

CLASS NOTES - PREMILLENIALISM

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PREMILLENNIALISM CLASS NOTES

Robert Stapleton

INTRODUCTION:

1. With the constant changes in the middle-east there is always someone who wants to discuss issues pertaining to the coming of Christ, and how they relate to biblical teaching.
 - A. Since the time of Christ it appears that countless numbers of people have been caught up in end-time dialogue.
 - B. Discussions, on matters of eschatology, constantly run full-steam ahead.
 1. Eschatology - the study of end-time matters.
 2. As part of the class on eschatology we are to consider the subject of premillennialism.
 - A. To accomplish this we will consider the following points:
 1. Premillennialism - What Is It?
 2. The Church - The Kingdom of God?
 3. Who Is The Anti-Christ?
 4. A Rupture of the Rapture Theory.
 5. The "Great Tribulation" Explained.
 6. What Is The Battle of Armageddon?
 7. The Consequences of Premillennialism.

BODY:

1. PREMILLENNIALISM - WHAT IS IT?

- A. Premillennialism is derived from two Latin words:
 1. "Pre" - meaning before.
 2. "Millennium" - meaning 1,000 years.
 3. I like what has been said to be the definition given by Foy E. Wallace.
 - A "Pre means before, millennial means 1,000, ism means there isn't anything to it anyhow."
- B. Basically speaking, premillennialism is the doctrine that Jesus is to return to earth before He begins a, so-called, 1,000 year reign on earth.
 1. The theory began in the late 2nd century A.D. and gradually disappeared after the 3rd century A.D.
 - A. It was later revived and during the past century or so has developed a great following.
 2. The most popular form of premillennialism, today, is referred to as "dispensationalism."
 - A. This is so because those who adhere to this theory view the existence of the material universe through a series of seven dispensations.
 1. Innocence - God in Eden.
 2. Conscience - to the flood.
 3. Human Government - from Babel.
 4. Promise - from the Abrahamic promise.

5. Law - from Moses.
 6. Grace - from Christ.
 7. Kingdom - the millennium.
- B. The notion has to do with God having created the world in six days, and on the seventh day he rested.
1. So, all history is divided into seven dispensations, the final one of which will be the millennium.
- C. This particular theory was crystallized by John N. Darby (1800-1882).
- D. Note, Biblical credence was given to this theory by the Scofield Reference Bible and its footnotes.
- E. The theory was sensationalized by Hal Lindsey's, Late Great Planet Earth.
- C. The theory is based upon a misunderstanding of several Old and New Testament Scriptures.
1. First, a misunderstanding of the Abrahamic promises concerning the "promised land."
 - A. God promised that Abraham, and then later his descendants, would inherit the land known as Palestine - Gen. 13:14, 15; 15:18.
 - B. The Premillennialists contends that the land promise was never fulfilled and makes a connection with the coming millennium and the return of the Jews to Palestine.
 1. The problem is, though, the promise was extended from Abraham to his "seed" or his descendants, as is seen by Gen. 15:18.
 - C. Actually, when one looks correctly at the fulfillment of the prophecy, they see its fulfillment - Jos. 21:43-45; 23:14; Neh. 9:22-24; 1 Kings 4:21; 8:56; Ex. 15:26.
 - D. Should it be argued that Israel later lost that promised land and, therefore, the promise was nullified; several things should be carefully noted.
 1. First, the promise was never an unconditional promise.
 - A. In other words, just as heaven is promised, it is not an unconditional promise.
 - B. Faithfulness is bound upon the one who seeks heaven and, likewise it is so of Israel - Jos. 23:16.
 2. Secondly, even though Israel did lose a portion of the land, it was later regained by David - 2 Sam. 8:3.
 2. Secondly, such prophetic passages as Psa. 118:22 and Isaiah 53 are grossly misunderstood.
 - A. S.D. Gordon, a dispensationalist, wrote: "It can be said at once that His dying was not God's own plan. It was conceived somewhere else and yielded to by God." (Quiet Talks About Jesus, p. 114).
 - B. It doesn't take a biblical scholar to see that this theory is far from the truth on the matter - Acts 2:23; Eph. 3:9-11; Col. 1:26.
 3. Further, such O. T. passages as Dan. 2:36-40 are misunderstood and misapplied.
 - A. It is contended, by the dispensationalist, that the "kingdom was postponed

