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PREMILLENNIALISM

The doctrine of premillennialism is making great strides in the religious world today. It is becoming a cardinal doctrine of most denominations. It is a doctrine every Christian must deal with as he endeavors to teach his religious neighbors the gospel of Christ. As a preacher of the gospel I find myself having to deal with this theory more and more as I try to convert denominational people. I am afraid we have not done enough teaching on the subject. In the following article we will deal with the false theory of premillennialism in the simplest way possible so that all might see the error of it.

In the beginning, the theory that Christ will establish His kingdom and reign a thousand years upon the earth is not a new theory. This theory goes back to Judaism. The following is a quotation from an article by H. M. Riggle which was published in the Gospel Advocate of April 22, 1937:

"The idea of a millennial reign proceeded from Judaism for 'among the Jews the representation was growing that the Messiah would reign a thousand years upon earth. Such products of Jewish imagination passed over into Christianity'. (Neander's "History of Christian Dogmas", Vol. 1, p. 248.)

'The Jews generally believed that the Messiah would establish a literal or earthly kingdom. And even some of them believed that Messiah's reign would last a thousand years.' Before the death of all the first apostles, this Jewish notion was revived in the teaching of an ungodly heretic by the name of Cerinthus.....

Cerinthus lived in the days of the apostle John. We will now call your attention to the attitude of the beloved apostle toward this millennial teacher. Irenaeus, who was born about 120 A.D., and who was acquainted with Polycarp, the disciple of John (Eusebius' "Ecclesiastical History", Book V, Chapter 24), states that while John was at Ephesus he entered a bath to wash; but when he found that Cerinthus was therein, he refused to bathe there, left the building, and exhorted those with him to do the same saying: 'Let us flee, lest the bath fall in, as long as Cerinthus, that enemy of the truth, is within.' (Ibid., Book III, Chapter 28.) Let this be a rebuke to modern millennial advocates. They claim their doctrine is well founded in the Revelation of John. But John called the founder of their theory 'That enemy of the truth.'"

Let us now give a general definition of the modern-day premillennialism: Those who hold to this theory do not believe that the Kingdom prophesied of in the Old Testament has been established. They say we are only in the "church phase" -- that Christ came to set up the kingdom, but the Jews refused Him, so He returned to heaven and placed the church here instead -- and He will return later to establish the kingdom; They teach that God's promises to make of Abraham's seed a great nation, and to give them a certain land have not been fulfilled; They teach that when Christ comes the second time there will be a resurrection of the righteous, and Jesus will take the living and righteous dead up in the air (the "rapture") to be with Him seven years. During this seven years they say there will be great tribulation on earth and the Jews will begin to believe and be converted. At the end of this seven years Christ will come back to earth with the saints and bind Satan, set up His kingdom in Palestine, and reign over these converted Jews (and the saints) in Jerusalem on David's throne for one thousand years; They believe that the fleshly descendants of Jacob (the Jews) are still (today) God's people as in the days of David.

Now, let us examine some of this teaching in light of the word of God that we might see it is false:

CHRIST WAS NEVER PROMISED THE EARTHLY THRONE OF DAVID

1. Jeremiah declared that no man of Coniah's (or Jechoniah's, footnote of the ASV) seed could sit on David's throne in Judah and prosper: *"Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? Is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? Wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."* (Jeremiah 22: 28 - 30)
2. Christ was a descendant of Coniah (or Jechoniah) -- (Matt. 1:11), therefore Christ could not reign and prosper on a throne in Judah.
3. The throne of David that was promised to Christ was not a temporal throne in Judah (Luke 1:32), but a spiritual throne, or reign, from heaven over a spiritual kingdom (John 18: 36). Forty days after He was raised from the dead, Christ ascended into heaven and began His reign on the first Pentecost after His resurrection (Acts 2: 30 - 36). Here (in heaven) He will reign until He comes the second time to raise the dead -- good and bad (John 5: 28 - 29), and judge all men (Matt. 25: 31 - 33; I Cor. 15: 24 - 25), then He will deliver up the kingdom to God, the Father. (I Cor. 15: 24)

FLESHLY ISRAEL NO LONGER GOD'S NATION

1. John the baptist warned the Jews that they were about to be cut off (Matt. 3: 7 - 10).
2. Jesus told the Jews that He had other sheep (John 10:16).
3. Jesus told the Jews the kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (Matt. 21: 43). This refers to the Gentiles -- as Peter says, *"Which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God: Which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy"*. (I Pet. 2: 10)
4. God's nation now is not fleshly Israel, but that "Holy Nation" (I Pet. 2:9) redeemed with the precious blood of Christ (I Pet. 1: 18 - 19).
5. When Jesus died upon the cross He did away with the distinction between Jew and Gentile so far as God is concerned (Eph. 2: 11 - 22).
6. God bore witness that there was no difference today between Jew and Gentile by baptizing the household of Cornelius with the Holy Spirit (Acts 15: 8, 9).
7. Both Jew and Greek are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus today: *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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: 26 - 28)

THE LAND PROMISE MADE TO ABRAHAM WAS COMPLETELY FULFILLED

1. *"And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their Fathers: and they possessed it, and dwelt therein"* (Joshua 21:43).
2. *"There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass."* (Joshua 21:45)

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST IS A SPIRITUAL KINGDOM AND WAS ESTABLISHED ON PENTECOST, A.D. 33

1. Some who heard Jesus would not die until they saw the kingdom come with power (Mk. 9:1).
2. The power came when the Holy Spirit came (Acts 1: 8).

3. The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost (Acts 2: 1 - 4), therefore the kingdom came on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ.

4. Jesus said that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36).

We have not been able to deal with all the errors of premillennialism in this short article, but I believe one can see from those errors we have dealt with that this theory is not even hinted at in the word of God. Men who teach and believe this theory will lose their souls. Beware of this false doctrine!

-- Donald Townsley