

Historic Premillennialism and the Victorious Church

INTRODUCTION

Tonight I want to talk on historic premillennialism. That seems like a strange title to some of you. As for others, you know exactly what that means. As we're talking to those who are called to the marketplace tonight, this is a very significant subject for the people who are called there, or to the government, or to the military, or to education. This is to those for whom that is their primary assignment in the kingdom of God.

THE GREAT COMMISSION IS THE PROMISE OF A GREAT ANOINTING

When the Lord arose from the dead, He returned and appeared to His disciples. He gave the glorious Great Commission. We know it well. He commanded the Church to disciple the nations. That discipling of the nations is increasing as we get closer to the glory of the second coming of Christ. The anointing to disciple the nations is actually increasing. The call to disciple the nations will impact every sphere of society with the kingdom of God. Not only does it lead them to salvation, but it enables them to go forth as ambassadors to that station in society to release the ways of the kingdom—again, not only to save others, but actually to establish the presence and the power and the ways of God into that sphere of responsibility that the Lord has given you.

This “Great Commission,” as it's called, is actually the promise of a great anointing. That anointing increases as we get closer and closer to the Lord's return. The issue at hand that's so significant is this: what's the context that we should expect as we get closer to the Lord's return? Meaning, what should we expect? Is it going to get easier? Is the glory going to increase? Is the pressure going to increase? What are we expecting as God is calling different ones to their assignment in the society, in the community, whether in the marketplace, in the government, education, or media? There's a lot of confusion in the Body of Christ on this subject. One camp says it's going to get really bad, and another camp says it's going to get really good. The Bible says it's going to get really bad and really good at the same time. We don't need to pick one extreme or the other.

Many believers pick one extreme or the other. One camp says, “It's going to get really bad, so why even try?” Another camp exaggerates the goodness to the point where it's almost nothing but victory everywhere.

Then the third camp, which is the most popular, says, “You know, I don't get any of it. I'm not even going to bother with trying to figure it out. I'm just going to let things take care of themselves when we get there.” That's actually the worst position. Because the Bible gives so much information, clearly written in the Word, as to what we're supposed to expect in terms of the negative and the positive. It's the tension of those two realities. If we have an accurate, biblical picture, then as the negative and the positive unfold, our faith is strengthened. We have resolve and clarity to keep pressing on. If we have a wrong biblical picture, we end up in confusion and offense, because it becomes more difficult than we thought. Or we end up in fear and ambiguity and confusion, and we say, “I don't even want to do this, because no one even has any clarity as to what's happening.”

THE NECESSITY AND ANOINTING TO ENDURE

The Bible has given us, paragraph A, a very clear perspective on the end times. We want to have an accurate, biblical perspective, so that we stay steady with confidence, but we're girded to endure while we overcome.

One man says, “Do we overcome or do we endure?” There’s endurance while overcoming. There’s the anointing of power to overcome individually as well as impact the nations. There’s the necessity and the anointing to endure, because the tides of darkness and evil will get stronger and stronger, yet the glory will increase more and more. Both the positive and the negative will continue to increase as we draw near to the time of the Lord’s return.

What we believe about the end times greatly affects how we approach the work we do for the kingdom. It’s not enough to just do human logic. I’ve heard people who have an overly-optimistic perspective say, “You know what? I just want to be positive.” It’s not an issue of just wanting to be positive. What we want is to be accurate. We want to agree with truth. We don’t get to vote on the plan that God has already established. We only get to agree with it—to understand it and agree with it. Over the years I’ve heard men on the positive end say, “It’s such a bummer to talk about the negative, so let’s ignore it.”

I say, “No, we really can’t do that. We’re not the Lord of the process. There’s One far smarter and far greater in power than we who is determining the great master plan.”

What we want to do is understand it and come into agreement with it so that we have the anointing to overcome individually, as well as in our impact on the nations, while at the same time having the anointing to endure faithfully to the end without any wavering whatsoever in the midst of great resistance. Ideas have consequences. If we have wrong ideas, either too positive or too negative or too vague, where we don’t even think about it at all, those three wrong positions have serious consequences in our thinking, in our attitude, in our actions. We can’t take the ostrich approach, put our head in the ground, and hope that what’s in front of us and what’s coming won’t come. That’s not a responsible way to go forth in the kingdom.

Rather, one man said, “I’m not a muddy-eyed pessimist, and I’m not a starry-eyed optimist; I’m a wide-eyed realist.” I think that’s the way we want to approach this.