- until the time of his return."
1. Therefore, the church became "a kind of interim measure."
 - B. Clearly, Daniel declared that the kingdom would come in the days of the Roman Empire - Dan. 2:44.
 1. An empire, which vanished from the earth in 476 A.D.
 - C. Christ plainly announced that the kingdom would come within the lifetime of His contemporaries - Mark 9:1.
 1. By the way, this was announced after Jesus had already told of his impending death - Mark 8:31.
 - D. The "new birth" process granted entrance into the kingdom - John 3:3-5.
 1. If there is no kingdom then there would be no new birth today.
 - E. Paul taught, during the first century, that those who obeyed the gospel were translated into the kingdom - Col. 1:13.
 - F. John, near the end of the first century, spoke of being in the kingdom - Rev. 1:6, 9
 - G. As we have already noted, the Bible clearly teaches that the church was a part of God's "eternal purpose," which was wrought through Christ - Eph. 3:10, 11.
 1. Since the "church" is simply the body of the saved - Eph. 5:23 - it thus follows if the church was simply an after-thought on God's part, then so was salvation.
 4. Also, there is much misunderstanding relative to the meaning of Dan. 9:27.
 - A. The claim is that following the "rapture," a seven-year period of tribulation is supposed to begin.
 1. It is argued that this seven-year period of tribulation is foretold in Dan. 9:27.
 2. It is further claimed that due to a covenant made with "the antichrist," during the first half of this period, the Jewish temple will be rebuilt and the Law of Moses reinstated.
 - A. However, the "antichrist" will break his covenant and a reign of terror will prevail during the final stage of the tribulation period.
 - B. Yet, when one properly studies Dan. 9:27 they will see that it is actually speaking of Christ and his work - not some "antichrist."
 1. Further, the notion that the O. T. system will be revived strikes at the very center of the mission of Jesus and his "better" covenant - Heb. 8:6.
 2. Paul clearly affirmed that the law system of Moses was permanently abolished - Col. 2:14.
 5. As to the N. T., numerous passages are grossly misunderstood and misapplied.
 - A. Such passages as Mt. 24, Rev. 16, 19, and 20 are at the very center of this entire system.
 - B. We will be saying more about these texts later.
 - D. There is also a grave misunderstanding concerning exactly who Israel is today.
 1. Remember, the dispensationalists believe that due to their theory of unfulfilled

Abrahamic promises (which, as we have seen is error), the Jews are still God's chosen people, and will eventually return to the land of Palestine under God's guidance.

