

# Post-Millennialism

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[0:00] There are various features of this view. I think you'll see that, understand that.

So we won't spend a lot of time on postmillennialism. In fact, the time we will spend on it, you're going to notice, even what I put up here, you're going to notice that often I say, like amillennialism, postmillennialism, maybe I need to check myself into the hospital. So, you know, I'm going to say that they're very much alike. There are some slight differences, and so we'll talk about that as we go along. But here's the basic view, and we've already gone through this graphic. We did that when I was just kind of introducing the various views. You have that in your notes, not in what I gave you today, but in what we looked at a number of weeks ago. So let me go on here. What does the postmill, what do the postmill people, let's just call it postmill. That's a lot easier to say, isn't it? All right. What do they believe about the millennium? Now, you might think that amillennialism means they believe in no millennium. That's the negative, ah, and you would be right, primarily. And so then you would maybe naturally conclude that postmillennialism means they believe in no millennium. Actually, they don't. In a literal sense. So, well, put the right button here. This is what they believe. The 1,000 years mentioned in Revelation 20, and that's the primary text for the millennium. There are some Old Testament references. I think we looked at maybe some of those several weeks ago. Maybe not. I don't recall. But really, the definitive text for God's revelation concerning the millennium is in Revelation 20. And so, and by the way, just to remind you, millennium doesn't appear in the Bible. All right. So it's not there. But 1,000 years is there. And that's a millennium. All right. All right. So what do they believe? They believe that it is figurative, figurative, not literal, as in an exact literal 1,000 days, but they believe it's figurative. Or maybe we could use the word symbolic of a relatively long but indeterminate period of time. Now, if you recall, that's exactly what the ah-millennial people believe. Although they believe more strongly about it. In that it is not a period, a really definable period of time. All right. Next, some post-millennialists believe that it represents the church age. That the millennium or the 1,000 years that you read about, and it's repeated a number of times in Revelation 20, that what the Bible is talking about there is the church age. All right.

So there, I say some, not all. We might even, I might be safe in saying most post-millennialists believe that the, quote, millennium is just simply the church age, the age in which we're in right now. But again, it's an indeterminate period of time. I mean, the church age, how long has it been going on now? Over 2,000 years. For two millennia. Yeah. So, you know, we ought to be two millennialists.

But then we don't even know how long it's going to continue, do we? All right. But they just believe it represents, in a symbolic way, figurative sense, the church age. Others believe, that it represents a future golden age of the church, which will emerge suddenly, for some suddenly, or maybe gradually, as the world becomes more and more Christianized.

[4:48] That's what they believe. All right. The golden age. Now, I mentioned a while ago that most post-millennialists believe that the millennium represents the church age, I really misspoke.

Most really would fall into this case, especially those that have, you know, kind of the more contemporary version of post-millennialism sees the millennium as the golden age, the golden age. And then there, again, are two camps there. They believe that that golden age will be inaugurated suddenly, not necessarily preceded by any particular event, but it's just suddenly we have the golden age. The gospel has been preached to everyone on the planet, and we're kind of inaugurated into a Christianized world. Now, let me be fair with them, in case, you know, you're thinking that the idea is that everyone on the planet will be Christian. Most post-millennialists do not hold to that. They believe the world will be Christianized, but not necessarily every believer, every person will be a Christian. All right. There's difference, right? However, in their view, the church

brings in the millennial kingdom through the preaching of the gospel in fulfillment of the Great Commission. In fact, they would use the Great Commission, those texts, Great Commission texts in the Bible, in the gospels, they would use those as texts to support their view. And we'll get into this a little bit later, so I'm kind of jumping the gun. So this is how the millennium starts, or this golden age. We bring it in. I do, and you do, and the church does, through the proclamation of the gospel. So if that would be the case, we'd better get to doing that. Now, I think we ought to get to doing that, but not so that we can bring in the millennium. I think like nearly, like really every feature of last things, those things are going to occur according to God's timing and plan. So, but this is the view. This golden age of the church is based on a number of Old Testament prophecies that, in their view, point to the messianic kingdom bringing universal peace and spiritual prosperity.

I just listed those. I'm not going to read them to you. You can do that yourself sometime. Some of these I'll go ahead and tell you, you're going to read and say, I don't get that.

But these are the texts, and there are others. All right, so these Old Testament, the messianic kingdom, and it's characterized by peace and spiritual prosperity, the golden age.

References in the New Testament to this, well, I didn't write that quite right. To this Christianization of the world would be Matthew 13, 31 to 33. You have those two parables, mustard seed growing into a great tree, a little leaven, leavening the whole lump. Those parables there in Matthew 13, they would say pertain to a postmillennial view or the golden age. Most postmillennialists would cite, and I mentioned this a while ago, would cite the Great Commission passages as promises of the successful evangelization of all nations. Now, I would agree with that.

[8:48] But that's not a text for when Christ is going to come or any text, I think, that would support the idea that the world is going to continue to become more and more Christianized until finally the whole world is. I don't think I see that in the Great Commission.

