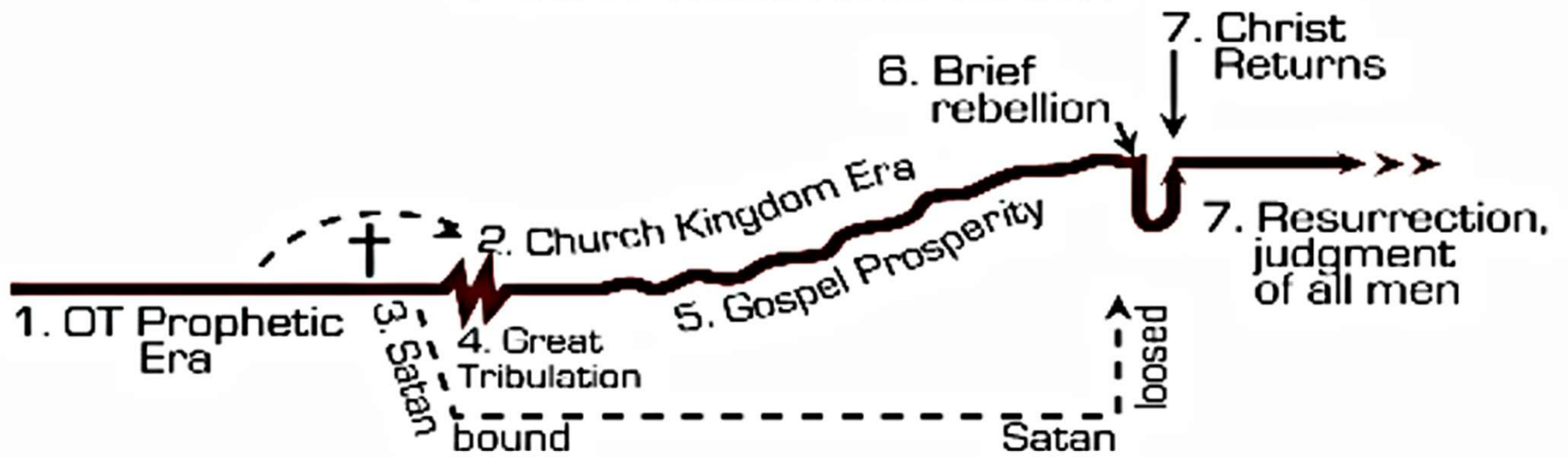


Looking at Postmillennialism

Understanding its History,
Teaching, and Fall and Rise

Postmillennialism holds that the Lord Jesus Christ established his kingdom on earth in the first century through his preaching and redemptive work. Since then he has continued to equip his Church with the gospel, empower her by his Spirit, and charge her with the Great Commission to disciple all nations. **Postmillennialism expects that eventually the vast majority of men living will be saved. Increasing gospel success will gradually produce a time in history prior to Christ's return in which faith, righteousness, peace, and prosperity will prevail in the affairs of men and of nations. After an extensive era of such conditions, the Lord will return visibly, bodily, and gloriously, to end history.**

POSTMILLENNIALISM



The History of Postmillennialism

- Born out of the allegorizing of Origen (185-253 AD)
- Influence of Augustine
- Joachim of Floris (12th century Roman Catholic)
- Daniel Whitby (1638-1726) – “Father” of modern postmillennialism

Two Variations of Postmillennialism

- Biblical postmillennialism, emphasizing the power of God to accomplish the promises that He has given.
- Liberal postmillennialism, emphasizing the nature of man and his ability to achieve progress through natural means.

Historic/Princeton Postmillennialism

- Princetonian postmillennialism was well represented by Charles Hodge (1797-1878).
- B. B. Warfield noted he would never attempt to write a Systematic Theology because, “there was no need” [since Hodge had written such a good one].