- A. Certain dispensationalists view the acts involved with the Nov. 28, 1947 United Nation's Resolution #181, which was passed in May of 1948, that declared Israel a state, a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.
- 2. Further they believe that at some future date all Jews will be converted.
 - A. Their idea is that when Jesus comes, the Jews will see His scars and come to a realization that He indeed was the Messiah.
 - B. One of the problems with all of this, though, is that at Jesus' coming He will not be coming to bring salvation to those who have failed to obey.
 - 1. He will be coming to bring condemnation - 2 Thess. 1:6-9.
- 3. Let's notice some things that pertain to this matter from two view points: Who is Israel spiritually, and who is Israel racially?
 - A. In order to understand exactly who spiritual Israel is, we must come to an understanding of God's dealings with the physical Jew as the church age began.
 - 1. When one looks at Mt. 24:1-35, there is little doubt as to who the "abomination of desolation" (v. 15), would fall upon.
 - B. Moving to the book of Romans, the fact of God having turned from physical Israel to spiritual Israel is clear - Rom. 2:28, 29; 9:6, 25-33; 10:1-3; 11:5, 13-24.
 - C. Then, in Gal. 3:7-9 and verses 28, 29, we see, beyond a shadow of doubt that God's concern for Israel is relative to spiritual Israel instead of physical Israel.
 - 1. The whole point of these writings is to show that those who are saved are the seed of Abraham spiritually, and are the recipients of God's blessings today - Eph. 1:3.
 - D. What I am about to say about Israel may surprise some but it is clearly verifiable.
 - 1. "The Jews As a Race: The findings of physical anthropology show that, contrary to popular view, there is no Jewish race." The Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 12, p. 1054, 1973 edition.
 - 2. What is meant by this statement is that over the years there has been so much intermingling of the blood between Jews and other races, that an actual, verifiable bloodline cannot be established.
- 4. In connection with this we often hear people saying something like, "Well, doesn't the Bible say that all Israel is going to be saved?"
 - A. Of course, it does - Rom. 11:26.
 - 1. The problem comes in understanding exactly what is meant by "all Israel," and how will this come about?
 - B. Paul deals with the subject of Israel, and their rejection of the gospel, in Romans chapters 9, 10, and 11.
 - 1. Romans 9:6 helps us to see, exactly, who Israel is.

- A. Rom. 2:28, 29 also serve to confirm this point.
 - C. The problem also comes up as to exactly who it is that is in mind in Romans 11:1, 2a, implying that God has not cast away the Jews as a nation as far as a nationalistic salvation is concerned.
 - 1. What must be done is to carefully read the whole text.
 - A. Romans 11:2 states that "God hath not cast away his people," - no way to deny this.
 - B. But, you must go on.
 - 1. "Which he foreknew."
 - 2. This would be the "remnant" of physical Israel, who became a part of spiritual Israel by their obedience to the gospel- Romans 11:5.
 - 2. Those who were not a part of this "remnant" were cast away - Romans 11:15.
 - 3. Romans 11:23 is extremely important on this point as it shows their having been cast away by implication.
 - A. It would not be possible to "graft" them in again if they were never cut off.
 - D. Now, lets take a quick look at Romans 11:26.
 - 1. It says, "And so all Israel shall be saved."
 - A. We know who Israel is by now - the obedient remnant.
 - 2. The word "so" plays an important part here.
 - A. "So" is an adverb meaning "in this manner."
 - B. Therefore, the statement would be "in this manner all Israel shall be saved."
 - 1. The question, then, logically follows, "What manner?"
 - C. Which, of course, is answered by their having been grafted in, once again, by their acceptance of Christ as the Messiah and obedience to the gospel - John 8:24; Heb. 5:9.
 - E. As to the word "all" we really do not have a problem unless we are seeking for salvation for nationalistic Israel.
 - 1. All Israel that accepts Jesus and remission of sins will be saved.
 - F. Hopefully this gives you an overview of the theory of premillennialism.
 - 1. We will discuss several other tenets as we proceed with this series.
- 2. THE CHURCH - THE KINGDOM OF GOD?**
- A. It should be understood that not all premillennialists explain their concept of Christ coming to reign 1,000 years exactly the same way.
 - 1. However, there is a general agreement among them.
 - B. Basically, that agreement is that the prophets foretold the coming of Christ and his kingdom.
 - 1. However, when He came He did not establish the kind of kingdom that either the Jews of the 1st century, or the present premillennialists wanted him to establish.
 - C. Relative to the time of the kingdom and its coming there are two basic theories.

