

WHY POSTMILLENNIALISM IS ATTRACTIVE, BUT PREMILLENNIALISM IS BETTER

by
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Postmillennial eschatology is on the rise. In contrast to premillennialism, which affirms a literal, thousand year kingdom of Christ following the second coming, and amillennialism, which asserts that the kingdom of Christ is a present spiritual reality and that there will be no literal kingdom on earth following Christ's return, postmillennialism holds that Christ is currently building a literal kingdom on earth through the spread of the gospel that will result in social, cultural, and political Christianization. Loraine Boettner explains,

Postmillennialism is that view of the last things which holds that the kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals, that the world eventually is to be Christianized and that the return of Christ is to occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace commonly called the millennium.²

An eschatological position that “did not originate as a system until the early 1700s,”³ postmillennialism enjoyed widespread appeal in the

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²Loraine Boettner, “Postmillennialism,” in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, ed. Robert G. Clouse (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1977), 117.

³Thomas Ice and H. Wayne House, *Dominion Theology, Blessing or Curse? An Analysis of Christian Reconstructionism* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1988), 208. Some postmillennialists have argued that their position began much earlier (e.g., Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., “Postmillennialism,” in *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, ed. Stan N. Gundry and Darrell L. Block [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999], 14–18), but as amillennialist Kim Riddlebarger rightly observed, “Since amillennial Christians are also technically postmillennial in their understanding of the millennium, theologians have often contrasted pre- and postmillennialism without distinguishing between a- and postmillennialism” (Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times*, exp. ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013], 38).

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly fueled by the Great Awakening and advances in science, technology, and social reform. However, postmillennial adherents declined in the twentieth century for two primary reasons. First, two world wars delivered a severe blow to postmillennialism's optimism about the progress of world history.

But even more significantly, few postmillennialists of that time even attempted a robust exegetical defense of their view. When older postmillennialists did use Scripture, they always stressed the need for an allegorical interpretation, even tracing their hermeneutic directly to Origen.⁴ For example, James Snowden argued in 1919, "It is true that many of these prophecies when so applied must be taken poetically and not literally."⁵ One later example of this lack of exegetical basis is illustrated in George Ladd's response to Loraine Boettner's argument for postmillennialism in the 1977 *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*. Ladd's response filled only half a page, and began with, "There is so little appeal to Scripture that I have little to criticize."⁶ Ironically, even defenders of the postmillennial position during that same year acknowledged as much. In his foreword to R. J. Rushdoony's *God's Plan for Victory: The Meaning of Postmillennialism*, Martin Selbrede acknowledged that it "is not itself an exegetical work,"⁷ and later admitted, "It's actually a pretty poor exposition of postmillennialism, particularly from an exegetical standpoint."⁸ Likewise, Gary North, the editor of five essays defending postmillennialism in a 1977 issue of *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, confessed, "This issue...is not deeply exegetical."⁹

Why Postmillennialism Is Attractive

But this is no longer the case. As I will demonstrate below, what I believe has increased the appeal of postmillennialism in more recent years is the development of exegetical arguments in favor of that position, and in particular, the attempt to interpret kingdom prophecy literally, at least to a certain extent.¹⁰ This form of postmillennialism

⁴Loraine Boettner, *The Millennium* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1957), 82; James H. Snowden, *The Coming of the Lord* (New York: Macmillan, 1919), 18–19.

⁵Snowden, *The Coming of the Lord*, 237.

⁶George Eldon Ladd, "An Historic Premillennial Response to Postmillennialism," in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, ed. Robert G. Clouse (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1977), 143.

⁷Martin G. Selbrede, "Foreword," in *God's Plan for Victory: The Meaning of Postmillennialism*, by R. J. Rushdoony (Vallecito, CA: Ross House, 2022), vi.

⁸Martin G. Selbrede, "Rushdoony's Impact on Eschatology," *Faith for All of Life* (2007): 27.

⁹Gary North, "Editor's Introduction," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 3 (1977): 12.

¹⁰Often referring to a "literal" hermeneutic is misunderstood to mean that no parts of Scripture are ever figurative or allegorical. For this reason I prefer Mark Snoeberger's

found new life in the wake of Christian reconstructionism among theologians such as Gary North, Greg Bahnsen, and Kenneth Gentry. More recent popularizers of postmillennialism, such as Doug Wilson, have distanced themselves from reconstructionist roots.¹¹ But this newer resurgence of postmillennialism has become popular in large part, I believe, because of their attempt to take certain promises in Scripture literally. This has attracted some from amillennialism, with its almost entirely spiritual interpretation of Christ's kingdom.

Recent conservative postmillennialism has also attracted some former premillennialists who have bought into the unfair caricature that premillennialism is unconcerned with this present world.¹² Postmillennialism's more "optimistic outlook" and emphasis on the importance and value of earthly work is attracting mostly younger Reformed men who are concerned about the quickly devolving conditions of society and culture.¹³ This optimism concerning societal progress is one of the most practical outcomes of their attempt to take kingdom prophecy literally, leading to a strong emphasis on the value of what Christians do now in the world. Postmillennialists like Greg Bahnsen argue that widespread conversions will result in massive socio-cultural improvements: "We are not going to see perfection by any means, any more than we see perfection in our individual lives. We will, however, see a general improvement in the earth's condition morally, culturally, politically, educationally, artistically, and on and on and on it goes."¹⁴ What Christian would not desire what postmillennialism promises? The question is, does Scripture promise this?

These two emphases from recent postmillennialists—a literal interpretation of kingdom prophecy and placing value on earthly work now—are what I intend to evaluate in this paper. I will demonstrate how these emphases are articulated by postmillennialists, and then I will argue that while both emphases are, indeed, biblically important, premillennialism actually embodies them more consistently.

description of this hermeneutic as "originalist." See Mark Snoeberger, "Traditional Dispensationalism," in *Covenantal and Dispensational Theologies: Four Views on the Continuity of Scripture*, ed. Brent E. Parker and Richard J. Lucas (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2022), 153. However, I will continue to use the term *literal* to designate the belief that what Scripture says is what will *literally* happen.