Hodge's Postmillennial Views

- A second, personal, visible advent of Jesus Christ, preceded by:
 - The universal diffusion of the Gospel (the ingathering of the elect)
 - The conversion of the Jews (cf. Rom 11)
 - The coming of Antichrist (RCC Papacy for Hodge)
- Resurrection, judgment, end of the world, final consummation

“The great truth set forth in these prophecies is, that there was future in the time, not only of Daniel, but also of the Apostles, a great apostasy in the Church; that this apostasy would be Antichristian (or Antichrist), ally itself with the world and become a great persecuting power; and that the two elements, the ecclesiastical and the worldly, which enter into this great Antichristian development, will, sometimes the one and sometimes the other, become the more prominent; sometimes acting in harmony, and sometimes opposed one to the other; and, therefore, sometimes spoken of as one, and sometimes as two distinct powers. Both, as united or as separate, are to be overtaken with a final destruction when the Lord comes.”

The Popularity of Postmillennialism

- Enlightenment—rational progress
- Industrial Revolution
- Social Reforms (slavery, women's rights, education, etc.)
- Modern Missionary Movement & Second Great Awakening

The Fall of Postmillennialism

- World wars and shattering the myth of moral progress.
- The Great Depression (1930s)
- The rise of Dispensational Premillennialism
- The liberalization of postmillennialism

The Resurrection of Neo-Postmillennialism

- Movement emphasized patience and preparation
- Mastered Media and Social Media
- 2020 Covid Handling by Wilson and Durbin
- Wokeness Fatigue and Desire to Fight
- Pendulum Swing from Rapture Fever/Escapism

Assessing Postmillennialism

A Look at Some of Their Beliefs

Always about Hermeneutics

- “It is generally agreed that if the prophecies are taken literally, they do foretell a restoration of the nation of Israel in the land of Palestine, with the Jews having a prominent place in that kingdom and ruling over the other nations.”

Loraine Boettner, “Postmillennialism,” in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, ed. Robert G. Clouse (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1977), 95.

Postmillennial Optimism

- Most postmillennialists argue that the majority of humanity will be saved.
- Kenneth Gentry, “Postmillennialism expects that eventually the vast majority of men living will be saved.”

Matthean Texts to Consider

- Matthew 7:13-14
- Matthew 7:21-22
- Matthew 22:14 (cf. 22:2)
- Matthew 24:9-14

Postmillennial Optimism (2)

- Most postmillennialists argue that the world will keep getting better and better, under Christ's control.
- Andrew Sandlin, "Had he wanted, God could have crushed Christ's enemies at any time. His will, however, is that his people be faithful in advancing his cause and kingdom. Little by little his enemies are vanquished (by salvation or judgment), and his kingdom extends throughout the earth." (*Primer*, 46)

Texts to Consider

- 2 Timothy 3:1-17
- 2 Peter 3
- 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10
- 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

The Not-So-Great Difference?

- Premillennialism* teaches that the Gospel will be proclaimed to all nations and will have a significant impact. Many individuals across various nations will oppose Christ. At His return, Christ will defeat those who stand against Him.
- Postmillennialism* teaches that the Gospel will be proclaimed to all nations and will be highly effective, but there will still be individuals who remain rebellious. Christ will return and execute judgment upon those who continue to oppose Him.

One GIGANTIC Difference!

- Neo-Postmillennialism trains its adherents NOT to look for the imminent coming of Christ:
- **“Human history will last for at least 100,000 years, I am confident. ... If Jesus returns before that time, Satan can say, ‘Well, You said You would show Your mercy to thousands of generations, but You did not do so. You ended history after only a few hundred generations.’”**
 - James B. Jordan, “Thousands of Generations,” *Biblical Horizons* 61 (1994).

Why Talk about These Things?

- How we read the Bible is a crucial issue—how do we know what God has said?
- There is a virulent anti-dispensationalism and anti-Semitism today from the neo-postmillennialists
- We need to be reminded of our glorious hope for soon-coming Messiah (cf. Tit 2:13)