Fairbairn, “Contemporary Millennial/Tribulational Debates: Whose Side Was the Early Church On?” in Blomberg and Chung, eds., *A Case for Historic Premillennialism*, 105-131.

<sup>8</sup> Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 119-120.

<sup>9</sup> Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Preaching and Teaching the Last Things* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 143.

<sup>10</sup> David L. Allen and Steve W. Lemke, eds., *The Return of Christ: A Premillennial Perspective* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011), 75.

‘chiliastic’ division of the eschatological future... is probably of pre-Christian origin.”<sup>11</sup> Thus premillennialists argue that their position is the first view in the history of the church.

Biblically, as Blomberg and Chung note, Premillennialists appeal to Rev. 20:1-7 as the primary text supporting their position,<sup>12</sup> as they believe that their interpretation “does more justice to the natural flow of the text (from return of Christ to millennium to final judgment to new heavens and new earth).”<sup>13</sup> Additionally, Premillennialists appeal to large portions of the OT,<sup>14</sup> the Gospel of Matthew,<sup>15</sup> Acts,<sup>16</sup> Romans 9-11,<sup>17</sup> and 1 Corinthians 15.<sup>18</sup>

A significant premillennial argument is related to God’s faithfulness to Israel and the numerous texts that refer to its restoration.<sup>19</sup> Walvoord argues that,

The prophecies given to Israel are viewed as literal and unconditional. God has promised to Israel a glorious future and this will be fulfilled after the second advent. Israel will be a glorious nation, protected from her enemies, exalted above the Gentiles, the central vehicle of the manifestation of God’s grace in the millennial kingdom... the doctrine of Israel remains one of the central features of premillennialism.<sup>20</sup>

The future restoration of Israel is considered by most Premillennialists to be a significant reason to look for a millennium *after* Christ’s *parousia*. As Hess writes, “[w]ere I to look at the

---

<sup>11</sup> Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1991), 228. Vos points to the *Book of Enoch*, the Jewish Sibyl and *Psalms of Solomon* as pre-Christian evidence; see also Helene Dallaire, “Judaism and the World to Come” in Blomberg and Chung, eds., *A Case for Historic Premillennialism*, 37-60.

<sup>12</sup> Revelation 20:1-7 is the only location in the NT where the word “millennium” (Gk. χίλιοι, *chilioi*) appears.

<sup>13</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 716; cf. George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 259-269; Stanley M. Horton, *The Ultimate Victory: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1991), 291-299; David Pawson, *When Jesus Returns* (London: Hodder & Stoughton), 203-266; James M. Hamilton Jr., *Revelation* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 365-379.

<sup>14</sup> E.g., Premillennialists, especially Dispensationalists, appeal to Gen. 12:1-7; Psalm 89; Isaiah 2:1-5; Jer. 31:35-40; Ezek. 36:16-38; Daniel 9:24-27; etc., as foundational to their interpretation.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 352–380; D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 488–523.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Darrel L. Bock, “Evidence from Acts” in Campbell and Townsend, eds., *The Coming Millennial Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1997), 181-198.

<sup>17</sup> Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 118, 168.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. “D. Edmond Hiebert, “Evidence from 1 Corinthians 15” in Campbell and Townsend, eds., *The Coming Millennial Kingdom*, 225-234.

<sup>19</sup> E.g., Amos 9:14-15; Jer. 16:15; Hos. 2:14-23; 11:8-11; Isaiah 9:1-7; Ezekiel 43:1-4; 47:1-2, 22-23; etc.

<sup>20</sup> Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 136.

Old Testament and hear it as the prophets and their first audiences seem to have understood it, I would be forced to conclude that many elements specific to the restoration of Israel are yet awaiting fulfillment.”<sup>21</sup> Connected to the Abrahamic covenant and the overarching theme of the restoration of Israel, premillennialists believe that the ‘kingdom promises’ given to King David also require a future millennium.<sup>22</sup> Due to these emphases, premillennialists often hold to forms of “Zionism” or strongly support the modern state of Israel.<sup>23</sup>

Dispensational premillennialists consider the *sine quo non* of their interpretive presuppositions the idea that Israel and the church are two distinct groups that God is dealing with in unique ways.<sup>24</sup>

Premillennialists appeal to church history, biblical exegesis, and their theological views related to the kingdom of God and Israel as informing their perspective. However, let’s consider two further advocates for premillennialism: Charles Spurgeon and Jürgen Moltmann.