1. The Postponement Theory:
 - A. This has as its basis a rejection of Christ and His kingdom by the Jews..
 1. Scofield Reference Bible, p. 1148.
 2. Ibid., p. 1,226.
 3. There's A New World Coming, p. 30.
 4. Ibid., pp. 166, 167.
 - B. Yet these people contradict their selves in such statements as "However, the Old Testament prophets also painted another portrait of their coming King-that of a suffering Messiah who would die because of the sins of the people." Lindsey, Hal, There's A New World Coming, p. 36.
 1. In this we see an admission that Jesus came to die as the Messiah, yet in dying, He could not establish the kingdom that He also came to do.
 2. Why was it that He had the "power" to die as Messiah, but lacked the necessary "power" to set up the kingdom?
 - C. While we're on this point, we should stop and ask the question, "How do we know that man won't reject Christ the next time around, should such a theory be Biblically sound?"
 1. If Christ is able to subdue His enemies this time, why was He unable to do so previously?
 - D. Further, shouldn't we be able to find at least one passage that clearly indicates that Jesus "postponed" His kingdom?
 1. Shouldn't we be able to find at least one passage that clearly indicate that the church was more or less a substitute for a kingdom unable to be established?
2. No-postponement Theory:
 - A. Certain premillennialists now interpret prophecy in such a way as to make it appear that there was no postponement of the kingdom.
 1. The idea is that the time has not yet come for its beginning.
 - B. As strange as it may seem, given what we've already noted on the Scofield Reference Bible's position on the postponement theory, Scofield also held to the no-postponement theory - page 902.
 1. I guess its like having your cake and eating it too.
 - C. Another said, "In that dream the Lord revealed not only the succession of coming world powers but also the establishment of God's kingdom following the fourth and last earthly empire." DeHaan, Richard W., The Time of Christ's Return (Radio Bible Class, 1981), p. 12.
 - D. If this theory is true, then God always intended for the kingdom to be established sometime after (key word), the conclusion of the Roman Empire in 476 A.D.
 1. The so-called ten-kingdom confederacy actually would have no part at all of the Roman Empire.
 2. Likewise, the kingdom really would have nothing to do with the Roman Empire as spoken of in Daniel chapter two.

- A. We should, therefore, wonder why it was even spoken of in Daniel?
 - 3. DeHaan stated that Daniel's prophecy shows the establishment of the kingdom "following" the Roman Empire.
 - A. Yet Daniel's prophecy actually states that it would be "IN" the days of those kings - Dan. 2:44.
 - 4. There is absolutely nothing said in Daniel 2 concerning the feet representing 10 nations or any 10 nation confederacy.
- D. Let us now proceed to note what the Bible has to say relative to this matter from a prophetic perspective.
 - 1. In other words, if Jesus came to earth to establish the kingdom, and ended up being powerless to do so, and eventually dies, how does this theory relate to O. T. prophesy?
 - A. Granted, not all fail to see this point.
 - B. Some admit that Jesus came to die as the Messiah and establish the kingdom.
 - 1. However, He was only able to muster up enough "power" to do one of the two.
 - 2. What of the following prophecies?

A. Rejection by the Jews	Isa. 53:3	John 1:11
B. Triumphant entry	Zech. 9:9	John 12:13, 14
C. Betrayal by a friend	Psa. 41:9	Mark 14:10
D. Sold for 30 pieces of silver	Zech. 11:12	Mt. 26:15
E. False witnesses	Psa. 27:12	Mt. 26:60, 61
F. Silent when accused	Isa. 53:7	Mt. 26:62, 63
G. Smitten and spat upon	Isa. 50:6	Mk. 14:6
H. Suffered vicariously	Isa. 53:4, 5	Acts 8:30-35
I. Crucified with sinners	Isa. 53:12	Mt. 27:44
J. Hands and feet pierced	Psa. 22:16	John 20:27
K. Mocked and insulted	Psa. 22:6-8	Mt. 27:39, 40
L. Given gall and vinegar	Psa. 69:21	John 19:29
M. Side pierced	Zech. 12:10	John 19:34
N. Soldiers cast lots for coat	Psa. 22:18	Mark 15:24
O. No bones broken	Psa. 34:20	John 19:33
P. Buried with the rich	Isa. 53:9	Mt. 27:57-60
Q. Resurrection	Psa. 16:10	Mt. 28:9
R. Ascension	Psa. 68:18	Luke 24:50, 51
 - 3. Surely we can see that the above prophecies, and their fulfillment, do not fit the premillennial viewpoint.
 - A. Actually, we can see from the words of Jesus that He came to fulfill the prophets - Mt. 5:17.
 - 4. Now, that we've cleared that up, let us move onto see that the Bible clearly teaches that Christ is now King on David's Throne reigning over the kingdom
- E. Christ Is Now King On David's Throne.