CONFIDENCE IN THE CLARITY OF GOD’S END-TIME PLAN

Paragraph B. I want to give you what I believe to be a clear presentation of what the Bible says about the major trends of the end times. There’s a lot of room for opinions and errors on the fine details, but the broad strokes of the positive and the negative, I find, are quite straightforward in the Bible—if you take the Bible at face value. In other words, you interpret it in a literal way. It means what it says and says what it means. If you take that approach, which is the approach that we take here at IHOP-KC, then the main positive trends and the main negative trends are really straightforward. It’s not so confusing. If we go beyond the big trends to the more specific details of timing, and all those things, there’s a lot of room for opinions, and not having to get it just right. But I believe we can have clarity on the broad strokes, and confidence that we’ve understood the Word of God.

DON’T ACCEPT ANYTHING THAT YOU DON’T SEE IN YOUR OWN BIBLE

Paragraph B. These aren’t my personal ideas. They’re personal and they’re mine, but they’re also shared by our team, because they belong to the other members of our team as well. I’m going to give you what we believe is an appropriate, accurate, biblical view of the positive and the negative, so that we can possess an anointing to overcome and to endure in a steady way without drawing back in fear, confusion, or giving up and giving in.

Before I give you some of these ideas, look at paragraph B. We don't ask anyone to just accept our views. When our Bible School students come, one of the things we tell them is that we want to teach them to think for themselves. I urge them, no matter whether I'm the one teaching them or one of the other Bible School teachers, "Don't accept anything that you don't see with your eyes in your own Bible." They actually have a responsibility to challenge something if they can't see it in the Word of God. They need to challenge it in the right way with a humble spirit, but they need to challenge it.

Our definition of loyalty isn't, "Just agree with us." Our definition of loyalty is that we have a responsibility together in the community that we are here together, to challenge one another that we're walking in the truth together. Just do it with humility—the right spirit in the right way.

Paragraph C. This is very important. We have some views that are really different from some others around the nation and the nations, but we honor the godliness and we honor the wisdom of many men and women of God who hold different views. What I mean by "honoring their godliness and wisdom" is that we honor their walk with the Lord. We honor their ministries. They have tremendous revelation of the Lord. Though we disagree with this issue, we honor who they are and we honor the significant amount of things the Lord has done through them. There are many people I could name for whom I feel this emotion. Some I know well, and some I don't know except through their writings. I have tremendous respect for them. Because as we approach the coming of the Lord, as we draw nearer to it, no one knows the day or hour when He's coming, but we need to grow in honor, love, and humility as we're striving to become more clear and accurate as to what the Bible says about this subject.

THE CHURCH WILL GO THROUGH THE TRIBULATION IN VICTORY AND POWER

Paragraph D. The point that's most controversial that we hold here at IHOP-KC is that the Church is raptured after going through the Tribulation period. She will go through the Tribulation in great victory and in great power. This differs from the pre-tribulation rapture view. Most of you are aware of that. The pre-tribulation rapture view says that the Church will be raptured at any time. After the Church is taken up, then the Tribulation comes. I believe that's not the teaching of the Scriptures. I honor the people who teach that. I don't honor that particular doctrine. I think that error is a very significant error, because it leaves people unprepared for the most glorious hour of human history. Because the Great Tribulation isn't just the most difficult hour for the nations, it's the most glorious hour for the Church. It's the hour when we'll walk in the greatest victory and anointing of any time in Church history.

Paragraph E. There are several popular end-time views that are being taught today. I mentioned them already, but I'll say them again. One view is too pessimistic. That's the dispensational premillennial view that says the rapture is coming and why bother impacting society? The Antichrist is going to take it over anyway. The devil is going to win for a season anyway. Let's draw back, let's lead people to Jesus, and just hang in there until then. In my opinion, that's too pessimistic a view of the end times.

THE VICTORY WILL BE GREATER, BUT THE FIGHT WILL BE GREATER, TOO

There's the other view that's too optimistic. This view teaches that the glory is going to be so great, and the darkness will be there, but it will be so minimized by the power of the Church that we'll Christianize all of society. It may take a few hundred years, but it's going to get better—better, and stronger and bigger. The darkness will just kind of recede, and eventually all the nations will be Christianized. Then Jesus will come in

full delight because of the great job that we did. We'll hand the nations to Him. There are actually quite a few people who believe that. That's too optimistic.

That's called postmillennialism. I believe that that view will lead people, in the decades to come, to great confusion and disillusionment. It's a bit popular now because the message is, "We're called to the marketplace, and guess what? We're going to get more money and it's going to get easier. We're going to get more favor."

