

Overview/Preterist

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[0:00] Much of what I'm sharing with you and will share with you will be ground that I have covered many times in my own personal study over the years.

And I would add to that that a lot of this is going to be ground that you too have already walked across and been introduced to.

So I doubt that at least last week, now I may introduce some things tonight that maybe you've not heard. I hope you won't be wondering, will this help me in any way? I hope you're not going to wonder that.

I am approaching this really from a strictly kind of teaching approach. That's a little redundant. That's the approach, teaching. And so I'm going to mention some things that might be a little complex, complicated, and I'll try to explain it as best I can.

[1:12] And the last thing I want to do is, this seems to be the favorite little line these days, is throw the ball out in the weeds so you get lost in kind of getting cumbered by all of the stuff that's there.

And I don't want to do that. But I do want to introduce all the various, not all of them, because there are a lot, but the main views concerning last things.

And even the very term last things, for some, is a misnomer because there are some who believe we've already seen those last things.

And we'll get in a little bit of that here tonight. Now, I do need to apologize for something. I made a mistake on one of the graphics, and it was a slight mistake, and I want to go back over that.

That's on the postmillennialism. But what I'd like to do is go ahead and start again with amillennialism, which was the first view that we looked at.

[2:17] I heard someone say, and I don't know who it was, heard someone say, I need to hear that again. I wasn't quite sure if I got it. Well, you're going to get it another time here. And I do have provided for you, of course, in your notes, the charts that I think can be helpful.

Though let me say to you that these charts are not complete, I mean, not exhaustive. They don't have all the details pertaining to each one of these views.

I'd have to give you a chart maybe about that big to include all of those things. So we're just kind of hitting the basic elements of these various views of the millennium.

The millennium. These are millennial views. And let me say one other thing before we get back into this. What I'm giving you right now is just an overview.

You probably were wondering last week, well, you know, I see the chart. I see what their view is. But where do they get that? Where are they coming from with that?

[3:23] And are they right? And if they're not right, why? And so forth. We're going to get into that. This is just an overview. And after I cover a few things here, lay some foundation, a little bit more foundation, then we're going to go back and look in more detail at each of these various views.

And I'm going to share with you, first of all, what they claim, each one claims to be the biblical basis for their view. And then I'm going to share with you my view on each one of these and why I think they may be wrong and why one of them is probably right.

Or I think it's right. So I am going to at some point be biased completely, headlong into it. I'm going to be biased to tell you exactly what I believe.

Now, some of you have already picked up from last week some of my bias and I can't hide it all. So if I say some little snide remark about one element of a view, then you're going to know, well, you're probably not convinced about that one.

So I'm not going to hold all my bias away. But here, let's get to amillennialism. And again, remember these prefixes. In case you didn't get this last week, the prefixes help clue us in.

[4:40] They identify the views. So ah, pre, post, and that kind of identifies various views. So ah in the ah-millennial or ah-millennium is a negative.

It's a negative prefix. It means not. So no millennium. Now, that's not entirely true. The ah-millennialists, some of them, many of them, do believe in a millennium per se, but just not a literal millennium in the sense of a thousand years.

And I think I made that clear last week. And here it is. They do not believe in a literal 1,000-year reign of Christ and His church. And often ah-millennialism is called now-millennialism.

That is, we're in, in whatever sense of millennium you believe, we're in it. All right, so it's kind of now-millennial. And here's the graphic for that.

They begin, kind of there, the view begins, of course, with the first advent, the incarnation, the coming of Christ. That's how it all began. And then they have Christ's death and resurrection.

[5:54] And that also included the binding of Satan. So aren't you glad that when Christ died, here's some of my bias coming through, when Christ died, that Satan was bound.

So we've not had to deal with Satan at all since the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. This is the ah-millennial view, basically. Again, there are many variations of it.

And then that means we've entered into the millennium, or a non-literal millennium. And some wouldn't even call it the millennium. It's just simply this present age that we're in.

We call it the church age. Well, we, I would, but they wouldn't call it the church age. It's just the present age. And at some point, Satan will be released.

And then Jesus will come. And there will be a general resurrection, just one resurrection, of the righteous and the unrighteous, and a final judgment.

[7:02] And that will then inaugurate the new heaven and new earth, or the eternal state. All right, so that's basically the ah-millennial view.