1. Jesus came to establish His kingdom - Luke 1:31-33.
2. He came at the right time - "The Kingdom of God is at hand."
 - A. John - Mt. 3:2.
 - B. Jesus - Mk. 1:15; 9:1; Dan. 2:44; 9:24-27.
 - C. The twelve - Mt. 10:7.
 - D. The seventy - Lk. 10:9.
 1. In all of this we need to remember that the second coming was not "at hand."
 - E. Jesus affirmed that He was King - Lk. 23:3.
 - F. He has been given all authority - Mt. 28:18.
 - G. He was resurrected to reign on David's throne - Acts 2:29-34.
 - H. He was to reign and sit on David's throne while David slept - 2 Sam. 7:12-14.
 - I. He went to receive a kingdom - Lk. 19:11-28.
 - J. He was given a kingdom at His ascension - Dan. 7:13, 14.
 1. Compare to Mt. 20:21; Mk. 10:37; (Kingdom and glory are interchangeable); 1 Tim. 3:16; Lk. 24:26.
 - K. He has built up David's house on His throne - 2 Sam. 7:12-24; Amos 9:11, 12; Heb. 1:4-6; Acts 15:13-17.
 - L. He reigns as Priest upon His throne, which Christ could not do on earth - Zech. 6:12, 13; Jere. 33:17, 18; Rom. 15:12; Heb. 8:1-4; Gen. 14:18-20.
 - M. He now reigns till the last enemy is destroyed - 1 Cor. 15:20-28.
 - N. He will reign till He comes again - Heb. 1:8, 13; 10:12, 13; 1 Cor. 15:20.
 - O. He sits on David's throne, for David's throne is God's throne - 1 Kings 1:46-48; 2:12; 1 Chron. 29:23; Rev. 3:21.
 - P. He reigns in Heaven on His throne, not His footstool - Isa. 66:1; Psalms 11:4; Acts 7:49; Zech. 6:12, 13.
3. Further, we see that the Bible describes Jesus as King.
 - A. He has the keys of David's kingdom - Isa. 22:22; Rev. 3:7; Mt. 16:19.
 - B. He has naturalization process into His kingdom - John 3:5; Acts 8:12.
 - C. He has ambassadors - 2 Cor. 5:20; Acts 20:25; 19:8; 28:23, 31.
 - D. He has a territory - Mt. 28:18.
 - E. He has subjects - Col. 1:13; 1 Thess. 2:12; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 1:9.
 - F. He has a throne in heaven - Zech. 6:12, 13; Heb. 10:12, 13.
 - G. He has a law system - Isa. 2:2-4; Lk. 24:46-49.
4. If Jesus is not now King over the kingdom then all of the above passages are in error.
- F. God knew that people would set themselves against Him and His Son in order to thwart His plans.
 1. He is, therefore, pictured as "laughing" at their feeble attempts at such - Psalms 2:1-6.
 2. Clearly God rules as "victor" over mortal man in this matter.
 3. In Psalm 2:6, it is predicted that God would set His king upon the holy hill of Zion.