### **The Premillennialism of Charles Spurgeon and Jürgen Moltmann**

Spurgeon (1834–1892) is arguably one of the most influential Baptist pastors of all time. Hailed as the “prince of preachers,” Spurgeon’s influence and legacy as a pastor and author/preacher of popular level works continues to shape the church.<sup>25</sup> Moltmann (b. 1926) is

---

<sup>21</sup> Richard S. Hess, “The Future Written in the Past: The Old Testament in the Millennium,” in *A Case for Historic Premillennialism*, 23-36.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 194-207; Ronald B. Allen, “Evidence from Psalm 89,” in *The Coming Millennial Kingdom*, 55-77.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Ronald E. Diprose, *Israel and the Church: The Origin and Effects of Replacement Theology* (Rome: Istituto Evangelico Italiano, 2000); Barry E. Horner, *Future Israel: Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must Be Challenged* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2007); Calvin L. Smith, ed., *The Jews, Modern Israel and the New Supersessionism* (Lampeter: King’s Divinity Press, 2009); Hess, “The Future Written in the Past: The Old Testament and the Millennium,” in *A Case for Historic Premillennialism*, 23-36; Dan Juster, *Revelation: The Passover Key* (Shippensburg, PA: 1991); Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989). It should be noted that many historic premillennialists disagree on matters related to Israel and the Holy Land.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1995), 33-40; Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 221-247.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Lewis Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1992); Tom Nettles, *Lived by Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (Ross-shire, UK: Mentor, 2013).

“without a doubt one of the three or four most widely read and influential of twentieth-century- and early-twenty-first-century theologians,”<sup>26</sup> having published dozens of books and journal articles.<sup>27</sup> Spurgeon was/is a popular preacher and Moltmann is an academic theologian; *both* are premillennialists, as we shall now see.

Beginning with Spurgeon, we find an explicitly clear statement concerning his millennial view:

If I read the word aright, and it is honest to admit that there is much room for difference of opinion here, the day will come, when the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout, with the trump of the archangel and the voice of God. Some think that this descent of the Lord will be post-millennial — that is, after the thousand years of his reign. I cannot think so. I conceive that the advent will be pre-millennial; that he will come first; and then will come the millennium as the result of his personal reign upon earth.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, Spurgeon stated, “there is, moreover, to be a reign of Christ. I cannot read the Scriptures without perceiving that there is to be a millennial reign, as I believe, upon the earth, and that there shall be new heavens and new earth wherein dwell righteousness.”<sup>29</sup>

If these two quotes are not convincing, Dennis Swanson provides a detailed examination of Spurgeon’s millennial views and demonstrates that not only did Spurgeon hold to historic premillennialism, but that he rejected both postmillennialism and amillennialism.<sup>30</sup>

Turning to Moltmann, we find many provocative statements about the importance of “millenarianism” that, at face value, cannot be considered distinctly premillennial. For example, Moltmann writes,

... there is no affirmative community between the church and Israel without the messianic hope for the kingdom. And that then means that there is no adequate Christian

---

<sup>26</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit – In Biblical Teaching, through the Centuries, and Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 400.

<sup>27</sup> Moltmann’s most well-known works are likely his trilogy: *Theology of Hope* (1964), *The Crucified God* (1972), and *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1975).