Who doesn't like that message? "More money, easier, more favor? Cool. I think I'll vote for that message." We don't really get to vote. There's already a plan that's made clear from heaven. Yes, it's true, we'll walk in greater anointing, but there will be greater resistance. The victory will be greater, but the fight will be greater, too. There will be great advances of the kingdom, but there will be setbacks as well. We need to be girded for both, because if we're only imagining that it's going to get better and better, people will be greatly disappointed. At the end of the day, they'll be offended at Jesus and they'll not trust His leadership. Though it's a little popular to say, "Glory, you're going to get more favor, money, honor and easier," and you'll get a clap and an applause for a season until the trouble comes, then the confusion begins.

Having said that, there are promises in the Bible that are made for their fullness in the millennial kingdom, when Jesus returns. They will receive their full manifestation after He returns and sits on the throne in Jerusalem. However, we don't wait until He comes, until they're fully manifest, before we begin to experience those promises. They're released in part even now before He comes. The key phrase is, "released in part." It's not an issue of either waiting for the full promises to arrive when He comes and living in nothing until then, or having the full promises before He returns. It's in between. There's a fullness that will happen only when He appears, but whatever happens in fullness at that hour will happen in part and even in an increasing measure as we approach that hour. Because whatever Jesus does when He comes, that's what's in His heart now. It's His nature. It's part of His plan. If it's in His heart and His wisdom and He has already planned it, then dimensions of it, measures of it, we can expect to be released even now. It's not an issue of total barrenness now and then full glory when He comes. It's quite different. When we know the nature of what He wants to do when He comes, we know that's what He'll do in part even now. We still believe Him for those dimensions of His power to be released in an increasing way as we approach His appearance.

HISTORIC, POST-TRIBULATIONIST PREMILLENNIALISM

Paragraph F. Our view here at IHOP-KC is called "historic premillennialism." That's a very popular view for 2,000 years. Multitudes of teachers in the Body of Christ have held that. It's a historic, traditional view. It's historic premillennial, post-tribulation. That would be the term. However, traditionally, I believe that position comes up short. Though I believe it's the most accurate tradition through church history that represents what the Bible says, most people who hold that view don't hold the view of the victorious praying church in the context of it.

People say, "What's your view of the end times?"

I tell them, "Historic premillennialism, but with a victorious church."

Some of you say, "I don't know all those words."

I want to assure you of this: there are only about five or ten words. You can learn them in five minutes and you really need to know them. The reason you need to know them is because these terms are being used by leaders all over the Body of Christ, all over the world right now, in an increased way. In other words, people weren't talking about them so much a few years ago, but right now, because the Spirit is emphasizing the mandate and the anointing to disciple nations—which means bringing the influence of the kingdom into society—because of that Holy Spirit emphasis, the question is, how far can we go? How good will it get? How bad will it get? There are only several main positions, but people are being entrenched in those positions. There's real resistance in some camps against the other in the position that they hold. You want to know what the Bible says. You want to be able to give an accurate, concise, biblical answer when you're challenged. When someone says, "What do you mean it's going to get better? What do you mean it's going to get worse?" you want to be able to have the basic, simple, biblical answers to that.

If you're one of those who has said, "Well, I mean, who knows anyway?" don't have that posture. Because in the next ten years, the next twenty years, which posture you take and what Bible verses you use to back it up will be a huge issue in the Body of Christ. It's growing now in its importance and its emphasis in the Body of Christ. Just resolve that you're going to break down and learn a few of these terms. Really, there's only five or ten minutes worth of terms. Here in this handout, I've given a brief synopsis. If you get these clear, you'll be able to discover what the Bible says about the positive and the negative in a general sense. We don't have all the details. You'll be able to answer those who oppose you or resist your position. You really want to be able to do that.

THE WHEAT AND MATURES WILL MATURE TOGETHER AT THE END OF THE AGE

Let's look at paragraph G. The harvest of righteousness and the harvest of sin will both come to fullness at the end of the age. The harvest of righteousness and the harvest of sin are both going to come to fullness. For the seeds of righteousness have been sown for 2,000 years and there's going to be a harvest. It's called the wheat. The seeds of sin have been sown for 2,000 years and they are coming to a harvest as well.

In Matthew 13:30, Jesus teaches on the wheat and the tares. The wheat is good seeds, and the tares is the bad seeds. He says, "Let both the wheat and the tares mature together" (Mt. 13:30, paraphrased). At the end of the age, they'll mature together. There are many scriptures that verify that sin will reach its highest heights, but righteousness and the glory of God on the Church will reach its highest heights as well. This will happen simultaneously.