- A. The Hebrew writer states that Christians are NOW (i.e. then), "come unto mount Zion to the church" - Heb. 12:22, 23.
- B. Then in verse 28 he further corroborates this point - Heb. 12:28.
- C. Luke, in Acts 4:25-30, records Psalm 2:1, 2 and applies it to Christ and the church, as Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and the Israelites band together in their opposition to Jesus.
 - 1. These three texts strike a deathblow to the premillennial theory.
- 4. The basic problem that underlies all of this confusion, pertaining to the kingdom is that all premillennialists teach that the kingdom will be a literal earthly kingdom.
 - A. When one looks at Rev. 20:1-4, they must wonder how some can take the portion speaking of the 1,000 year reign as literal while all the time denying the literalness of the key, the chain, and the bottomless pit mentioned in verses 1-3.
 - 1. It is extremely interesting to note what people like Lindsey have to say pertaining to a literal interpretation of scripture.
 - B. See - The Late Great Planet Earth, p. 176 and There's A New World Coming, pp. 269, 270.
 - 1. Now let us note how well they follow their advice:
 - A. The 10 days of Revelation 2:10 are not literal - T.N. W.C. p., 50.
 - B. The "24 elders" of Revelation 4:4 are not literal, they are representatives of the church - T.N.W.C. pp., 84, 85.
 - C. The smoke, fire, and brimstone of Revelation 9:17, 18 are not literal, they refer to a thermonuclear war.
 - 1. "Smoke represents the immense clouds of radioactive fallout and debris." – T.N.W.C., 141.
 - 2. "Brimstone is simply melted earth and building materials." ibid.
 - D. The 144,000 "virgins" of Revelation 14:4 are not literally virgins, they are spiritual virgins – T.N.W.C. p., 199.
 - 1. These are literal "Jewish Billy Grahams turned loose on this earth." - L.G.P.E. p., 111.
 - E. The clouds of Revelation 1:7 are not literal, as it refers to a "throng of believers in Christ...all dressed in spotless white robes." - T.N.W.C., pp. 28, 29.
 - F. The two wings of a great eagle of Revelation 12:14 are not literal, they represent an "airlift made available by aircraft from the U.S. Sixth Fleet." T.N.W.C., p. 179 (See Hermeneutics, pp. 79, 80, 82, by Dungan).
 - 2. I think this sufficient to prove the point that their claims of viewing the book of Revelation from a literal viewpoint is false.
 - 5. We can bring to a conclusion this point as we have already noted proof of the fact that Jesus came to establish the same kingdom that He established.

3. WHO IS THE ANTI-CHRIST?

- A. Much has been said over the years pertaining to exactly who the antichrist is.
 - 1. Of course, the majority of that which has been said is false.
- B. Over the years numerous individuals have been singled out to be the antichrist.
 - 1. Such people as Hitler, the Pope, Henry Kissinger, Ronald Reagan, and now Saddam Hussein, have been referred to as the antichrist.
 - 2. Others, such as Hal Lindsey, see "Two Anti-Christ's" - T.N.W.C., pp. 180-ff.
 - 3. Then in "The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon," he says, "We know the anti-Christ's number, but not his name. He will be easily recognized, however. A member of the European Common Market will suffer a head wound, which would normally be fatal. Miraculously he will be restored to health. That will be an unmistakable signal" - p. 112.
 - 4. He also refers to the antichrist as the "Future Fuehrer," (L.G. P.E., p. 103), and stated that he "will come to power just before the return of Christ."
 - 5. He went on to say, "We believe that according to all the signs, we are in the general time of his coming."
 - A. It is important to keep in mind that this book was published in 1970.
 - B. Likewise it is important to note what he says ten years later in The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon. (Copyright March 1981)
 - 1. "The decade of the 1980's could very well be the last decade of history as we know it.", p. 8.
 - C. He also stated, "I believe that this very man lives right now somewhere in Europe.", T.N.W.C., p. 183, Copyright 1973.
- C. With all of this in mind, can we know exactly who the antichrist is, without referring to fanciful names and theories?
 - 1. Or are we relegated to some back-yard theory that is almost funny?
- D. It is interesting to note exactly what the Bible does say about the antichrist.
 - 1. I'll guarantee you that authors, such as Lindsey, have said much more about this matter than what is found in God's word.
 - 2. The Greek word "antikristos" is found only five times in all of the N.T. - 1 John 2:18 (twice), 22; 4:3; 2 John 7.
 - A. It is extremely significant that in Lindsey's L.G.P.E., in the chapter that deals with "The Future Fuehrer," that he never once mentions any of these passages on any of the 16 pages.
 - B. Likewise, in his T.N.W.C., which also involves 16 pages, there is only one reference to any of these passages.
 - 1. And that is simply a passing statement indicating one of what he calls the "names" given to this person by the Bible - pp.183, 184.
 - C. I think we have to realize that the reason for such blatant omission is clear.
 - 1. That being that biblical information simply does not fit such a theory.
 - 3. When examining the N. T., concerning this matter, one quickly sees that there is no one specific person denominated as "the antichrist."
 - A. Instead John clearly says that "many antichrists" have arisen - 1 John 2: 18; 2 John 7.