<sup>28</sup> “Justification and Glory,” last modified April 17, 2014, <http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols10-12/chs627.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> “Forever with the Lord,” last modified April 17, 2014, <http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols22-24/chs1374.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> “Charles H. Spurgeon and Eschatology: Did He Have a Discernible Millennial Position?,” last modified April 17, 2014, <http://www.spurgeon.org/eschat.htm>.

eschatology without millenarianism. Eschatology is more than millenarianism, but millenarianism is its historical relevance. It is only the millenarian hope in Christian eschatology which unfolds an earthly and historical future for the church and Israel... Millenarianism looks towards future history, the history of the end...<sup>31</sup>

What does Moltmann mean when he discusses “millenarianism”? Questions concerning Moltmann’s “millenarianism” are, in my estimation, based more on semantics than on theological differences in that Moltmann does not use traditional terms such as “premillennialism,” “postmillennialism,” or “amillennialism” consistently or in a way that most systematic theologians do.<sup>32</sup> However, Moltmann clearly rejects “Historical Millenarianism” (Amillennialism) and accepts “Eschatological Millenarianism” (Premillennialism) in *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*.<sup>33</sup> Moltmann makes an important clarification when he writes that,

... the resurrection *from* the dead necessarily leads into a reign of Christ *before* the universal raising of the dead for the Last Judgment. That is to say, it leads into a messianic kingdom in history before the end of the world, or into a transitional kingdom leading from this transitory world-time to the new world that is God’s. This hope is clearly evident in Paul [Phil. 3:10f].<sup>34</sup>

Not all understand Moltmann as a clear premillennialist. Bauckham raises this issue when he states that “Moltmann fails to distinguish between the two types of futurist millenarianism: premillenarianism and postmillenarianism (or premillennialism and postmillennialism).”<sup>35</sup> However, Moltmann provides clarification when he responds to Bauckham by writing, “I

---

<sup>31</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 197.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Donald G. Bloesch, *The Last Things: Resurrection, Judgment, Glory* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004). Bloesch states that he believes Moltmann’s “position belongs primarily to the postmillennial tradition” (p. 109).

<sup>33</sup> This is seen in that Moltmann starts chapter three, section seven, with the title “Historical Millenarianism No—Eschatological Millenarianism Yes.” One simply needs to read pp. 192–202 in order to determine he is discussing what is generally referred to as amillennialism and premillennialism.

<sup>34</sup> Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, 195, emphasis his.

<sup>35</sup> Richard Bauckham, ed., *God Will Be All In All* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 1506-1507.

understand [the millennium] theologically. Christ's kingdom of peace is evidently associated with hope for Israel's future in the fulfilment of God's promises to Israel in the kingdom of the Son of man (Daniel 7). But for Christians this kingdom of the Son of man is identical with Christ's kingdom of peace at the end of time.”<sup>36</sup> Moreover, Moltmann states, “Christian millenarianism has had a clearly detectible affinity to Israel. It is only here that the theological recognition of Israel's enduring vocation, and the hope for Israel's future, are really preserved.”<sup>37</sup> This reads strikingly similar to the previously mentioned premillennial commitments to a future eschatological place for ethnic Israel and is connected to Moltmann’s agreement that “hand in hand with expectation of the overthrow of the Antichrist went the expectation of Israel's redemption and the establishment of Christ's thousand years' empire.”<sup>38</sup> One is hard pressed to argue that Moltmann does not argue for premillennial theology.<sup>39</sup>

In light of the reality that Premillennialism finds support in church history, is based on reasonable exegesis and theological concepts, *and* finds support by none other than Spurgeon and Moltmann, I believe it’s fair to state that the view should be considered a defensible academic theological position. At the very least we should acknowledge that Christians throughout history have considered it persuasive and have good reason to do so.

### **A Defensible Academic Theological Position? Yes, *But...***

While premillennialism is a legitimate viewpoint and well within the boundaries of orthodoxy, there are significant challenges that must be considered. This is to say that premillennialism is a defensible view *but* it cannot be considered the *only* legitimate

---

<sup>36</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, “The Hope of Israel and the Anabaptist Alternative,” in *God Will Be All in All*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 1685-1687.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 1695-1696.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 1702-1703.