WHEN DARKNESS COVERS THE EARTH, THE GLORY OF THE LORD WILL DAWN

One of the key passages on this is Isaiah 60:1, where it says that when deep darkness covers the earth, the glory of the Lord will break out. When the deep darkness of man's depravity and the Great Tribulation is breaking forth, at the very same time, the glory of the Lord is shining through His people. Joel 2:11 describes the Day of the Lord, meaning the events related to the second coming of Jesus. The Day of the Lord means a little more than that, but that's the heart of it. It will be great, meaning very positive, and it will be very terrible. It will be the greatest revival, the great day, but it will be the very terrible day, too. Most people are vague on it. They don't even have an opinion. That's really going to change in the years to come with the pressure of the Holy Spirit in the positive sense, releasing greater revelation to go forth in power. Then the intensity of the pressure of darkness to resist that power is going to increase. So we really do need answers that can steady us and that we can give to those who challenge the position that we have.

BREAKTHROUGH IN THE MIDST OF RESISTANCE WITH PRESSURE

Here it is. One camp focuses on the great, the breakthrough, the power. They put their energy on the fact that a breakthrough is coming, not on the resistance. But the other group puts their energy on the resistance and not the breakthrough. Again, which is it? Is it breakthrough or is it resistance with pressure? The answer is, it's breakthrough in the midst of resistance with pressure. We'll have a deep personal involvement in what happens in our geographic part of the earth.

THERE WILL BE A DIVERSITY OF GLORY AND A DIVERSITY OF DARKNESS

In other words, the glory of God will go forth like the waters cover the sea. Now, how do the waters cover the sea? In one place, the water is five inches deep. In the other, the water is five miles deep. In one place, the water in the ocean is still. In another place in the same ocean, there's a tsunami breaking forth. If you consider all the oceans of the world as one big body of water, in one place the water is hot or warm, and in the other place it's freezing. The glory of God is going to break forth like the waters cover the sea. There will be different depths, different intensities. There will be different resistance, just like the waters of the sea. If someone got up and asked you, "On a global level, how is the water doing in the sea? Right now?"

You would say, "Well where?"

"No, no, just give me a general report; tell me how the waters are all doing tonight."

You would say, "There's no one answer. You mean, the warm or the cold, the tsunami, or the still water in the bay?"

"No, I just want one answer."

The obvious answer is that there's no one answer. There will be a diversity of glory and a diversity of darkness, and it will be different in every single region of the world. It will be in the hands and in the balance of how the people of God respond to God. That's why it matters that we believe the positive is coming: because we want to go forth in faith for breakthrough and power. We don't want to be idealistic about it, because then we'll get confused and offended when the resistance is stronger than we've imagined. Because it will be stronger than at any other time in history. I know what I'm believing for my geographic area. I'm believing different things for different places. It will be different all over America. It's not going to be one evenly distributed measure of glory or darkness in our nation or in the nations of the earth. There will be different measures and intensity of light and darkness everywhere in the earth. It will be in the hands of the people of God, and how they respond in agreement to God. If they respond in wholeheartedness and in faith and in diligently going forward without looking back, more will happen. If they retreat in fear and in confusion, then less good will happen.

Someone says, "It's whatever the Lord wants."

The Lord says, "I want to respond to the measure of your agreement with Me. That's what I want."

"No Lord, just whatever you want."

"OK, I want to respond to the measure My people in every area of the earth agree with Me."

We put it on the Lord. He pulls us back into the relationship as well. It's not all on us, but He's not letting us out of the dynamics of it. It really matters that we get what's going on. It's my personal opinion that there are people alive on the earth today who will see it with their own eyes. Maybe my grandchildren; maybe even their children; I don't know. I believe we're approaching that time in history where the intensity of the darkness and the glory on a global level is obviously increasing unto the coming of the Lord.

THE UNIQUE DYNAMICS OF THE GENERATION OF THE LORD'S RETURN

Paragraph H. There are many unique dynamics that will occur in the generation of the Lord's return. There will be unique dynamics of positive and negative that have never coexisted together in one generation of history. The positive will surpass the book of Acts. The negative will surpass any time in history. Those two dimensions in their intensity will exist in the same generation on a global level. That's unique. There will be nothing like it. These unique dynamics are such that the Body of Christ must be prepared in understanding and prepared in faith in order to overcome in that hour.

THE PEOPLE WHO UNDERSTAND WILL HAVE CONFIDENCE

It's not an issue of saying, "Well it will take care of itself." No, there are unique dynamics of positive and negative that will come together in an intensity that has never happened in a single generation, ever. It's a totally unique hour of history. The biggest issue will be the issue of understanding. Because the people who understand will have confidence. They'll grow in love. They'll have diligence. They'll press forward boldly. The people who don't understand will be confused. They'll face the temptation to be offended at God. They'll be tricked and deceived by the poison of darkness. They'll be in confusion. Most of them will draw back, hunker down, and hope the storm passes. Many of them will be devoured in the storm. It really matters that we understand the broad strokes of the positive and the negative.