¹¹See Wilson, "Even Postmillennialists Get the Blues," Blog & Mablog, October 11, 2013, <https://dougwils.com/the-church/s16-theology/even-postmillennialists-get-the-blues.html>.

¹²See Scott Aniol, "Polishing Brass on a Sinking Ship: Toward a Traditional Dispensational Philosophy of the Church and Cultural Engagement," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 30 (2019): 129–46.

¹³On this point, there is considerable overlap with the recent interest in Christian Nationalism. See Scott Aniol, "Book Review: *Mere Christendom* by Douglas Wilson," *Gloria Deo Journal of Theology* 2 (2023): 127–43.

¹⁴Greg L. Bahnsen, *Victory in Jesus: The Bright Hope of Postmillennialism*, 2nd ed. (Augusta, GA: Covenant Media Press, 2015), 39.

Literal Interpretation of Christ's Kingdom

Premillennialists often lump postmillennial and amillennial hermeneutics together as similarly allegorical. But recent postmillennialism does interpret certain aspects of kingdom prophecy in a more literal fashion, and I believe this is one reason for its recent attractiveness. Bahnsen notes, "There are things that are said in the Bible which cannot possibly be applied to the post-consummation kingdom of God. They must be applied to history."¹⁵ He expresses his concern for a literal interpretation of these promises when he states, "This is what the Bible says. It is really just a question of whether we can believe the Bible."¹⁶ This more literal approach to kingdom prophecy plays out in several key areas.

God's Original Creation Purpose

First, postmillennialists recognize God's original creation purpose and his continued intent to bring about that purpose within history prior to the new heavens and earth. God created man in his image, and God blessed him, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Gen 1:28). This blessing given to mankind at creation crowned him with rule over the earth, granting man the privilege and responsibility to subdue and have dominion over all things. Doug Wilson notes, "Representing and establishing royalty on earth has been God's design and purpose from the beginning."¹⁷ Gary North agrees, "Man must dominate. It is basic to his very being. He was designed to exercise dominion, as the image-bearer of God, in time and on earth."¹⁸

Adam failed in this role, but as Wilson continues, "God never relinquished his determination to establish it among us regardless."¹⁹ God still intends, he argues, for man to exercise dominion, and this is a goal of his redemptive kingdom plan. Kenneth Gentry explains, "The post-millennialist holds that God's love for his creation prompts his concern to bring it back to its original purpose of bringing positive glory to him. Thus, the postmillennialist's hope-filled expectation is rooted in creational reality."²⁰

¹⁵Ibid., 62.

¹⁶Ibid., 64.

¹⁷Douglas Wilson, *Heaven Misplaced: Christ's Kingdom on Earth* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2008), 24.

¹⁸Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory* (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision, 2010), 30 (emphasis added).

¹⁹Wilson, *Heaven Misplaced*, 24.

²⁰Gentry, "Postmillennialism," 23.

Christ Installed as King at the Resurrection/Ascension

Second, postmillennialists believe that this restoration of God's creation purpose will be accomplished through Jesus Christ, who they believe was installed at his resurrection and ascension in the position of king that Adam abdicated. Bahnsen claims, for example, that when Peter applies Psalm 110 to Christ's resurrection and ascension in Acts 2,

Peter declares, with inspired accuracy, that when Jesus was raised from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God, that was the fulfillment of the promise of God to David that he would have such a kingdom and that all his enemies would be put under his feet. We must conclude that the kingdom has come, and it is the Davidic kingdom.²¹

Gentry agrees, asserting that "Christ has been installed as the King" since the resurrection/ascension. He bases this assertion, without any fuller explanation, on Paul's declaration that "[Christ] was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 1:4). Christ is even now "ruling from God's right hand," Gentry states, placing several proof texts in parentheses about Christ's exaltation (Rom 14:9–11; Eph 1:20–22; Col 1:18; 1 Pet 3:22; Rev 17:14; 19:16).²²

The Successful Rule of Christ over This Earth

Third, since Christ is currently reigning as king, postmillennialists argue, he will be successful in exercising dominion over this earth as God originally intended. Gentry argues, "Messiah will vanquish the raging nations of the world as surely as God conquers Israel's Canaanite foes."²³ Gentry cites Messianic psalms as support for his "historical optimism." He interprets promises that "all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord" (Ps 22:27) as taking place in the present age. He argues that we must interpret literally descriptions of the kingdom, such as the following: "His salvation is to be known among all nations (67:2); all the ends of the earth will fear him (67:7); all nations will come and worship (86:9); renowned enemies will be converted (87:4); all kings will revere him (102:15). In fact," Gentry argues, "Messiah will be seated in heaven until his enemies become his footstool (110:1)—a theme verse that becomes the most cited Old Testament verse in the New Testament."²⁴ When Scripture promises that all people will know God, "from the least of them to the greatest" (Jer 31:34), and that "peoples shall flow to" the mountain of the house of the Lord (Mic 4:1), postmillennialists take these promises literally.

²¹Bahnsen, *Victory in Jesus*, 43.

²²Gentry, "Postmillennialism," 34–35. He also lists Rom 14:9–11 and Col 1:18, though it is more difficult to see how these texts apply to his point.

²³*Ibid.*, 34.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 32.

