

The Consequences of Dispensationalism

Introduction: Is Premillennialism dangerous or harmful to the faith? Or is it something that is just a sensational view of the end of time? It is my conviction that Dispensational Premillennialism is not only convoluted and contradictory; it is also speculative, dangerous, and unscriptural. As the other speakers have dealt with the particulars of the doctrine both contextually and topically, this study will be devoted to the logical consequences of this theory.

If the logical consequences of a doctrine are in contradiction to biblical teaching, then the view, must be rejected. Eschatological distortions tend to impact every other aspect of one's perspective of the biblical account of God's nature, Jesus's work of redemption, the nature of the church and kingdom, and the heart of our hope as the Lord's people. What is the harm in believing in this doctrine? Let's consider the consequences of Dispensational Premillennialism.

I. Dispensationalism Denies the General Resurrection at Christ's Second Coming

- a. Premillennialism argues that physical death will continue to exist after the Second Coming of Christ.
 - i. On their view, they must concede that unbelievers will continue to populate and corrupt the earth during the seven years of tribulation.
 - ii. Yet, Paul teaches that "at Christ's second coming" – "the end comes" – at which time the Lord will have "abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:23-26).
 - iii. There is no room in this context for seven years of tribulation and a literal thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth.
 - iv. When Jesus returns for His people, His purpose will have been fulfilled, "God will be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28), and there will be total and absolute victory over death (1 Cor. 15:50-58).
- b. Dispensationalism denies that there will be a resurrection or final judgment of the wicked when Christ returns in His Second Coming

- i. Premillennialists argue that unbelievers will not be finally resurrected until at least the tribulation and one thousand years have passed after Jesus's return.
- ii. But the Lord teaches that the righteous and wicked will be raised in the same hour on the last day (John 5:28-29; cf. Acts 24:15).
 - 1. It is impossible to conceive of a plainer statement of the simultaneousness of the resurrection of both the righteous and wicked.
- iii. If the righteous are raised when Jesus returns, so will the wicked be raised when He returns, since they will both be resurrected at the same time (1 Cor. 15:20-22; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 1:6-11; Heb. 9:28).
 - 1. 1 Cor. 15:20-23: "Then comes the end":
 - a. It is obvious that the return of Christ is not to begin an earthly reign; rather it will bring an end to earthly affairs.
 - b. While some assert that the term "then" permits an extended interval the context does not allow such.
 - 2. 2 Thess. 1:6-10 affirms that the unrighteous will be judged, and the righteous will be vindicated simultaneously.
- iv. The final judgment will occur when Christ returns (Matt. 25:31-34, 46; 2 Cor. 5: 1-4, 10-11; Heb. 9:27).
- v. The NT presentation of the second coming of Christ inevitably lead to a repudiation of this unbiblical eschatological theory.
- vi. Order matters:
 - 1. Establishment of the church/kingdom
 - 2. Jesus's second coming
 - 3. Resurrection of both the righteous and wicked
 - 4. Righteous caught up with Jesus in the air
 - 5. Destruction of the Earth
 - 6. Final Judgment
 - 7. Eternity

II. Dispensationalism Denies the Present Messianic Reign of Christ:

- a. The premillennial doctrine virtually ignores the spiritual emphasis of OT prophecy.
 - i. It holds that Christ will return to participate in a material reign on the literal throne of David.
 - ii. Yet, Scripture presents Jesus's reign as being spiritual (Lk. 17:20-21; John 18:36).
- b. The OT promised that the Messiah would reign on the throne of David
 - i. Isaiah prophesied that Christ would be heir to the throne of David (Isa. 9:7).
 - ii. The angel Gabriel informed Mary that Jesus would reign on David's throne (Lk. 1:32-33).
 - iii. Jeremiah promised that there would not be another king reign on David's throne literally and physically (Jer. 22:24-30).
 - iv. Israel will not be God's special nation again (Jer. 19:11).
 - v. Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah would rule as both priest and king (Zech. 6:12-13) and the Hebrew writer clearly states that Jesus could not be priest in the Levitical order (Heb. 7:11-14; cf. Ps. 110:1-4).
 - vi. Therefore, Jesus reigns spiritually on the heavenly throne of David!
 - vii. The spiritual reign of the Christ was promised in 2 Sam. 7:12-16; cf. Heb. 1:8 – Jesus rules at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55-59)
 1. It should be noted that the Christ would reign on the Davidic throne while David would sleep with his fathers.
 2. How would that be the case if the kingdom was to occur after the resurrection of the righteous as premillennialism asserts?
 - viii. Psa. 89:27-29: "I will make Him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth" (cf. Acts 13:33-38; Col. 1:15; Rev. 1:5).
- c. Jesus is presently reigning on the Davidic throne
 - i. Peter references the promise of 2 Sam. 7:12-14; Psa. 89:3-4, 35-37; 132:11 in Acts 2:29-36.