Not all the fine details, but the broad strokes.

Paragraph H. Jesus has a plan to intervene in the affairs of the nations in such a unique way. He has never intervened at this level of intensity. He is going to transition the earth to the age to come in one generation. Can you imagine that? There's one generation in which the planet is going to be transitioned to the age to come. The people alive in that generation will be deeply participating with Jesus in that plan. He will drive evil off the planet forever in that generation. There's no time like this in history.

JESUS WILL INTERVENE TO REMOVE OPPRESSION FROM THE EARTH

He's not going to do it in a vacuum. In other words, He's not just going to wave His hand and do it. He's going to do it with us and through us. He's going to do it in partnership with His people, and the people must agree and understand what He's doing in the broad sense. He's going to release His glory, but He's also going to release His judgments. The point of His judgments is to remove everything that hinders love. His judgments will remove everything that hinders love. That's the point.

Some people say, "How could a God of love judge?" It's opposite. The question is opposite. "How could a God of love not judge?"

I've used this analogy many times. In a number of conversations, I've spoken with people who are opposed to the judgments of God, as though the judgments of God are a contradiction to who Jesus is, instead of an expression of love and wisdom and glory. I said, "So, let's say a group of evil men come to the park one day, and your family is there enjoying some time together. They begin to take hold of your wife and children and

abuse them in the most severe way. The policeman walks by and says, ‘You know, I don’t want to be negative. I just want to give people space. I’m a really positive policeman, and I tolerate in my mercy.’ They are destroying your family in the most hideous way you can imagine.

“Now you meet the policeman. Do you think he is wise and loving? Or do you think he’s missing a couple of things?”

He says, “Obviously, that would be bad.”

That’s the point. Corruption and oppression is going to reach a level on the earth beyond any time in human history. If Jesus allowed it to go on without intervening, He could then be accused of not being a God of love. He is going to intervene like no other time in history. Yes, He will manifest His glory on one hand, in the positive dimension, with miracles and salvation, but He will also manifest His glory on the other by removing the things that hinder love.

HE WILL USE THE LEAST SEVERE MEANS TO REACH THE GREATEST NUMBER

Look at the end of paragraph H. During the Great Tribulation, Jesus will use the least severe means to reach the greatest number of people at the deepest level of love. He has factored into His plan the free will of man to choose evil in a steadfast way. He will not violate the free will of man. He says, “I have a plan that takes into account My perfect foreknowledge, the free will of men to resist in a steadfast way, the goodness of God, and the afflictions of people.” He says, “I will use the least severe means to reach the most people in the deepest level of love without violating anyone’s free will.” That’s the Great Tribulation.

THE CHURCH WILL EMERGE TRIUMPHANT IN THE HOUR OF HIS COMING

Top of page two. I like to call it “apostolic Christianity.” Sometimes I call our position “historic premillennialism with a victorious church.” More concisely, I call it, “apostolic premillennialism.” It’s the historic premillennial position, with the apostolic church. The apostolic church means the Church full of glory, like the New Testament church. That’s what I mean. That’s paragraph A and B.

Roman numeral III. What is apostolic Christianity? What is New Testament Christianity? I use the terms *apostolic* and “New Testament” almost interchangeably. The kind of church that’s going to emerge will be Jesus centered. The Church that will emerge in victory in the hour He comes will have such an allegiance to Him. She will proclaim His supremacy, His glory, His worth. She will give her allegiance to Jesus like no other time in history. It will be like the early church, but the numbers will be greater. A billion worldwide will have such allegiance. It will be church-centered. Jesus is building His Church and coming back for it. It will be wholehearted. It will walk in holiness.

Paragraph D. It will operate in supernatural power.

Paragraph E. It will grow from a foundation of prayer and intimacy with God.

Paragraph F. It will have a missionary spirit as it embraces the Great Commission and the cultural mandate, which is the same thing.

Paragraph G. It will embrace persecution without backing down. That's part of the warfare. It will engage with God's purpose for Israel and, paragraph I, it will be free from the wrath of God. In other words, when the Church is going through the Tribulation, the wrath of God is not on it. The Tribulation is the wrath of God on the Antichrist. When Moses went into Egypt, the judgment didn't come on Moses. The judgment came on Pharaoh. The deliverance of the children of Israel from Pharaoh was a snapshot. It was a foreshadowing of the end time-drama. There will be an end-time Pharaoh called "the Antichrist." There will be an end-time Moses called "the praying church." The praying church will stretch forth her rod and the judgments of God will come against Pharaoh, not against the people of God.

I've heard people say, "If we go through the Tribulation, it will be terrible."