Additionally, these things must take place, not just in the new heavens and earth (as amillennialists argue), but in this earth. Gentry argues that “in Psalm 72 messianic victory is tied to preconsummative history, before the renovation of the present universe and the establishment of the eternal new heavens and earth.” Jesus’s reign takes place “as long as the sun, as long as the moon, throughout all generations.”²⁵ Further, Gentry notes that the universal worship of God, as prophesied in passages such as Isaiah 2:2–4, will occur during the last days, not after the last days.²⁶ Likewise, Bahnsen argues, “The Bible teaches us that Jesus will subdue all his enemies under his feet,” and this promise “cannot be applied to the new heavens and the new earth.”²⁷ He points out that the kingdom prophecy in Isaiah 65 indicates that “the young man shall die a hundred years old.” Taking this prediction literally, he observes, “No one is going to die in the new heavens and the new earth, so Isaiah could not be talking about that.”²⁸ North agrees, “This period of astounding life expectancy and increased spiritual wisdom will take place during history, before the final judgment. To argue anything else is to deny the literal words of the prophecy of Isaiah.”²⁹

This is key for postmillennialism: Christ must successfully reign over the present earth that God created for that purpose, not simply over a new earth. Gentry explains, “The protoevangelium promises in seed form (no pun intended) the victory of Christ in history, just as the Fall and its effects are in history. The first Adam’s fall will be overcome by the second Adam’s lifting up. God does not abandon history.”³⁰ Boettner explains what this will look like:

The postmillennialist looks for a golden age that will not be essentially different from our own so far as the basic facts of life are concerned. This age gradually merges into the millennial age as an increasing proportion of the world’s inhabitants are converted to Christianity. Marriage and the home will continue, and new members will enter the human race through the natural process of birth, as at present. Sin will not be eliminated but will be reduced to a minimum as the moral and spiritual environment of the earth becomes predominantly Christian. Social, economic, and educational problems will remain but with their unpleasant features greatly eliminated and their desirable features heightened. Christian principles of belief and conduct will be the accepted standards.³¹

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., 36.

²⁷Bahnsen, *Victory in Jesus*, 61.

²⁸Ibid., 62.

²⁹North, *Unconditional Surrender*, 146.

³⁰Gentry, “Postmillennialism,” 28.

³¹Boettner, “Postmillennialism,” 120–21.

No Spiritual Kingdom

As I mentioned earlier, what essentially distinguishes postmillennialism from amillennialism is interpretation of the kingdom's nature. Both positions agree that the kingdom of Christ is present, but postmillennialists strive to take the prophetic descriptions of the kingdom's nature literally. For example, in responding to Robert Strimple's case for amillennialism, Gentry argues that "were Strimple to follow his own exegetical direction, he would become a postmillennialist" if he interpreted literally all the descriptions of the kingdom in Isaiah 2, Ezekiel 47, and Psalm 2.³²

For my part, I think the arguments for postmillennialism outlined above do present significant exegetical problems for amillennialism. Postmillennialists examine the promises of Christ's kingdom, they interpret those promises literally, and because they believe Christ was inaugurated as king at his resurrection and ascension and is presently reigning over earth from heaven, they expect those literal promises to be fulfilled in this present age before the new heavens and earth.

The Church's Present Work

As to how Christ will successfully reign, conservative postmillennialists point to the Great Commission of Matthew 28. Christ extends his authority primarily through his body, the church, successfully accomplishing the evangelization of the world. They argue that on the foundation of all authority being given to him (v. 18), Christ commissions his people to "disciple all the nations" (v. 19). They take this to mean that nations as nations will be entirely converted during Christ's kingdom as a result of the church's evangelistic endeavors.³³ Bahnsen argues, "The church goes forth, not simply to battle (with periodic or spotted conversions from place to place), but to incredible victory (namely, the discipling of the nations as such)."³⁴ And again, this worldwide allegiance to Christ will occur in history before the new heavens and earth. Wilson insists that when the Bible speaks of the earth being full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11:9), "all this happens in the course of history, not after history is over."³⁵

It is important to recognize, however, that postmillennialists do not believe that every individual will be saved during the millennium, and

³²Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., "A Postmillennial Response to Robert B. Strimple," in *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, ed. Stan N. Gundry and Darrell L. Block (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 131.

³³For a helpful treatment of postmillennialists' interpretation of "disciple nations," see Jeff Moore, "The Mission of the Church and the Mission of the State: Honoring Christ's Authority to Define Proper Domains," *Gloria Deo Journal of Theology* 3 (2024): 13–37. I disagree with some of Moore's conclusions, such as his denial that nations as nations will come worship Christ, but his exegetical work is helpful.

³⁴Bahnsen, *Victory in Jesus*, 102.

³⁵Wilson, *Heaven Misplaced*, 17.

they do so on a literal reading of parables such as in Matthew 13, where both wheat and weeds grow side by side in the kingdom. This description of the kingdom has always been a problem for amillennialism, but postmillennialists take it literally. Yet the success of Christ's rule, evidenced in all the nations submitting to him as king, will come to pass. Wilson argues, "We should note that we are not commanded to give everyone in the world a chance to be saved—we were told to disciple the nations. This is the earthly task of the church, and nothing else is."³⁶

Postmillennialists root this optimism regarding the church's success on earth, not only in the Great Commission, but also in a literal interpretation of the promises that Christ's people will reign with Christ on earth in history. The kingdom "shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High," promises Daniel 7:27. Jesus promised that the meek would inherit the earth (Matt 5:5). Paul declares, "If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him" (2 Tim 2:11–12). And Revelation 20:6 unequivocally predicts that Christ's followers "will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him." Postmillennialists want to take these and many similar promises literally as occurring in history before the new heavens and earth.³⁷

The Christianization of Culture

But the success of Christ's reign does not end with the salvation of souls. Although this reign of God's people results primarily from gospel proclamation, since postmillennialists understand such a reign to be rooted in God's original creation purpose for mankind, they also include a socio-cultural emphasis in what it means to extend Christ's rule on the earth. Christ is ultimately fulfilling God's original intent for man to rule as his vice regents, but he is doing so through his people on earth. According to Gentry, Adam and Eve were "covenantally obligated...to develop human culture to [God's] glory, exercising righteous dominion over all the earth," and that covenant obligation continues now for Christ's body.³⁸ Wilson agrees, "The cultural mandate is nothing more or less than mankind's obligation to be culturally responsible."³⁹ North asserts, "Man must exercise dominion. It is part of his nature to do so."⁴⁰

As a result, postmillennialists place a high emphasis on the real

³⁶Ibid., 82.