<sup>39</sup> Roger E. Olson states that in personal correspondence, Moltmann affirmed that he was a Premillennialist; cf. “Why I am a premillennialist (and you should be, too),” last modified April 17, 2014, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/rogereolson/2010/09/why-i-am-a-premillennialist-and-you-should-be-too/>.

eschatological option. Pushing against the premillennial hermeneutic with *just as* reasonable exegesis and theological framework, in addition to the evidence from church history, is amillennialism.<sup>40</sup> In the same way that we have explored the historic, biblical, and theological arguments for premillennialism, hereafter will be a brief critical evaluation of premillennialism in light of amillennialism in the hopes that a humble, honest, and informed approach to premillennialism can take place.<sup>41</sup>

Amillennialists are quick to challenge the assertion that premillennialism has outright dominance in the Patristic era. Despite that amillennialists often argue from silence,<sup>42</sup> one must acknowledge that they are indeed correct when they reject Kaiser's statement that the major view of the millennium in the early church was the premillennial position. Hippolytus (170–235), Clement of Alexandria (c. 150 – c. 215), Origen (184/185 – 253/254), and Cyprian (c. 200–258) were all amillennial, not to mention the magisterial Augustine of Hippo (354–430).<sup>43</sup> Based on the fact that each of these early church fathers were largely orthodox<sup>44</sup> and heavily influential toward developing theological views that are still held today, it would seem that premillennialists

---

<sup>40</sup> Due to space constraints, I will overlook the challenges raised by Postmillennialism; cf. Loraine Boettner, *The Millennium* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1957); Keith A. Mathison, *Postmillennialism: An Eschatology of Hope* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1999); David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Ft. Worth: Dominion Press, 1987); Chilton, *Paradise Restored: A Biblical Theology of Dominion* (Ft. Worth: Dominion Press, 2007); Greg L. Bahnsen and Robert R. Booth, *Victory in Jesus: The Bright Hope of Postmillennialism* (Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media Press, 1999).

<sup>41</sup> It is not my intention to critically evaluate amillennialism here. For critical evaluations of amillennialism, see George Eldon Ladd, *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God*, 153-183; Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 37-112; Craig L. Blomberg, "The Posttribulationism of the New Testament: Leaving "Left Behind" Behind," in *A Case for Historic Premillennialism*, 65-67; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1116–1121; Culver, *Systematic Theology*, 1150–1152.

<sup>42</sup> Amillennialists often make much of the fact that many patristic writers simply do not mention the millennium in their works. However, this does not necessarily mean that they did not hold to premillennial views but that their views on the millennium either were not covered or have not survived. For two helpful summaries of patristic eschatology, see Charles E. Hill, *Regnum Caelorum: Patterns of Millennial Thought in Early Christianity*, second edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); Gary DeMar and Francis X. Gumerlock, "Premillennialism and the Early Church," in *The Early Church and the End of the World* (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision, 2006), 39-64.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Hans Schwarz, *Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); Sam Storms, *Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative* (Ross-shire, UK: Mentor, 2013), Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 2824.

<sup>44</sup> This is not the place to discuss questions concerning Origen's orthodoxy!

need to abandon statements of patristic exclusivity. As the often quoted Justin Martyr acknowledged to Trypho, “many who belong to the pure and pious faith, and are true Christians, think otherwise.”<sup>45</sup>

When surveying the biblical data, challenges to premillennialism are raised concerning the “natural flow” of Revelation, as well as the hermeneutical issues related to the apocalyptic genre.<sup>46</sup> Storms states that amillennialism “makes more sense of the structure of the book of Revelation” due to its acknowledgement of “the principle of recapitulation, or progressive parallelism.”<sup>47</sup> Amillennialism is said to better view St. Paul’s use of Isaiah 25:8 in 1 Cor. 15:50-55 as well as correctly understands “the New Testament teaching (2 Pet. 3: 8-13) that the new heavens and new earth will be inaugurated at the time of Christ’s second coming, not 1,000 years thereafter”<sup>48</sup> Storms also notes that amillennialism understands that Acts 15 indicates that “the rebuilding of the tent (or tabernacle) of David refers not to a restoration of ethnic or national Israel in a post-parousia millennial earth, but rather to the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus to the throne of David and the ingathering of souls, in this present church age, from among the Gentiles.”<sup>49</sup> These are just a few of the biblical texts that challenge premillennialism.<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, in response to the premillennial claims regarding the future restoration of Israel and the Holy Land, amillennialism contends that the “prophesied restoration of Israel is

---

<sup>45</sup> Justin Martyr, “Dialogue of Justin with Trypho, a Jew,” in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 239.