I say, "Are you kidding?" Moses went through this situation. He didn't say, "Well Lord, I don't want to release the judgment of God on the Antichrist; I just want to be raptured." It was the greatest hour of Israel's history. So the judgment isn't on the Church. The judgment is on the oppressors, and it's actually released by Jesus in the final three and a half years in partnership with the praying church.

THREE COMMON VIEWS OF THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

Top of page three. Roman numeral IV. The millennial kingdom. What is it? As most of you know, it's a literal thousand-year period that Jesus will rule on the earth in righteousness. That's paragraph A and B. It's a literal period of time where Jesus literally rules the earth in person from Jerusalem for 1,000 years.

Let's go to the middle of page three. Roman numeral VI. Three common views of the Millennium. There are three major views of this thousand-year reign. Ninety-percent of the people who have a view have one of these views. These are the three terms you need to use. Many people don't think about it, so they don't have a view. That's not a good position. You say, "I don't know, it will take care of itself."

It will not. I like what Allen Hood says. One man says, "It will all pan out."

Allen says, "I'm sure it will, but will it pan out well for you?" Because your response to the Lord will have a dynamic relationship to what happens in your sphere.

Roman numeral VI. Three different views of the millennial kingdom. Premillennial, which I believe is the biblical view. Jesus returns *pre*, or *before*, the thousand years. We believe He returns after a time of glory and crisis through the Great Tribulation. He returns, and then after He returns comes the 1,000-year reign. He's sitting on His throne in Jerusalem. He returns before that. That's why they call it *pre*-millennial. He returns before the 1,000 years. I believe boldly that's the biblical view.

Another camp is called *postmillennial*. There aren't so many in this camp today. In the 1800s, there were a lot more. Now, there aren't so many. There are several versions of postmillennialism, but basically Jesus comes *post*, or *after*, the 1,000-year reign. It's so hard for me to believe that people really believe this, but they do. They believe that we're in the Millennium now, and that Jesus comes after the Millennium is over, after we've Christianized the world. Then He comes. A lot of smart men believe that. They really do. A whole lot of people believed that in the 1800s. After two great world wars, they said, "No more." It's having a resurgence of sorts, but the numbers are small. There's a growing number of theologians who are saying that. The thing that's fueling some of them is this urgency of the Spirit and the anointing of God for us to disciple the nations, and to

bring the kingdom to every sphere of society. You can have that conviction and believe in that anointing and feel that weight of the Spirit without believing we're in the Millennium now and it's only going to get better and better. There's a growing camp that thinks we're in the Millennium now and the second coming occurs after the Millennium is over.

Paragraph C is the most common camp among theologians. It's called *amillennialism*. *A* means *no*, meaning there is no Millennium. This has become more popular in the last few decades. There isn't one: it's all figurative; it's all symbolic. Jesus doesn't come before or after it. That's the easiest approach, because it means they don't have to work through the 150 chapters in the Bible—yes, you heard me right, 150 chapters—whose primary subject is the end times. Why? Because it's all symbolic; it's all like a big poem. It's a poem He gives us describing the spiritual dynamics of the conflict we're going through in a figurative way. The amillennial view teaches that all these verses in the Bible really just speak of conquering sin in the heart. It's an internal victory, not an external victory. That's the easiest one because you don't have to work through any of the verses.

It's surprising to me that a lot of the intellectuals choose this one. Some of the intellectuals I've talked to say, "It's just so ridiculous to believe that Jesus is coming back and ruling all the nations. Come on, let's be real."

I say, "We're talking about Jesus, the Genesis 1 Jesus. It's easy for Him to do this." Some of them think it's ridiculous to believe the literal events of what end-time prophecy talks about because they're too extreme. That's not a good reason to back away from it, because it seems extreme. I told one man, "It is extreme. It's more extreme than we can imagine."

THE WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS OF THE AMILLENNIAL WORLDVIEW

Top of page four. Paragraph A. The strength of the amillennial view of the kingdom is the spiritual victory over sin in the heart. That's the strength. I like that. When a man says, "I'm an amillennial theologian," at least you know they believe in victory over sin in the heart.

I say, "Good. I'm taking that from you."

The weakness is this: in amillennial theology, not all, but most of the 150 chapters in the Bible on end-time prophecy are figurative or symbolic. They don't really mean what they say. Ouch! That leaves me empty. I mean, 150 chapters. That's a lot of Bible. They embrace replacement theology, which means that the Church has replaced Israel. They say that the Church gets everything that God has promised Israel. That's why it's called "replacement theology."

It's inconsistent, though, because they only give the Church the promises. They don't give the Church any of the negative things. I say, "Come on. We can't be selective and take the positive and make it literal, then take the negative and dismiss it. If it's all given to us, the bad stuff is given to us, too."