³⁷Others include Ps 37:11; 149:5–9; Rom 5:17; 1 Cor 6:2–3; Rev 2:26–27; 5:9–10.

³⁸Gentry, "Postmillennialism," 26.

³⁹Wilson, *Heaven Misplaced*, 114.

⁴⁰Gary North, *Dominion Covenant: Genesis* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1982), 29.

value of earthly work in this present age, as they anticipate the Christianization of culture through their extending Christ's rule over all the earth. Gentry suggests that

as a consequence of the spread of the gospel, history will experience widespread faith in God, righteousness on the personal and social levels, and international peace and prosperity on the cultural and political levels.... Each and every realm of thought and activity is under his authoritative command: ecclesial, familial, and personal—as well as ethical, social, cultural, financial, judicial, legal, political, and every other realm. The rich reward of his redemptive labor is sovereign lordship over all.⁴¹

Wilson insists that postmillennial optimism should motivate Christians to pursue strong Christian marriages, godly children, fervent gospel proclamation, holy living, and covenant-renewal worship that is regulated by Scripture instead of wracked by worldliness. “The central way that Christians are called to transform the world is not to be found in politics,” he says. “Christ gave us our mission and he gave us our methods. The world is to be brought to Christ, with all the nations submitting to him, agreeing to obey him. That is the mission.”⁴²

It seems to me that this emphasis is partly responsible for the growth of postmillennialism today. In response to nominal Christianity, worldly worship, theological compromise, and cultural passivity in much of modern evangelicalism, young Reformed Christians are attracted to a theology that stresses the need to live holy and distinct lives in conformity to God's moral standards, to create culture that reflects biblical values, to boldly proclaim the lordship of Christ in the public sphere, and to worship according to the dictates of God's Word. All of these things they find in the postmillennial proposal.

The Appeal of Postmillennialism

As noted earlier, the emphasis upon the success of Christ's reign on earth in history, as clearly prophesied in Scripture, is one significant reason many amillennialists have become attracted to postmillennialism. As Bahnsen observes, “Amillennialists are always at a disadvantage here because they end up having to do such gymnastics to explain how all these really powerful promises of kingdom success are being fulfilled today in a kind of invisible way or in heaven.”⁴³ He states with a note of irony, “We [postmillennialists] can be premillennialists, at least when it is appropriate in terms of the understanding of the golden age, or semi-golden age, that has been promised by the Bible.”⁴⁴

⁴¹Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., *Postmillennialism Made Easy*, 2nd ed. (Chesnee, SC: Victorious Hope, 2020), 20, 28.

⁴²Douglas Wilson, *Mere Christendom* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2023), 160.

⁴³Bahnsen, *Victory in Jesus*, 53.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

Yet, they certainly set their sights on premillennialism as well. Both amillennialists and premillennialists, according to postmillennialists, are “pessimistic” about the trajectory of world history, not expecting the kind of worldwide Christianization within history that they believe Scripture promises. “Postmillennialism is set apart from the other two schools of thought,” Bahnsen suggests, “by its essential optimism for the kingdom in the present age.”⁴⁵ Boettner claims of premillennialism,

If we feel the whole secular order is doomed, and that God has no further interest in it, why, then, of course we shall feel little responsibility for it, and no doubt feel that the sooner evil reaches its climax the better. ...Such an over-emphasis on the other-worldiness cannot but mean an under-emphasis and neglect of the here and now. ...It would be hard to imagine a theory more pessimistic, more hopeless in principle or, if consistently applied, more calculated to bring about the defeat of the church’s program than this one.⁴⁶

Any “refusal to exercise dominion” Wilson asserts, “is escapist religion.”⁴⁷

In fact, postmillennialists seem to believe that they are actually taking the promises of the kingdom more literally than premillennialists do. After citing several New Testament promises that the kingdom will come “quickly” (Rev 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20), that is it “at hand” (Jas 5:8; cf. 1 Jn 2:18; Rev 1:1, 3), and that “this generation will not pass away until all these things take place” (Matt 24:34; cf. Matt 10:23; Heb 10:25), Wilson asserts, “None of these passages would lead us to think that we need to wait two thousand years or more.” Wilson claims that the only options for interpreting these texts are (1) unbelieving liberalism, (2) interpreting them as referring to the end of the world, in which case “the natural meaning of the words indicating its nearness in time must be ‘spiritualized,’” or (3) “we can say that the writers of the New Testament expected to see these thing come to pass in their day, and they were correct.”⁴⁸

The bottom line is that postmillennialists believe that a literal reading of Scripture inevitably leads to the conclusion that Christ will successfully subdue the earth as God originally intended in the Garden of Eden, that he will do so through the spread of the gospel, and that the success will occur before he returns to earth a second time.

Why Premillennialism Is Better

Much could be said to correct postmillennial interpretation of many biblical texts, but that is not my goal here.⁴⁹ What I intend to do

⁴⁵Ibid., 92.

⁴⁶Boettner, *The Millennium*, 353–54.

⁴⁷Wilson, *Heaven Misplaced*, 74.

⁴⁸Ibid., 95.

⁴⁹For a helpful critique of how postmillennialists interpret key biblical texts, see Jeremy Sexton, “Postmillennialism: A Biblical Critique,” *Themelios* 48 (2023): 551–72.

is to focus specifically on this central reason I believe postmillennialism has become attractive—its attempt to take kingdom prophecy literally. And what I will show is that ultimately, though postmillennialists do interpret some of the kingdom prophecies literally, they are not willing to take all of the kingdom prophecies literally. Rather, premillennialism more consistently applies a literal hermeneutic to biblical prophecy.