- ii. Since David had died and was buried then these promises were not speaking of him, but of one of his descendants (Acts 2:29).
 - iii. David was an inspired prophet who looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:30-32; cf. Psa. 16:10).
 - iv. Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, declared, *“Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit. He has poured forth this which you now see and hear. For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet’ Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified”* (Acts 2:29-36).
- d. Jesus began to reign at the right hand of God when He ascended to the Father (Acts 1:9-11; 7:55; 1 Pet. 3:22).
- i. Peter explicitly states that David’s prophecy of Jesus’s resurrection was grounded in the promise of His reign as King.
 - ii. Note the difficulty that premillennialist have with this text:
 - 1. “Christ at His first advent offered the Jewish nation an earthly political kingdom . . . Because the Jewish nation rejected the Christ, this kingdom offer was retracted and the earthly, political, re-established Davidic kingdom was postponed until the future Jewish millennium. Between the withdrawal of the kingdom offer and the future millennial establishment of the kingdom was inserted the church age, a parenthesis in God’s prophesied program for Israel and the nations. The present age and the present reign of Christ have no direct relationship to the Davidic covenant or to Messianic prophecy” (Blue Letter Bible, *The Reign of Christ*, retrieved 2010, article was removed)
 - 2. “It is held that the Old Testament prophets predicted the re-establishment of David’s kingdom and that Christ himself intended to bring this about. It is alleged however, that because the Jews refused his person and work, he postponed the establishment of his

kingdom until the time of his return. Meanwhile, it is argued, the Lord gathered together ‘the church’ as a kind of interim measure” (Kevan, Ernest F. 1999. *Wycliffe Dictionary of Theology*. E. F. Harrison, G. W. Bromiley, C. F. Henry, eds. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson).

3. “For centuries the Jews have been scattered among many nations. In preparation for the return of Christ and the beginning of the millennium, they are being gathered back to their own land, according to prophecy, in a national restoration. David’s throne will be re-established at Jerusalem, and through these restored people as a nucleus Christ will reign with his immortal saints over the whole world” (Nichols, James A., Jr. n.d. *Christian Doctrine—A Presentation of Biblical Theology*. Nutley, NJ: Craig).
 4. Jesus received the fulfillment of the promises the Holy Spirit made about His resurrection, exaltation, and present reign (Acts 2:33).
- e. Jesus’s present reign as our King and Priest
- i. If He reigns as our priest, He also reigns as our king (Eph. 1:20-23; Heb. 4:14-16; 7:24-26; 8:1; 10:10, 14)
- f. Christ would reign until His Second Coming (1 Cor. 15:23-26)
- i. This text does not fit the premillennial view that Christ would rule in a physical kingdom *after* the resurrection of the righteous.
 - ii. Rather it teaches that He is presently reigning as king and when the resurrection occurs at His Second Coming then He will turn the kingdom back over to the Father!

III. Dispensationalism Denies the Kingdom Promises of God

- a. Denies the realization of the Messianic Kingdom today
- i. Wayne House and Thomas Ice write, “Whatever dynamic God has given believers today does not mean that the Messianic kingdom is here. We see it as totally future.” (H. Wayne House and Thomas D. Ice, *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?* [Portland: Multnomah, 1988], 220).
 - ii. Daniel’s prophecy:
 1. “In the days of these kings” (2:44-45; 7:13-14)

2. The “kings” of the prophecy were Roman kings (fourth part of the image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, 2:31ff)
3. The Roman Empire came into dominance in 63 BC, and it fell in AD 476.
4. Thus, it follows that the kingdom of God was established at some point between those dates or Daniel is a false prophet.

iii. Isaiah’s prophecy (Isa. 2:1-3)

1. “In the last days” the “mountain of the house of the Lord will be established...and all the nations will flow to it” (2:2).
2. “For the law of the Lord will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (2:3; Acts 2:1-3).
3. Isaiah is speaking of spiritual peace among God’s people not universal world peace (2:4).