I will add that a small minority of postmillennialists believe the gospel conquest will be so complete that not one unbeliever will be left in the world. Now, that would be a real fringe. I don't know if, you know, anyway. The first resurrection, and this is very much like amillennialism, the first resurrection mission in Revelation 20 is, according to the postmill view, a spiritual regeneration, a revival of the elect on earth. Not a resurrection, but a regeneration, a revival. Like amillennialists, postmillennialists do not believe that Christ will visibly reign from an earthly throne during the millennium or at any time during the millennium or at any time during it. Well, that's redundant. Anyway, it may become apparent that I very hurriedly put this together in my PowerPoint. Well, but you get the idea. They don't believe in a literal reign of Christ on a literal physical throne on this planet for a thousand years or any particular period of time. Not at the beginning of it to inaugurate it, not somewhere in the middle of it someplace or not even at the end of it. Christ will never sit on a throne on this earth in the postmill view. All right.

Now, when the Bible speaks of Satan bound a thousand years, Revelation 22, the idea is that his power to deceive the nations will be bound or be greatly, gradually diminished, moving toward a total and perfect binding when Christ returns at the end of the age. Now, let me explain that in case. I mean, it's kind of wordy. I tend to be that way sometimes. Satan will be bound. I mean, even all millennialists believe in those scriptures, well, it's very clear, Revelation 20, that Satan will be bound for the millennium, whatever they believe that millennium to be. All right. But he's not bound in totally bound. And I think this is kind of a reaction to a certain reality that it's clear Satan is not totally bound, is he right now?

[11:52] If we're in the millennium, as many postmill people believe, then Satan is bound. But if he's bound in the literal sense, as I take it from scripture, then something doesn't make any sense. Well, they limit.

That is, his binding is limited only to his influence, his power to deceive the nations.

And it's gradual. And toward the end of the age, when there will be, by most postmill views, there will be an uprising.

He'll be loosed. He will be, once and for all, totally bound. But that will only happen at the end of the age. Postmillennialists see a largely earthly realization of the kingdom of God during present history.

Sorry. This kind of goes with their view that Christ never will sit on a throne here. This kingdom is not characterized by Christ here, ruling, reigning, sitting on a throne.

[13:03] But rather, his rule is where? In us, in the church. The world becomes gradually more Christianized, and so his rule and reign is accomplished that way. All right. So, it's happening right

now.

Just prior to the end of the millennium, or, again, the golden age of the church, Satan will be unloosed for a short time, and there will be a brief period of apostasy and conflict between good and evil. And that's basically the amillennial view as well.

Amillennial, postmillennial. There's not much of a difference between the two. I'm going to give you one main reason here in just a minute. Like the amillennialists, postmillennialists interpret Matthew 24 as past history.

Okay? Any belief in a, quote, great tribulation, in the literal sense, I believe in a literal seven-year tribulation.

And, you know, people can squabble about whether the great tribulation commences halfway through it, or whether the whole thing ought to be a great tribulation.

[14 : 30] That's neither here nor there. At this point, we'll talk about that later. But the postmillennialists, they do not believe in a literal great tribulation.

Certainly not one in the sense of a seven-year period. And so the great tribulation the Bible speaks of, and speaks of a number of places, not just Matthew 24, they believe is simply a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Alright? And that's the same as the amillennial view. They maintain that Revelation, the book of Revelation, was written before A.D. 70. Well, they'd have to maintain that.

And that it also refers to the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem. Alright? So, Matthew 24, largely when it refers to the great tribulation and other events, the Antichrist and so forth, and Revelation, the majority of it, pertains to events that have already taken place.

before 70 A.D. or at 70 A.D. The great apostasy, 2 Thessalonians 2 mentions it, or in that chapter, and the rise of the Antichrist are both past events.

[15 : 53] So, we don't have to worry about an Antichrist. Alright, well, they do believe in an Antichrist in two senses.

Like the amillennialists, most postmillennialists believe that the man of sin, 2 Thessalonians 2.3, was Nero, who, in their view, inflicted great harm on the church and on Jews during the last days, quote, last days, of the Old Covenant Age, also called the Great Tribulation.

They would say that if there is a Great Tribulation, it is just that period that took place before the destruction of Jerusalem. Nero, Caesar, was the Antichrist, and so forth.

Some postmillennialists believe that there will be another man of sin at the end of the church age coinciding with the belief, or a brief apostasy mentioned in Revelation 20.

So, there will be another one to a lesser degree. And, you might remember when I was sharing with you what the preterists believe, and, in large part, postmillennialists and amillennialists take a preterist view of eschatology or end-time prophecies because they believe all of it's past.

[17 : 22] But there are some, postmillennialists, preterists, who believe that some, at least some, of, you know, those prophecies are yet to be fulfilled.