They say, "No, we don't want the bad stuff. We just want the good stuff." It seems a bit inconsistent to me.

THE STRENGTH OF THE POSTMILLENNIAL WORLDVIEW

Middle of page four. Roman numeral VIII. Postmillennialism. What's the strength of postmillennialism? The cultural mandate, which is another term for the Great Commission. We're supposed to impact the culture in

every sphere of society. We're to bring the kingdom to every sphere of society in an increasing impact. The Spirit is really breathing on that truth in this last couple of decades. We want to bring the kingdom into every sphere of society. We won't Christianize all of society, though we will make significant inroads.

WHATEVER MEASURE WE HAVE, WE'RE GOING FOR MORE

Someone said, "How far will we go?"

I said, "Well, the glory of God is like the water covering the sea. In one region they'll reach far greater heights of affecting the different areas of society. In another region they won't reach nearly so far." The balance is open, but we won't Christianize, we won't bring every sphere of society under the leadership of Jesus in a complete way before He returns. However, we're going to make significant advancements.

Someone says, "How significant is significant?" The answer is that every geographic region of the world will be different; like the water covers the sea, so the glory of God in the earth. There's no way of knowing, but I know this: I'm contending for a double portion for the area over which God has placed me, the area of my responsibility. When the Lord gives that, I'll contend for another portion. We'll just keep doubling and see how far it goes until the Lord returns. We don't have to know how far, far is. All we know is whatever measure we have, we're going for more.

We also know there will be an increased intensity of pressure against it. We won't cower before the pressure, but neither will we minimize it and pretend it doesn't exist. If the people don't know it, they'll be offended and tripped up and they'll lose heart in the battle if they don't know there's a battle at this level of intensity. Everyone knows there's a battle. I tell you, there's an intensity coming beyond any time in history, both positive and negative.

THE WEAKNESS OF THE POSTMILLENNIAL WORLDVIEW

The weakness of this view, paragraph B, is very similar to the amillennial view. Prophecy is symbolic. They don't take it at face value. When I say, "take it literally," I don't mean a wooden, forced view of Scripture. That's not what God meant. I mean a face value, literal view. God means what He says and says what He means, in a plain sense.

I've found significant inconsistencies in the hermeneutics, or principle of interpretation, of the amillennial and postmillennial views. *Hermeneutics* is a fancy word for "principles of interpretation." What I find in the hermeneutics, or the way theologians interpret the end-time passages, is that they take positive promises literally, but they take the details in that same context and make them figurative.

You can't make verse 2 literal and verse 3 figurative. Then verse 4 is figurative, or symbolic, and, "Oh, verse 5 is a good one; we'll make that literal." We can't approach the Scriptures with that kind of inconsistency. That's a superficial approach. Verses 2 through 4 are either literal or symbolic. We can't get rid of the hard passages when they don't fit our vision. We have to interpret the passages literally in their plain meaning.

Personally, I don't mean this in a dishonoring way, but I've talked to different theologians, postmillennial and amillennial. When I point out these multitudes of verses, they say, "Well, we don't really know. No one really knows what that means."

I say, “Come on, it means what it says.”

“No, because if it means what it says, then that means there would be a literal Millennium.”

I want to respond kindly, but this seems a little dishonest to me—this taking the positive things literally, and whenever you come across something that doesn’t fit your scheme, either making it symbolic or ignoring it completely. We need an approach to the Scriptures where, if there are ten verses, we approach the whole ten verses the same way. We honor the Word of God.

HISTORIC AND DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM

Top of page five. Now according to the premillennial view. Jesus is coming *pre*, or *before*, the Millennium. That’s what I believe the Scripture teaches. The strength of this view is that they take the prophetic Scriptures literally at face value. I love that. They seek to honor God’s purpose for the nation of Israel.

Now, most people in this room right here, I suspect, are premillennial. They’re the kind of people who take the Bible seriously at face value, and many, though not all of them, want to walk with it.

This is important, because this will matter to you. There are two different types, or two different views, or two different approaches, to premillennialism. There’s historic premillennialism, which I believe is the biblical view if you throw in the victorious Church. Then there’s dispensational premillennialism, which has a number of similarities, but there’s a point or two that’s really, really different.

When I tell someone I’m premillennial, that’s not enough. When someone asks me, “What’s your end-time view?” I say, “I’m premillennial.”

Ninety-nine percent of the time they’ll assume you’re dispensational premillennial. They think the rapture is coming at any moment, and I don’t believe that’s a biblical concept, because He’s coming at the end of the events He prophesied, but the other major negative of that is this: if He’s coming at any moment, why do we have to bother bringing the gospel to society? Because the Antichrist is going to win anyway. Let’s lead people to the Lord and let the nations live in darkness. That’s a huge concession. That’s a huge abdication of our responsibility. Why? Because we were called and anointed to disciple nations. We were called to influence society, not just lead souls to the Lord. We do them both; we don’t pick between them.