Some would tweak that a little. Some would add some things, subtract some things. But that's the basic thing. The basic thing. Post-millennialism. Here's where I made a few corrections. And I don't know what happened to me last week, but I had to alter my little graph.

So let me... I think I altered it in the new notes. If you brought your notes from last week, you can just tear off that last page and add this one. Post-millennial view.

We begin with Christ's death and resurrection. And again, that begins the millennium. And for most post-millennialists, it is non-literal.

It's the church age. And we're in that right now. And the length of it, we don't know, according to this view.

[8:09] I added this because I wanted you to know that there are a few variations. Some see a gradual entering into the millennium, so we don't really know the exact start date of it.

It may come very abruptly, or may have, because they believe it's already started. It may have started with the birth of the church, or gradually thereafter. We'll begin with conversion of Israel, binding of Satan, death of Antichrist, so forth.

So, some would put it further on down the way. But here's the important, key feature of post-millennialism. That is, it is generally labeled this way, it's very optimistic.

Very optimistic. And I, you know, when I say that, you say, well, that's a good thing, to be optimistic. Well, not if your optimism is unreal.

We can be as optimistic as we want to, but if it's not real. But there, this is a very optimistic view, because the idea is that the whole world will one day be Christianized.

[9:23] Not everyone will become a Christian. Post-millennialists don't believe everyone is going to be saved. maybe some extreme fringe, on the fringe, of that kind of very broad view.

But, but, but the world will be Christianized. That is, the gospel will go to every person. Every person will hear the gospel, and then the end will come. That's one of the passages that they usually point to.

And so, when that happens, at whatever point that is, when the world is Christianized, there will be a short falling away, a time of apostasy, and then comes Christ.

He comes. At the end of the millennium, whether it's a literal 1,000 years, with a little vague beginning, or if it's just a symbolic of a long period of time, at the end of it, whenever that is, He will come.

There will be the general resurrection, final judgment, and then new heaven, and new earth. And that's, very basically, the post-millennial view.

[10:38] Many, many of our Reformed brethren are post-millennials. Some are amillennial. We're going to get into a view that, that, in a little bit, I'll share with you a view that's very popular among Reformed theologians.

We'll get to that a little bit here. Pre-millennialism. All right, so we've had amillennial, that means no millennium, or now millennium. Post-millennium, means, and all these views primarily are identified by when each view believes Jesus will come.

And so, ah, means, He's going to come sometime. Post, He's coming after it. Post, after, pre, before.

All right, so the second coming will be before the millennium. Now, within that view, there are two, two primary views within pre-millennialism.

And, the first one would be what is called, traditionally been called, historical pre-millennialism.

[11:54] What does that mean? Well, those who have named it that, and hold this view, they've named it that because they believe that is the historical view. It goes all the way to the beginning.

They believe that is the one that, that is, was, the view of the early church. their view on pre-millennialism, we'll get to the view here in a minute.

Some call it covenantal, pre-millennialism. And then the other view is pre, and it's difficult to know how to name this, and I'll tell you why in a minute, but, I will say, even though I didn't put dispensational first, it is generally identified with that terminology.

Dispensational pre-millennialism. Now, that's a big mouthful of words, isn't it? Well, two words, but they're big words. Dispensational pre-millennialism.

Some would prefer to call it pre-tribulational pre-millennialism. There are some other names. Some call it modern pre-millennialism, and it's usually the historical pre-millennialists that like to call this view the modern pre-millennialists, and why would they want to call it that?

[13:08] Because they claim it's a new view. It's new. Now, not new like in the last few years, but primarily they would say that it started, well, probably popularized, they would say, by Schofield, though the view really became popular before Schofield.

I think the view goes back even further than that, but anyway, so, those are the two views. let's start with historical or covenantal.

We begin with Christ's death and resurrection. That, of course, inaugurates the church age. We would all agree with that. Jesus established His church.

Church age. Then, toward the end, what they would call the last days, there's a decline, spiritual decline, and then comes the tribulation.

The tribulation, time of tribulation, Antichrist, and the things that Scripture describes. And then, Jesus comes. Comes part of the way, and the church is raptured.

[14:33] The dead in Christ are resurrected. The living righteous are raptured and we go up and meet Jesus in the air. And then, with Him, we come down to the earth.

Alright, so, as opposed to what you're going to see with the dispensational premillennialism, there's this one coming and we meet Him and then we turn around and go with Him down to this earth.