And, this will be one, in a sense, that there will be another man of sin, another Antichrist, but he'll just come on the scene right at the end and be put down and so forth. The second coming of Christ, when does it happen?

After the millennium. Christ will return after the golden age. However long that is. However long it takes to Christianize the world. And so he will return after the golden age to destroy Satan and to establish the eternal kingdom.

And that kingdom is not going to be here. Alright? But he will establish his kingdom, his eternal kingdom. He will return to an almost completely Christianized world.

He will resurrect all the dead, righteous and wicked. So, one resurrection. Conduct the final judgment, just one judgment. And assign all people their permanent eternal destiny.

[18 : 34] That just... This will happen at the end of the age. Christ's millennial kingdom, the rule of his church, for this golden age will then come to an end.

Alright? That age will end and he will turn over the kingdom of God to the Father. 1 Corinthians 15, 22, 28. Alright? Post-millennialists then see four ages.

A past age, a present age, a golden age, and they're kind of split on whether we're in that golden age yet.

Many would say not yet. Some say yes. But there's the golden age. So, we may be in that or maybe we're still in the present age. I don't know. And then for the eternal age, which will be heaven.

Alright? Weaknesses of the post-millennial view. And you might guess some of these. And this, again, just like the amillennialists, this, I think, is the hardest one for them to deal with.

[19:50] In fact, I don't think they can deal with it. Post-millennialists must force a figurative interpretation of the phrase a thousand years. This is their biggest obstacle.

Because by rules of interpretation, biblical interpretation has the big word hermeneutics. The clear reading, that's rule number one. Now, if the Bible was intending to be figurative, it would not use literal language like numbers.

In fact, when the Bible uses numbers, it's speaking very literally. So, this is their biggest problem. A thousand years. And, is it a thousand years? Or is it an indeterminate amount of time?

They believe an indeterminate amount of time is figurative, is symbolic, and yet, you have to force that interpretation on this in order to hold that view.

You have to force it. It's not natural. Their optimistic outlook that sees a gradual Christianization of the world is unrealistic. And, contradicts observable historical evidence.

[21:02] I mean, that's why we all kind of snickered a while ago when I said, you know, they believe that one day the world will be Christianized. Is there any evidence that would substantiate that to us?

Any evidence of that? In fact, it seems clear to me that it's quite the opposite. Now, here again is the primary difference between amillennialism and postmillennialism.

Amillennialists are pessimistic. Things are getting worse. And I might add to that, premillennialists also see a world that is becoming less and less Christian.

Postmillennialists are optimistic. That's the primary difference between the two. In fact, as MacArthur, I think, said, postmillennialism is just simply optimistic amillennialism.

And beyond that, there's very little difference between the two. And I think that's a problem.

Historically, postmillennialism rises and wanes depending on the times.

[22:15] If you study the history of those, especially in, you know, 19th century, 20th century, you study the history of the postmillennialists.

And just postmillennialism as a belief system, you'll find that it increases and decreases based upon the things that are happening in the world. You know, when wars are at a minimum, at a minimum, then, you know, the postmillennialists are encouraged.

Things really, indeed, are getting better. In fact, I saw a movie not too long ago. It was an old, old black and white movie. I don't even remember what the movie was or what it was about. But I remember that this family was seated at big dining room table, having a big feast, and the father of the house, he was about to carve the meat or whatever, and he said, this truly is the millennium. And why would he say that? Because of some biblical theology? Well, you know, for them, yeah, but primarily that's said because things are great and peaceful and progressive.

And so, their view flourishes during seasons of progress and worldwide optimism when that happens. And, you know, and of course, there are pockets of that.

[23:40] I mean, you know, there have been a lot of postmillennialists in America over the course of our history. that have been greatly encouraged and then suddenly we have war and then we don't have any postmillennialists anymore.

So, and usually they convert to amillennialism. So, they just go from the optimistic to the pessimistic. The Bible, and this I think is an important one to note, the Bible indicates that Christ, not man, establishes and starts the millennium.

He will set up His kingdom. Yet, strictly speaking, the postmill people, and amill people, well, really not so much the amills, the postmills, they have man establishing the kingdom.

We're bringing in the kingdom. But, Scripture is pretty clear that Christ is the one who establishes His kingdom. postmillennialism embraces an inconsistent hermeneutic.

That's how you interpret Scripture, interpretation of Scripture. An inconsistent hermeneutic which abandons the plain meaning of any particular text, and they abandon it only when they're interpreting eschatological texts of Scripture.

[25:10] That is, and this is a point well made, especially among the reform camp because many of them are postmill people, postmill in their views.

And they are doggedly, tried doggedly to be accurate in interpreting Scripture when they preach it, when they study it, when they write commentaries and so forth, until they get to Bible prophecy and it just seems like suddenly that's not literal, that's figurative, and so all of the basic hermeneutical

rules for biblical interpretation, that's redundant, but that's what hermeneutics means, the basic rules for biblical interpretation, they just kind of throw out the window, and it's very inconsistent. Thank you.