<sup>46</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *Revelation*, New Covenant Commentary Series (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011), 279–286.

<sup>47</sup> Storms, *Kingdom Come*, Kindle Locations 9452-9453. The “principle of recapitulation” can be found in William Hendriksen, *More than Conquerors* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1940, 1967); Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 223-238.

<sup>48</sup> Storms, *Kingdom Come*, Kindle Locations 9413-9414.

<sup>49</sup> Storms, *Kingdom Come*, Kindle Locations 9444-9446.

<sup>50</sup> Storms actually provides thirty biblical and theological reasons as to why he finds amillennialism as superior to premillennialism; cf. *Kingdom Come*, Kindle Locations 9372-9538. I cannot but concur with the majority of his arguments; cf. Robert L. Reymond, *Paul: Missionary Theologian* (Ross-shire, UK: Mentor, 2000), 529-555.

fulfilled in the Church, the true Israel of God.”<sup>51</sup> Hoekema states that “the New Testament itself often interprets expressions relating to Israel in such a way as to apply them to the New Testament church.”<sup>52</sup> Even some premillennialists agree. For example, Schnabel writes that “the prophets’ promise of a future restoration of Israel to land continued to be connected with covenant fidelity.”<sup>53</sup> Ladd, in stronger terms, writes, “Old Testament prophecies must be interpreted in the light of the New Testament to find their deeper meaning... I do not see how it is possible to avoid the conclusion that the New Testament applies Old Testament prophecies to the New Testament church and in so doing identifies the church as spiritual Israel.”<sup>54</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Premillennialism has historic, biblical, and theological merits and one seems hard pressed to deny that it is an academically defensible viewpoint. In addition to evidence from the early church and biblical/theological proposals, premillennialism has been held by many significant Christian leaders, including Charles Spurgeon and Jürgen Moltmann. In my mind, this carries powerful theological weight.

Yet under the critical evaluation of amillennialism, premillennialism is presented with challenges. These challenges, as far as I am concerned, preclude me from suggesting that premillennialism should have eschatological dominance. Academically defensible? Yes, *but...* not the only academically defensible eschatological position to hold.

---

<sup>51</sup> Storms, *Kingdom Come*, Kindle Locations 9440-9442. Storms directs readers to Matt. 8:10-12; 24:31; Rom. 9:25-26; Rev. 2:17; 3:9; 7:15; and 21:14. In response to issues concerning the *land* of Israel, see Gary M. Burge, *Jesus and the Land: The New Testament Challenge to “Holy Land” Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010);

<sup>52</sup> Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 196.

<sup>53</sup> Eckhard Schnabel, *40 Questions About the End Times* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 119.

<sup>54</sup> George Eldon Ladd, “Historic Premillennialism,” in *The Meaning of the Millennium*, 23.

## Bibliography

- Allen, David L., and Steve W. Lemke, eds. *The Return of Christ: A Premillennial Perspective*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011.
- Anderson, William E. *Rapture? Sure... But When?*. Holiday: Green Key Books, 2003
- Archer, Gleason L. *Three Views on the Rapture: Pre-, Mid-, or Post-Trbulation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
- Bauckham, Richard. *God Will Be All In All: The Eschatology of Jürgen Moltmann*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Berding, Kenneth, and Jonathan Lunde. *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
- Bietenhard, Hans. "The Millennial Hope in the Early Church" *Scottish Journal of Theology* 6 (1953).
- Bird, Michael F. *Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.
- Bloesch, Donald G. *The Last Things: Resurrection, Judgment, Glory*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Blomberg, Craig L., and Sung Wook Chung, eds. *A Case for Historic Premilennialism: An Alternative to "Left Behind" Eschatology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.
- Boyd, Alan Patrick. "A Dispensational Premillennial Analysis of the Post-Apostolic Fathers (until the Death of Justin Martyr)" Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1977
- Braaten, Carl E., and Robert W. Jenson, eds. *The Last Things: Biblical & Theological Perspectives on Eschatology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Campbell, Donald K., and Jeffrey L. Townsend, eds. *The Coming Millennial Kingdom*. Grand Rapids: Kregal, 1997.
- Carroll, John T. *The Return of Jesus in Early Christianity*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000.
- Clouse, Robert G, ed. *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1977.