*Literal Interpretation of the Cause and
Nature of Christ's Kingdom*

The most obvious example of the postmillennial unwillingness to take prophecy literally is in their allegorization of the thousand years prophesied in Revelation 20. For example, Bahnsen insists, “we are not inclined to begin by reading the ‘one-thousand’ in a literal way any more than we should read the one-thousand literally when the Psalmist says the Lord owns the cattle on a thousand hills. ...[T]he thousand-year reign of Jesus has begun and it is set in contrast in John’s writing to a very short period for Satan at the end of history.”⁵⁰

Yet an even more prevalent aspect of kingdom prophecy that postmillennialists do not take literally is descriptions of how Christ’s kingdom comes. To put it another way, postmillennialism and premillennialism agree on the literal earthly character of millennial kingdom in history (with a few notable exceptions discussed below). Where we disagree is in the cause and timing of the kingdom.

God’s Kingdom Purpose

Contrary to what some might claim, biblical premillennialism is not based solely on a particular interpretation of Revelation 20. Rather, it is rooted in a holistic understanding of God’s kingdom purposes, beginning in Genesis 1. Michael Vlach succinctly presents the biblical argument for premillennialism:

Jesus as the Last Adam is destined to successfully rule from and over the realm (earth) that was tasked to the first Adam. Adam failed but the Last Adam will succeed. Jesus’s kingdom reign will be from and over the earth and He will share His reign with His followers and complete the kingdom mandate of Genesis 1:26–28.⁵¹

As we have seen, this paragraph could have almost been written by a postmillennialist based on a literal reading of kingdom promises.⁵² Yet premillennialists believe this rule of Jesus and his people will occur after

⁵⁰Bahnsen, *Victory in Jesus*, 51. Gentry likewise asserts, “With amillennialism, postmillennialists understand the ‘thousand years’ in Revelation as symbolizing an extended period of time” (Gentry, *Postmillennialism Made Easy*, 5).

⁵¹Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God* (Silverton, OR: Lampion Press, 2017), 543.

⁵²The only point on which a postmillennialist would disagree is with the word *from*.

Jesus comes again—it is not currently taking place. Why? Because pre-millennialists apply a literal hermeneutic to kingdom prophecies more consistently than postmillennialists do, which manifests in a few key areas.

Violent Subjugation

First, the positions diverge primarily with regard to how the kingdom will come. Postmillennialists argue that the kingdom comes gradually and generally peacefully through gospel proclamation and faithful Christian living. For example, though Gentry rightly interprets messianic psalms like Psalm 22:27 as being fulfilled before the creation of the new heavens and earth, he asserts without support that it will come “apparently on the basis of evangelistic persuasion rather than Armageddon imposition.”⁵³ Bahnsen states the point clearly: “According to the Bible, the kingdom of God does not come in this world through violence.”⁵⁴

Yet consistent literal interpretation of the promises indicates otherwise. Instead of coming gradually and peacefully, many prophecies concerning the earthly kingdom of Christ predict that it will come suddenly and with violent force.⁵⁵ A few examples will suffice to illustrate the point.

Psalm 2, often correctly cited by postmillennialists as proof that Christ’s kingdom will involve whole nations submitting to the lordship of Christ, reveals how this will take place: “You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel” (Ps 2:9). Psalm 72, another Messianic psalm predicting his “dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth” (Ps 72:8) also describes how that will take place: he will “crush the oppressor” and make “his enemies lick the dust” (Ps 72:4, 9). The messianic kingdom psalm most quoted in the New Testament, Psalm 110, says that Christ “will shatter kings on the day of his wrath” (Ps 110:5). How is it that the nations will be Christianized? “He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth” (Ps 110:6). In fact, much, if not all, of the imprecatory language in the psalms is a plea for God to fulfill his promise of subjugating the nations and reigning over the earth.

This is what the prophets of old foretold. Isaiah prophesied, “Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it” (Isa 13:9). As Craig Blaising rightly summarizes, “It is the coming of Christ in the

⁵³Gentry, “Postmillennialism,” 32.

⁵⁴Bahnsen, *Victory in Jesus*, 57.

⁵⁵This is a point on which premillennialists and amillennialists agree, though amillennialists believe that Christ’s sudden and violent defeat of his enemies at his second coming ushers in the eternal kingdom in the new heavens and earth. See Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 166ff.

Day of the Lord that brings in the future fulfillment of the eschatological kingdom both in its millennial and final forms.”⁵⁶ And this Day of the Lord will come with violence: “I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless” (Isa 13:9–11).⁵⁷ Likewise, Zechariah prophesied a day when Messiah would establish his kingdom on earth by unleashing his wrath against his enemies: “Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle” (Zech 14:3).

This violent overthrow of Christ’s enemies is what will render the nations subservient to him such that even Egypt will worship him: “In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord near its borders” (Isa 19:19). Zephaniah predicts that the Day of the Lord will bring with it wrath, distress and anguish, ruin and devastation, darkness and gloom” (Zeph 1:14). On that Day, the Lord will “gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger” (Zeph 3:8). This outpouring of wrath upon the nations, the prophet predicts, will then be the means by which the nations will be converted: “For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord” (Zeph 3:9).

Coming, Then Reigning

Blaising also helpfully points out that “throughout the New Testament, the second coming of Jesus is the coming of the Day of the Lord.”⁵⁸ First Corinthians 5:5 identifies the Day of the Lord as future. It “will come like a thief in the night,” Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5:2, bringing with it “sudden destruction” (v. 3). Paul insists that the Day of the Lord is not yet here, “for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first” (2 Thess 2:2). Paul describes Christ’s second coming as a time when he “is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus” (2 Thess 1:7–8).

Further, Jesus specifically described his earthly reign as being accomplished as a result of his coming again. He promised in Matthew 25:31–32, “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.” The order of events

⁵⁶Craig Blaising, “A Premillennial Response to Kenneth L. Gentry Jr.,” in *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, ed. Stan N. Gundry and Darrell L. Block (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 74.