Paragraph B. I believe historic premillennialism is the biblical view. They believe the rapture is after the Tribulation, after we’ve walked in the glory and victory like no time in history. The dispensational premillennialists think the rapture happens before the Tribulation. We escape it, and society falls into utter darkness.

Roman numeral X. Now I give a few positives on dispensational premillennialism, but several negatives as well. I believe this is a wrong approach. Here on the handout I’ve laid out why. Again, many people would agree with these definitions. They would have a different opinion as to which is the right one and the wrong one, but the basic definitions are not hard to define. This is a general overview. There are always exceptions. This is a general overview of the negatives of dispensational premillennialism. That sounds like a big word, but most of you know it. It really isn’t a big word. Say it: “Dispensational premillennialism.” See, you already got

one down. Say *postmillennialism*, *amillennialism*, *premillennialism*, “historic premillennialism.” You got them all. Now say *hermeneutic*. That was my other big word. You got the whole thing. You’re pros. You’re scholars.

THE WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS OF HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM

Top of page six. Coming to an end. Historic premillennialism is the traditional view. For 2,000 years, it has been the primary view of the Church. Dispensational premillennialism actually began in the 1830s. It’s not even a 200-year old system. It isn’t a system that’s 2,000 years old.

Paragraph A. The strength of this view is the literal interpretation of prophecy. That’s good. Preparing for persecution so we’re not offended when it happens is good. Responsibility towards Israel is good. The weakness of the traditional, historic view is that it doesn’t emphasize the great harvest. People say, “Well, the Church is going to get holier, but smaller.” I mean, the ones who make it will be awesome, but the numbers will shrink and shrink and shrink.

I believe we’re going to see a great harvest, an outpouring of the Spirit in power, and we’re going to function in the bridal paradigm in intimacy with God. The historical view, traditionally, doesn’t have those three components. It’s the victorious Church.

HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM AND THE VICTORIOUS CHURCH

Roman numeral XII. Historic premillennialism and the victorious Church. I believe this is the right view.

Paragraph A. The view that I’m putting forth combines the strength of postmillennialism—in other words, we engage in the culture now to bring the culture to society with great boldness—and the strength of amillennialism, the spiritual victory in the heart over sin and Satan. We take the strengths of historic premillennialism, which are the literal interpretation of Scripture, enduring through persecution, and the provoking of the nation of Israel, and add to those the full participation of the praying bride who is in intimacy with God at the end, walking out the first commandment, being used by God to bring the great harvest in.

Paragraph B. It’s a victorious church that will be used now, not just then. Because we’re used now, and we’re making a real difference now. Even part of being used and making a real difference now is training to be used more later. We don’t wait until some day in the future to be used. We don’t huddle up in a room, pray, and then one day many years from now we’re used. We’re used now with full diligence, and the very impact we’re making now is actually training us as a church worldwide, for something far greater.

Paragraph C. According to this view, not only do we not yield to persecution; we will walk in holiness, with the first commandment restored to first place, and the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle.

WE OVERCOME WITH POWER BY ENDURING STEADFASTLY

I’ll end with paragraph D. It’s a relevant church. What we’re doing today is relevant. Some people who hold the postmillennial view think, “Well, what does it matter if the devil is going to win in our society anyway?”

I say, “No, we don’t have the dispensational view. The devil isn’t going to triumph in darkness everywhere. Light is breaking forth, too.” We’re not giving in and relinquishing society to the devil. But even more than that, I believe that when we understand what the Bible teaches about the millennial kingdom, the gains and the victories that we make now in this age, some of them will have continuity and they’ll still be in place in the age to come. If we remove abortion from this city and state, and, when the Lord returns, abortion has been driven

out of this state, when He comes, that's a law that won't have to be overturned. That law will stay in place. If there are just economic policies and just laws, when the Lord comes and shakes everything that can be shaken, there are many things that will be built on righteousness that will not be shaken. They'll remain. In other words, our labors matter, because there's continuity between this age and the age to come.

This was kind of a heady message, but for those called to the marketplace and the emphasis of the Spirit in these last years to get the people out into the different spheres of society, discipling the nations, bringing the kingdom of power outside the four walls of the church, we need to know what the Bible says. We aren't overly pessimistic or overly optimistic; we buy into the biblical, realistic view. There's great victory, and great resistance, but we overcome with power by enduring steadfastly under the anointing. Our works matter, and some of them will have continuity in the age to come. Amen and amen. Amen and amen.