- Culver, Robert Duncan. *The Earthly Reign of Our Lord with His People: Biblical Millennialism without Covenantal or Dispensational Presuppositions*. Rushford: Vinegar Hill Press, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Systematic Theology: Biblical and Historical*. Ross-shire: Mentor, 2005.
- Deere, Jack S. "Premillennialism in Revelation 20:4-6" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 135 (1978).
- Diprose, Ronald E. *Israel and the Church: The Origin and Effects of Replacement Theology*. Rome: Istituto Biblico Evangelico Italiano, 2000.
- Drummond, Lewis. *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1992.
- Fee, Gordon D. *Revelation*. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011.
- Ferguson, Sinclair B., and J.I. Packer, eds. *New Dictionary of Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Gaebelein, Frank E., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.
- Gundry, Stanley N. *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.
- Gregg, Steve, ed. *Revelation, Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997.
- Grenz, Stanley, and David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, eds. *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999.
- Gruber, Dan. *The Church and the Jews: The Biblical Relationship*. Hanover: Elijah Publishing, 1991.
- Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.
- Hamilton Jr., James H. Jr. *Revelation*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012.
- Hendricksen, William. *More Than Conquerors: An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1940, 1967.
- Hoekema, Anthony C. *The Bible and the Future*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.
- Horner, Barry E. *Future Israel: Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must Be Challenged*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2007.

- Horton, Stanley M. *The Ultimate Victory: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation*. Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1991.
- Johnson, Darrell W. *Discipleship on the Edge: An Expository Journey through the Book of Revelation*. Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2004.
- Juster, Dan. *Jewish Roots: A Foundation of Biblical Theology*. Shippensburg: Destiny Image, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Revelation: The Passover Key*. Shippensburg: Destiny Image, 1991.
- Kaiser Jr., Walter C. *Preaching and Teaching the Last Things*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
- Ladd, George Eldon. *The Blessed Hope: A Biblical Study of the Second Advent and the Rapture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Gospel of the Kingdom: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Last Things: An Eschatology for Laymen*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Presence of the Future*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.
- Lindsey, Hal. *The Late Grate Planet Earth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.
- Nettles, Tom. *Lived by Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*. Ross-shire, UK: Mentor, 2013.
- Osborne, Grant R. *Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

- Pawson, David. *When Jesus Returns*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995.
- Plevnik, Joseph. *Paul and the Parousia: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997.
- Reymond, Robert L. *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Paul: Missionary Theologian*. Ross-shire, UK: Mentor, 2000.
- Ryrie, Charles. *Dispensationalism*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1995.
- Schnabel, Eckhard. *40 Questions About the End Times*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011.
- Schwarz, Hans. *Eschatology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Smith, Calvin L, ed. *The Jews, Modern Israel and the New Supersessionism: Resources for Christians*. Lampeter, UK: King's Divinity Press, 2009.
- Sproul, R.C. *The Last Days According to Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.
- Storms, Sam. *Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative*. Ross-shire, UK: Mentor, 2013.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. *The Holy Spirit – In Biblical Teaching, through the Centuries, and Today*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013.
- Volf, Miroslav, and William Katerberg, eds. *The Future of Hope: Christian Tradition Amid Modernity and Postmodernity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Voss, Geerhardus. *The Pauline Eschatology*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1991.
- Wall, Robert W. *Revelation*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995.
- Walvoord, John F. *The Millennial Kingdom: A Basic Text in Premillennial Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983.
- Wilson, Marvin R. *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Wright, N. T. *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*. New York: HarperCollins, 2008.