The second coming. Satan is bound and that begins the millennium. Though not all historical premillennialists would necessarily hold to a literal millennium, but they all hold to some form of millennium.

At the end of the millennium, Satan is loosed. Causes some troubles, but only for a short time. Then there's the judgment of the wicked and the eternal state.

Alright? And, I guess, you know, the idea is that when Satan is released, he'll marshal an army and rebel against Christ on his throne and they will be put down immediately and cast into hell and then we'll have the judgment and then the eternal state.

[16:05] Alright, now, so here's pretty much the view, the historical premillennial view. I think I might say to you, you may have noticed as we get along in these views, they become a little bit more complicated.

I mean, you know, there's a lot more to this one. This one will have even more. The premillennialism, pre-tribulational dispensational millennialism has Christ's death and resurrection, same there, church age.

Christ descends in the clouds. The church is raptured. Well, the dead in Christ are resurrected. The church is raptured and we meet Him in the air.

And together we don't come back to the earth, we go to the judgment seat of Christ, which is for believers and the marriage supper of the Lamb. And while that's taking place on this earth is the seven-year tribulation.

the battle of Armageddon comes to the close of that and then we have the second coming. Now, with the pre-tribulational, pre- or dispensational view, you have Christ's coming in two parts.

[17:36] There's one of the criticisms against this view and we'll get into this later when we look at the views in more depth. But, here, He doesn't come all the way. He doesn't actually come all the way until after the tribulation.

So, you have the church raptured before the tribulation and the second coming to the earth comes at the close of the tribulation and Satan is then bound.

And that begins the millennium of the thousand-year reign of Christ. Satan is loosed and judged.

There's the judgment of the wicked and then the eternal state.

Now, there are some other things to add to that, but these are the highlights, the basic view, kind of the chronology of the view. All right? So, that's, again, of course, you have it there in your notes.

We'll call it by its normal name dispensational premillennialism. Now, I've chosen not to get in to the tall weeds of dispensationalism.

[18:42] I don't agree with all the various views of dispensationalism, but, and so, I don't know that I want to call this dispensational premillennialism, but that's how it's normally identified.

I want to give you this one because you've not probably heard of this, but it's becoming more and more popular. It's called Preterism.

Preterism. And, I could name one pretty high profile theologian who's a preterist, and that would be R.C.

Sproul. It is, you know, held primarily by those of a reform tradition, and who probably would be either postmillennial or amillennial in their view, but the preterism is something that's becoming popular, and I want to share it with you so that you'll know about it, and, well, do you know why maybe it's not the best view to have, but the term preterism comes from the Latin word praetor, and it means gone by or past.

And so, if that's what it means, then here's a definition of preterism. It's a Christian eschatological view. Remember, eschatology is the study of last things, all right?

[20:21] So, it's a study of last things view that interprets the last, quote, last days, those prophecies concerning the last days of the Bible as events which were either fully or partially fulfilled by 70 A.D.

So, the preterists, either they believe all those prophecies were fulfilled then, or some and we'll get into both of these views.

Some believe that most were and some are yet to be fulfilled. So, there are two types of preterism today. There's this real scholarly way of putting it, full or partial.

Full preterism or partial preterism. Let me give you the full first, even though the full is not the oldest, the partial has been around a lot longer, but the full preterism, and I'll go ahead and tell you, it's heresy.

But, let me give you the full preterism sees all, every last day's prophecy fulfilled with the destruction of Jerusalem, including not only the resurrection of the dead, but also the second coming of Christ.

[21:37] So, it's all been done. It's all over. It was back there in 70 A.D. Yeah, well. And, I mean, there are some very serious scholars who hold to this.

there's various versions of it, but let me give you kind of a model for it, all right? It kind of begins with Israel as God's people.

That's Old Testament. And, there are 69 weeks. Remember, we studied Daniel's 70 weeks. and, I mentioned when we studied that, and I did give you the pre-millennial view on Daniel's 70 weeks, but first we have the 69 weeks, and then one week is kind of separated and fulfilled, and in their view, the 69 weeks, of course, is finished, as I would agree, because when you get to the end of the 69 weeks of prophecy, you have the Messiah is killed or crucified, so we have the crucifixion, and that begins then, from that point, when Christ is crucified, we have Daniel's 70th week, it takes place there.