⁵⁷See also Isa 2:12; 3:16–24; Jer 30:7; Ezek 38–39; Amos 5:18–19; Zeph 1:14–18.

⁵⁸Blaising, “Premillennial Response,” 74.

here is clear: the Son of Man comes again, then he will sit on his glorious throne to judge the nations. After separating the sheep from the goats, he says to his sheep, "Come, you who are blessed by the Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt 25:34).

Postmillennialists interpret passages related to the Day of the Lord in one of two ways. Some acknowledge that it refers to Christ's second coming, but they ignore the biblical chronology of the millennium following his coming. Others claim that the Day of the Lord has already begun. These, too, ignore the biblical chronology, and they also must spiritualize the violent subjugation of God's enemies prior to the millennium.

Gentry argues that the Day of the Lord refers to AD 70.⁵⁹ He notes how Psalm 2 is quoted in the New Testament with regard to Christ's resurrection and ascension.⁶⁰ But as Blaising observes, "Gentry does not do well, however, in explaining how the themes of rebellion and subjugation by force in this psalm find their fulfillment at this time. Is the preaching of the gospel the fulfillment of dashing to pieces those who refuse to submit to him?"⁶¹ Blaising notes that while the New Testament references Psalm 2 with relation to Christ's resurrection and ascension, Revelation 19:15 also quotes Psalm 2 with reference to Christ's second coming, a prophecy filled with language of violent subjugation:

In righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is the Word of God.... From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty (Rev 19:11–16).

As Blaising notes, "These texts see the final fulfillment of Psalm 2's regal language in a kingdom that ensues from that Second Coming."⁶²

Postmillennialists also do not take literally descriptions of Christ physically ruling the world on David's throne from Jerusalem after his coming to earth. Isaiah 2 pictures Messiah ruling on earth from Jerusalem as the nations gather to worship him there. Isaiah 9 states that Messiah will establish his government "on the throne of David and over his kingdom" (Isa 9:7). While Gentry's assertion from Isaiah's prophecy that worldwide worship will take place during the last days, not after the last days does counter the amillennial position, it does not

⁵⁹Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology*, 3rd ed. (Chesnee, SC: Victorious Hope, 2021), 382–83.

⁶⁰Gentry, "Postmillennialism," 34.

⁶¹Blaising, "Premillennial Response," 76.

⁶²*Ibid.*

contradict the premillennial view of the millennium, which occurs after Christ's coming, but still during the last days.⁶³

In order to deny the violent nature of Christ's return to establish his kingdom, postmillennialists must follow the amillennial method of allegorizing prophecies that speak in such terms. Bahnsen explains,

Postmillennialism maintains that the victorious advance of Christ's kingdom in this world will take place in terms of the present peaceful and spiritual power of the gospel, rather than through a radically different principle of operation, namely, physical force and earthly violence in order to subdue opposition.... How does Jesus conquer the nations according to Revelation 19? With a sword, right? But not a sword in His hand, it is a sword from His mouth. It is going to be preaching that changes men's hearts.⁶⁴

Likewise, Wilson notes that Psalm 110 "ends with Christ crushing the rulers of the whole earth. But how is this to be done?" Wilson says it will happen gradually in this age through gospel proclamation.⁶⁵ For other passages in which they cannot avoid the violent language, they either interpret them to occur in AD 70, or they acknowledge that they occur at Christ's coming but simply to squash a rebellion that rises at the end of the golden age.⁶⁶

Reigning with Christ

Postmillennialists also do not take promises of saints reigning with Christ literally, either in character or in timing. Repeatedly in kingdom prophecy, Christ's coming brings with it violent subjugation of his enemies, after which his people are given rule with Christ over the nations. For example, Daniel 7 portrays a "horn" waging war with the saints, which suddenly ends when the Ancient of Days comes in judgment, after which "the saints took possession of the kingdom" (Dan 7:21–22). Jesus promised in Matthew 19:28, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the

⁶³"Hebrews 1:2 indicates that 'in these last days' God 'has spoken to us in his Son.' Yet the NT also speaks of many eschatological events that have not been fulfilled with the first coming of Jesus and await future fulfillment (see 1 Thess 4–5; 2 Thess 1–2; 2 Pet 3; etc.). The interpreter will need skill in deciphering which aspects of OT eschatology apply to Jesus' first coming and which apply to his second coming" (Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever*, 148, n. 7).

⁶⁴Bahnsen, *Victory in Jesus*, 56–57.

⁶⁵Wilson, *Heaven Misplaced*, 99.

⁶⁶"The siege of Jerusalem described in Zechariah 14:1–2 points to the AD 70 judgment upon Jerusalem" (Gentry, *He Shall Have Dominion*, 523). "Though clearly expecting Christ's dominion throughout the world, Scripture nevertheless teaches that a minority of the human race will not convert to Christ. Evidence for this exists in the events associated with Christ's return, which include a brief rebellion, as indicated in 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10 and Revelation 20:7–9" (ibid., 302).

twelve tribes of Israel.” Ironically, after mocking the Corinthian believers for acting like they were currently reigning (1 Cor 4:8), Paul promised that believers would one day literally judge men and angels (1 Cor 6:3). And Christ says in Revelation 2:26–27, “The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron.” Postmillennialists spiritualize the reign of believers as simply gospel proclamation, and even when they extend such “rule” to cultural and societal influence, they are unwilling to take literally passages about judging men and angels and ruling over the nations with a rod of iron.