iv. Gospel of the Kingdom (Mark 1:14-15)

1. Jesus was preparing His hearers for the arrival of His kingdom (Matt. 3:2; 4:23)
2. Christ demonstrated the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy re: coming kingdom (Matt. 12:28; cf. Isa. 42:1-2; 11:1-5; 61:1-3; Matt. 3:16-17; Lk. 4:1, 14; Acts 10:38).
3. Promised that some would be alive when the kingdom of God came with power (Mk. 9:1; cf. Lk. 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; 2:1-3).
4. While kingdom can be used in various ways (Matt. 13:36-40; 2 Pet. 1:11), it frequently refers to Christ reign over His church (Matt. 16:18-19).
5. Pentecost has been rightly described as the “hub of the whole Bible.”
6. Christians are described as having been translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son” (Col. 1:13) and the apostle John is said to have been in the kingdom when he wrote the Revelation (Rev. 1:9).

IV. Dispensationalism Seeks a Political & Material Kingdom

a. Neo-Judaism

- i. Abdication of Spiritual Priesthood, for a fleshly priesthood (Zech. 6:12-13; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6)
- ii. Restoration of Levitical Order denies the sufficiency of the cross and new covenant (Heb. 7-10)
- iii. Sufficiency of the Cross as the wisdom of God, rather than a contingency plan (1 Cor. 1:18-2:5)
- iv. Superiority of the New Covenant (Rom. 7:1-4; Gal. 3:22-29; Heb. 8:8-13).

b. Spiritual nature of the Messianic Kingdom

- i. The kingdom of Christ is not militaristic (John 6:15; Lk. 17:20-21; Eph. 6:10-17).
- ii. The kingdom of Christ is not political (John 18:36-37).
- iii. The kingdom of Christ is not nationalistic (Rom. 2:28-29; 9:6-8; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).

c. Denies the unifying power of the Gospel

- i. Are the Jewish people still God's chosen people and saved without faith in Jesus Christ?
- ii. John Hagee said: "I'm not trying to convert the Jewish people to the Christian faith. In fact, trying to convert Jews is a "waste of time." The Jewish person who has his roots in Judaism is not going to convert to Christianity. There is no form of Christian evangelism that has failed so miserably as evangelizing the Jewish people. They (already) have a faith structure. Everyone else ... needs to believe in Jesus, he says. But not Jews. Jews already have a covenant with God that has never been replaced by Christianity" (<https://www.gracefellowshipofaugusta.com/pastor-wades-blog/post/the-jews-are-god-s->)
- iii. The central truth of the gospel of the unity of all believers in Christ is denied by premillennialism (Rom. 1:16-17; 2:28-29; 3:9-18, 23; 10:1-3; Gal. 3:28; 6:16; Eph. 2:12-21).

V. The Eternal Purpose of the Lord's Church is Denied (Eph. 3:10-11).

- a. Reduced to a Contingency plan that somehow substitutes for the kingdom during a temporary period.
- b. Postponement Theory undermines the eternal purpose of the church.
- c. Paul clearly affirms that the church is the manifestation of the eternal purpose of God (Eph. 3:1-11):
 - i. Stewardship of God's grace in the mystery of Christ (3:1-7)
 - ii. The plan had been in the mind of God from eternity (3:10)
 - iii. In the very existence of the church, we see the manifestation of the eternal purpose of God throughout the spiritual realm (3:10-11).
 - iv. This verse alone refutes the doctrine of dispensational premillennialism.

VI. The Sufficiency of Christ Death is Minimized (Acts 2:23)

- a. Did Jesus Fail in His Mission?
 - i. Absolutely not – He perfectly did the Father's will (John 6:38; 12:27; 17:4; Heb. 10:5-10)
 - ii. His death was not failure, but obedience (Phil. 2:8; Heb. 5:8-9).
 - iii. It was necessary for the reversal of sin and death (Rom. 5:12-21)
 - iv. Peter declared that although the Jews were responsible for their sin, the death of Christ was the “predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23; cf. 1 Pet. 1:20; 2 Pet. 1:2).
- b. Premillennial equivocation is revealing on this point

Conclusion: We must always emphasize the grace and power of God in His eternal purpose to save us from our sin through Christ in His glorious church! Thank God for His salvation and love.