Some would hold to these weeks as symbolic, not literal, most of them would, and so it doesn't matter that there was more than seven years of Jesus' ministry, or, excuse me, seven years before

the destruction of Jerusalem, it's a period of time.

Now, some would hold that the seven years was literal, and it took place just before the destruction of Jerusalem, but anyway, Daniel's 70th week starts sometime after Christ's death.

[23 : 35] You have Nero, comes on the scene, he's the Antichrist. Now, not all full preterists would agree or identify Nero as the guy, but most of them do.

And that begins the tribulation. Alright? Then in 70 A.D., you know the story from history, Titus, the Roman general, besieges Jerusalem and utterly destroys it.

And so, there's the fall, and Christ's coming occurred then. Now, not visibly, not bodily, invisibly. I mean, they have to do that, they have to say that.

been no reports of Christ's coming at that time, nobody saw that, but this is the view, so it's been done, and that then inaugurated the eternal kingdom on earth, and that's where we are right now, and it's ongoing.

Now, in their view, the church replaces Israel.

[24 : 54] Alright, so, the time of Jacob's trouble, the tribulation, occurred before Jerusalem was destroyed, and so this was God's judgment upon Israel, and from then on, the church is Israel, replaces Israel.

in their view, there's no bodily resurrection of the dead. Nothing in their view, now, I qualify that there's some that would place a resurrection somewhere there where Jesus comes back, but most of them do not believe in a bodily resurrection, and so a person dies, and, you know, they are judged, in fact, let me add this, no rapture of the church, and no judgment days, as in the sense of a group judgment, like the great white throne judgment, you know, that the Bible speaks of, how they missed that, I don't know, but no general judgment that way, so, from on down through history, people have died, of course, and some have been believers, some have been unbelievers, and they are judged after they die, and their bodies stay there in the grave, and they either go to heaven or they go to hell, there's no bodily resurrection in the full preterist view, now what are some problems with this, well, the writings of the early church fathers clearly reveal an expectation of the future return of

Christ, Christ, I'm not talking about the biblical writers, the New Testament writers, they certainly did, but then they would argue, the preterists would argue, well, they were there before 70 AD, so of course they were looking for the second coming, and they believed it would be in their generation, and so that's what they argued, but the early church fathers from the first century on, have all had an expectation of the coming of Christ, so, you know, that doesn't line up, 1 Corinthians reveals a future bodily and physical resurrection of the dead, which is not a part of their view, the church's continued observance of the Lord's Supper with the commitment to do so until He comes, I mean, all throughout history, since the first Lord's Supper was instituted by the Lord Jesus, the church all throughout those centuries has been doing so with this idea that we continue this until Jesus comes, so if He's already come, then why are we doing it still? We ought to just forget it, and as I was doing some study on the full preterist, even the full preterist, they observed the Lord's Supper, alright, little problem there, the clear distinction in Scripture between imminent and immediate coming, I didn't word this right, there is a confusion with the preterists, the full preterists, between those two words, and so when the Bible conveys the idea of imminent return, they always take it as immediate return, so anytime Jesus is speaking of the last days, or any of the apostles, then, especially when they speak of it in this generation, they take imminent to mean immediate, rather than it could be hundreds, thousands of years, and yet still be imminent, it could not be immediate, but it is still imminent, you understand?

So there is a confusion there, there is a disregard for Acts 1, 9-11, and the promise that Jesus would return in the same way He left, how did He leave?

[28 : 50] physically and visibly, as the disciples, the Bible says, watched as He went up and was taken up into the clouds, and out of their sight, and the angels said, why are you looking up there?

Gazing up, your jaws are on the ground, what's the matter with you? This same Jesus, in the same way He left, He is going to come again, and the Preterist does not have a bodily, physical return, of Christ.

Paul spoke to the Athenians in Acts 17-31 of God's ultimate judgment which would have been meaningless to the inhabitants of Greece if that judgment occurred at the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

I mean, why would they worry about any kind of judgment? The judgment was just there in Jerusalem. there is no other view of a judgment day in the preterist view. Full preterism requires a symbolic fulfillment of Revelation 20 and the 1,000 year reign of Christ. And I think that's problematic for any view that takes the millennium as or the thousand years as a symbolic thing or an allegory.

[30 : 17] When the Bible uses numbers, it means exactly what it says. 1,000 years. Alright, so that's a problem. There are one other one.