The timing is also key: saints will be given authority to rule after Christ’s coming, when his faithful in John’s vision, “came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years” (Rev 20:4). Postmillennialists have to follow the example of amillennialists in spiritualizing this resurrection and placing it during this age rather than taking it literally. For example, Bahnsen interprets Matthew 25:31–32 as occurring at the end of the Millennium. Conveniently, when quoting these verses, Bahnsen skips verses 33–34 which mention the sheep inheriting the kingdom.⁶⁷ Instead of affirming that the saints will literally rule over the nations, Bahnsen argues that this is taking place spiritually now. Referring to Ephesians 2:1–6, Bahnsen states, “Paul has told us we have been raised with him and we sit with him in the heavenly places, reigning with him on his throne. We have ascended with Jesus, the kingdom has come and the millennium has begun.”⁶⁸ Gentry argues that the idea of saints reigning with Christ in Revelation 20 is essentially the same as Paul’s statement that Christians are seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph 2:6).⁶⁹

Restored Creation

Another aspect of kingdom prophecy that postmillennialists spiritualize is with respect to the nature of the kingdom. While they do agree with premillennialists concerning all nations coming to worship Christ during his kingdom reign, they do not take literally promises concerning the restoration of the created order during Christ’s kingdom. Bahnsen acknowledges, “As far as the curse of sin has affected this world the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is going to reverse that.” He goes on to mention a reversal in “politics . . . , our sexual affairs, our family affairs, our financial affairs, our artistic affairs, our industrial affairs. It makes no difference. If sin has touched it, Jesus is going to deal with it.”⁷⁰ But what of the earth itself, including the animal kingdom? Postmillennialists seem unwilling to take those promises literally.

⁶⁷Bahnsen, *Victory in Jesus*, 46.

⁶⁸Ibid., 45.

⁶⁹“In God’s eyes we sit with Christ in heavenly places (which, in essence, is the idea of Rev 20:4–6), i.e. *in regal position*” (Gentry, *He Shall Have Dominion*, 268).

⁷⁰Bahnsen, *Victory in Jesus*, 65.

What do postmillennialists do, for example, with Isaiah 11:6–9, which promises that “the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and the little child shall lead them”?⁷¹ They rightly interpret Isaiah 2 as taking place literally on this present earth, but they must interpret promises of reversal of the curse on the earth either allegorically or as occurring on the new earth. For example, Gentry says of this verse, “This is poetry; it is not speaking literally of wolves, lambs, leopards, lions, and bears. These carnivores acting peacefully with herbivores picture the glory of Christ’s kingdom when it comes to full expression in history.”⁷² He interprets verse 11 literally about the reconciliation of his people as occurring with present nations on this earth, yet he has to allegorize promises that involve more than just people.

But as Vlach notes,

some spiritualize the literal meaning of these verses, but there is no good reason to do this. Nature and the animal kingdom were casualties of the fall of man. So why wouldn’t the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21) include a restoration of nature and animals? . . . Isaiah 11:6–9 shows that Messiah’s kingdom is not just a spiritual kingdom; it is a kingdom that transforms every aspect of creation—including the animal realm. In Eden man and animals lived in harmony, so too will it be in Messiah’s kingdom.⁷³

If, as postmillennialists agree, God’s kingdom purposes began in the garden and will be fulfilled in the kingdom of Christ, why would we not see the dominion of the Last Adam, not only over nations, but also over creation itself? It appears that the postmillennial understanding of the millennium takes prophecies about conversion and society literally, but it interprets figuratively prophecies about the restoration of the created order.

Literal, but Not

In other words, the key difference between premillennialism and postmillennialism is not with whether Christ will successfully rule over the nations, but when and how he will do so. Premillennialism takes literally all of the promises concerning the nature and timing of Christ’s visible reign on earth. A good summary comes from J. C. Ryle:

I believe that after our Lord Jesus Christ comes again, the earth shall be renewed, and the curse removed; the devil shall be bound, the godly

⁷¹Other passages that promise animal restoration include Isa 65:25 and Ps 8:6–8.

⁷²Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., “Thoughts on Isaiah 11,” *Postmillennial Worldview* (blog), May 12, 2023, <https://postmillennialworldview.com/2023/05/12/thoughts-on-isaiah-11/>. Interestingly, I could not find anywhere in Gentry’s published works where he deals with this text.

⁷³Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever*, 160.

shall be rewarded, the wicked shall be punished; and that before He comes, there shall be neither resurrection, judgment, nor millennium, and that not until after He comes, shall the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord (Acts 3:21; Isaiah 25:6-9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; Revelation 20:1, etc.).⁷⁴

Postmillennialism interprets literally many more promises than amillennialists do. Nevertheless, postmillennialists refuse to take literally any promises that do not fit within their system, and they do not appear to have any clear method for determining what to interpret literally and what to interpret spiritually. Bahnsen argues that kingdom prophecies “are to be interpreted figuratively and literally, depending on the context, and depending on the author’s intention,”⁷⁵ but he never presents any clarity on how these are to be determined.

*Understanding Why Earthly Work Matters Now*⁷⁶

This comparison of how literally postmillennialists and premillennialists interpret kingdom prophecies should also lay to rest the caricature of premillennialism as passive and unconcerned about earthly matters. As I mentioned earlier, one of the reasons young, Reformed evangelicals are attracted to postmillennialism is its emphasis on active work in this present world, which they believe premillennialism and amillennialism have wrongly minimized. Certainly some premillennialists may be passive, but that is not inherent to premillennial theology. In fact, on the basis of the theology itself, premillennialism offers a fairly robust philosophy of cultural engagement.

Since in the premillennial view the future millennial kingdom will be an earthly, physical kingdom, this implies that physical, cultural activities matter. Furthermore, since there is continuity between this present age and the future millennial kingdom, Alva J. McClain insists that “Life here and now, in spite of the tragedy of sin, is nevertheless something worth-while; and therefore all efforts to make it better are also worth-while. All the true values of human life will be preserved and carried over into the coming kingdom; nothing worth-while will be lost.”⁷⁷ Vlach agrees: “Man was created to interact with his environment, including culture. He will continue to do so in the kingdom of God in a holistic manner. This involves international harmony, tranquility in the animal kingdom, planting of vineyards, and the building of houses.”⁷⁸ This is because it is God’s intention to restore during

⁷⁴J. C. Ryle, *Are You Ready for the End of Time?: Understanding Future Events from Prophetic Passages of the Bible* (Inman, SC: Christian Heritage, 2020).