1 Corinthians 15-26 and Revelation 21-4 and you might remember these passages, but they reveal a time, sometime in the future when all sin and death will be destroyed, which could not happen if there is no future second coming and final judgment.

Alright. Partial preterism. I guess I can get this one in here before we finish this. I wanted to get a little further, but it's alright. And you may never, ever hear of preterism again in your life.

I doubt it, but if you do, then you'll know. Alright? Partial preterism. Partial preterism, the older of the two views, holds that prophecies such as the destruction of Jerusalem, the Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, and the advent of the day of the Lord as a judgment coming of Christ were fulfilled in circa 70 AD.

Alright? They believe those things were fulfilled. However, there is a slight difference. Again, Israel is God's people in the Old Testament.

[31 : 38] That's Daniel 69 weeks. That's the same. Have the cross. that inaugurates or we go into Daniel's 70th week after the cross just like the full preterist.

Nero's Antichrist with many of the partial preterists, but less maybe of those than with the other view. Tribulation and the fall of Jerusalem just like the other view.

Coming of Christ in judgment. And here they make a distinction. It may be a little fuzzy, but it's a distinction that he doesn't actually come all the way, but he comes in judgment.

And his judgment takes place there in Jerusalem, the destruction of Jerusalem, judgment upon Israel. But that is his coming.

And you have the eternal kingdom on earth, and then the church replaces Israel, and then at the end we have the resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteousness, and unrighteous, the rapture.

[32 : 45] Many of them couldn't bring themselves to call it a rapture, but that's kind of the idea. And the final judgment. We don't have a second coming here in that sense, but there is...

Did I skip something? Let me see something. Go back a minute. All right.

I guess that was it. All right. Some general objections. They must make an unconvincing distinction between the last days, plural, which you'll find in the Bible, and the last day, which they place in the future.

They make a distinction between those two. One is talking about the last days ending in 70 A.D., and the last day, which would be somewhat the resurrection and the final judgment into the age.

And it's awfully difficult to prove that there's a difference between those two things. This view requires that all the events of Matthew 24 were fulfilled in 70 A.D., including the coming of Christ, making it very difficult to have Him coming again at the end of the age.

[34 : 07] And they do believe, even though I didn't put that on the graph, they believe that the second coming is at the end of the age, albeit it's not coming to the earth, but there is the second coming of Christ.

So how do you then have the coming of Christ in Matthew 24 all taking place before 70 A.D. and then still having a coming at the end of the age or at the last day?

Similarly, there is no visible appearance that Christ's return in 70 A.D., thus making Acts 1, 9, 12 problematic for them. And then you have 2 Peter 3, knowing this first that there shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts and saying where is the promise of His coming?

So He's speaking of last days and they would say, He's talking about some time between now and the destruction of Jerusalem. So the idea is they're thinking that just before 70 A.D., God's people can say, where is He ever going to come?

But Peter goes on, but beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. Now some would use that argument to say that we're not talking about thousands of years, we're talking about a day or it's symbolic.

[35 : 36] But the point I want to make is if God views time in this way, that to Him a day is like a thousand years. A thousand years is like a day to Him. If God views time in that way, then preachers should rethink their strict timing of Matthew 24.

And when you think about it, there are a lot of passages in the Bible, old and new, that are prophetic and are speaking both of now as well as the future.

And there's very little dispute about some of those, like Isaiah's prophecy concerning the Messiah. Certainly, he was not suggesting, and Joel and some others, not suggesting that, you know, Isaiah was not suggesting that the Messiah is coming in my day.

He speaks of an immediate sense, but the prophecy points out into the future, in most cases hundreds of years. And so, here's the idea, to the Lord, a day is as a thousand years, a thousand years as one day to Him.

And so, we're not going to, we don't need to come to Matthew 24 and say, all this must be fulfilled exactly in our lifetime. It can point to the future.

[36 : 52] So, it's a problem for them. If the prophecies of the New Testament concerning the last days were fulfilled by 70 A.D., what value do they hold to believers today? All of Revelation, pretty much.

Matthew 24, certainly. Other passages in Paul's letters to the Thessalonians and the Corinthians. And we go back into the Old Testament. Testament, what good would these books be for us today if they are referring to events that have already taken place for us now several thousand years ago? All right, so that's an unanswered question, I think, a problem for the view. Thank you. Thank you.