⁷⁵Bahnsen, *Victory in Jesus*, 39–40.

⁷⁶This section is adapted from Aniol, “Polishing Brass.”

⁷⁷Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), 531.

⁷⁸Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever*, 16.

Christ's kingdom not just individuals, but all creation. "This restoration of all creation," according to Vlach, "includes the planet, animal kingdom, agriculture, architecture, and all God-honoring cultural pursuits (Isa 11; 65:17–25)."⁷⁹ He explains that "not only does Jesus' death atone for the sins of God's image-bearers, it is the basis for the reconciliation of all things in his kingdom."⁸⁰

Thus, from a premillennial view, what Christians do in the world now does matter.⁸¹ While the church as church has no social responsibility outside of itself, this does not mean that Christians must refrain from involvement in cultural spheres. According to McCune, "a church saint lives in two separate spheres, the church and the state,"⁸² and as such, individual Christians are "dual citizens" who can and should engage in politics, arts, education, law enforcement, science, and other cultural activities. However, "this is in their capacity as citizens of earth," not as "the church."⁸³ An individual Christian's role in society is not connected in any direct way to God's plan to establish his millennial kingdom on earth and restore all things. Further, when a Christian acts in society, it is not out of a motivation to fulfill the "cultural mandate." As Vlach argues, only "the 'Son of Man,' and 'Last Adam' (see 1 Cor 15:45) can fulfill the kingdom mandate originally tasked to Adam. He can represent man and do for mankind what mankind on his own cannot do,"⁸⁴ and this will occur in the future kingdom "after his present session at the right hand of the Father."⁸⁵

While God intends to restore all things, this is not happening during the present age, and the church has no role in such restoration. Instead, premillennialists make much of the fact that the NT promises this age will continue to grow, in the words of John Walvoord, "increasingly wicked as the age progresses" (2 Tim 3:13), and thus although cultural pursuits are worthy, "the premillennial view...presents no commands to improve society as a whole."⁸⁶ Yet, this pessimism

⁷⁹Ibid., 536.

⁸⁰Ibid., 446.

⁸¹On this point, premillennialists agree with amillennialists, especially those who affirm two kingdom theology. See David VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); David VanDrunen, *Living in God's Two Kingdoms: A Biblical Vision for Christianity and Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010); Scott Aniol, *Citizens and Exiles: Christian Faithfulness in God's Two Kingdoms* (Douglasville, GA: G3 Press, 2023).

⁸²Rolland McCune, *Promise Unfulfilled: The Failed Strategy of Modern Evangelicalism* (Greenville, SC: Ambassador-Emerald International, 2004), 262.

⁸³Ibid., 260.

⁸⁴Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever*, 546–47.

⁸⁵Ibid., 458. Vlach also affirms that when Jesus fulfills the dominion mandate in the kingdom, he will also "empower those who belong to him to do so" as he shares his rule with them.

⁸⁶John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), 134.

about the trajectory of the world's systems in this age is balanced with an optimism in the power of the gospel to change lives and the reality of Christ's coming again to set up his kingdom on the earth. Only he can accomplish societal transformation.

Conclusion

The bottom line is that while postmillennialism does interpret many kingdom prophecies literally and rightly emphasizes the importance of earthly work now, premillennialism does both of these with far more consistency. Unfortunately, not only is postmillennialism on the rise, but also premillennialism seems to be the favorite whipping boy of both alternative positions, scoffed at and maligned as "loser theology."⁸⁷ Much of postmillennialism's claim that it is optimistic in contrast to premillennialism is a case of begging the question. It is not helpful to be optimistic about realities we are not promised prior to the second coming. A false optimism rooted in faulty expectations may actually hinder Christians from preparing themselves to endure even under persecution. Any theology that questions why we should be active in society if wholesale transformation is not the goal is simply pragmatic to the core. Indeed, while the optimism may be attractive, optimism should not be the reason to adopt a system. The system is faulty, as I have shown, because of its unwillingness to apply a literal hermeneutic consistently.

Premillennialism, on the other hand, attempts to apply a consistently normal, "originalist" interpretation of kingdom prophecies in Scripture.⁸⁸ Postmillennialists should be applauded for their attempt to take kingdom prophecies literally, but they should be pressed to do so more consistently. Vlach best summarizes the inevitable conclusions to a consistently literal hermeneutic applied to kingdom prophecy:

- (1) There must be a successful reign of man and the Last Adam (Jesus) from and over the realm—earth—where God tasked the first Adam to rule.
- (2) Jesus must have a sustained and visible reign in the realm where he was rejected.
- (3) There must be a vindication and reign of the saints in the realm where they were persecuted.
- (4) There needs to be a time in history when all aspects of the

⁸⁷This label given to premillennialism comes from a somewhat hyperbolic statement made by John MacArthur in a sermon on January 17, 2021: "Oh, guess what? We don't win down here, we lose. You ready for that? Oh, you were a post-millennialist, you thought we were just going to go waltzing into the kingdom if you took over the world? No, we lose here—get it" (John MacArthur, "2020 Clarity: Reflecting on God's Goodness in the Last Year," Grace to You, January 17, 2021, <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/GTY178/>).

⁸⁸See Snoeberger, "Traditional Dispensationalism," 153ff.

covenants and promises are fulfilled.⁸⁹

Each of these points could be affirmed by modern postmillennialists if they would simply extend their desire to take Scripturally literally to the timing and manner of the advent of Christ's kingdom on earth.

Premillennialists ought to recognize with approval the growing concerns, especially among young Reformed evangelicals, to interpret Scripture literally and to find solutions to compromised worldly Christianity today. These two concerns find their most faithful answers in the exegetical foundations of premillennialism.

⁸⁹Michael Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be a Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus* (Los Angeles: Theological Studies Press, 2015).