4. Also, the N. T. does not affirm that the antichrist is some sinister, prophetic world figure that is to arise during the 1980's or 90's.
 - A. Actually, we can see that even when John was writing, probably around 90 AD., there were many "antichrists" - 1 John 2:18; 4:3.
- E. When a careful analysis of the N. T. usage of the term antichrist is conducted, it will reveal that the word is a general word employed to speak of a spirit of unbelief and rebellion.
 1. Basically, in summation here, any person who deliberately rejects the authority of Jesus is the spirit of the antichrist, regardless of which century they happen to live.
- 4. A RUPTURE OF THE RAPTURE THEORY.**
 - A. This theory relates to a two-stage coming of Christ, for his church - with his church, attributed to Margaret McDonald, of Glasgow, Scotland, from a trance in 1830.
 - B. We've all seen bumper stickers that said something like, "At the Rapture This Car Will Be Left Unmanned."
 1. Perhaps we really didn't know what in the world they were trying to say, but we did know that they were trying to say something..
 - C. See page 135 of T.L.G.P.E. under the title of "The Ultimate Trip."
 1. Basically, this is the sensationalized dialogue of the premillennialist as he attempts to explain what is often referred to as the "Rapture."
 - D. John C. Walvoord said, "The scriptures predict that the church will be raptured or 'caught up' to heaven at the coming of the Lord for them" The Rapture Question, p. 8.
 1. If this were all that was involved then we would have no problem with the theory.
 2. You see it is clear that the church will indeed meet Jesus in the air at His coming - 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.
 3. However, there is more, and that is where the problems come in.
 - E. "The question of the rapture comes from another question viz. Will the church have to endure the tribulation?" *ibid.*, p. 4.
 1. When one considers the theology of people like Lindsey and Walvoord they soon see things coming from their teachings that have no Biblical basis.
 - F. In order to better understand this theory we have to lay a little ground work.
 1. Proponents of dispensational premillennialism have, as a part of their theology, a period of "Great Tribulation" that lasts for seven years.
 2. During this period of time the "raptured" church will remain at some location with the Lord in the air.
 - A. It is following this period of "Great Tribulation" that the Lord is supposed to return to the earth with the "raptured" church for his millennial reign.
 3. Further, this "rapture" will only be witnessed by the believer and, therefore, will be "secret" or "mysterious" in nature.
 4. To complicate the matter, there are three views as to the time of the "rapture," relative to the "Great Tribulation."

- A. There are those known as Pre-tribulationists, who view the "rapture" as an event prior to the so-called "Great Tribulation."
- B. The second group is known as Mid-tribulationists, who view the coming of Christ for His church sometime in the middle of the seven-year period of tribulation.
- C. The third group is known as Post-tribulationists, due to their view of the "rapture's" arrival after the tribulation.
- D. We can, also, add another group to the overall groups by noting those who believe in a "rapture" that can be viewed as a "Partial-rapture."
 - 1. Their view is that only some believers will be "raptured."
- 5. The term "rapture" is not found in the scriptures.
 - A. It is from the word "rapere," found in the expression "caught up" in the Latin translation of 1 Thess. 4:17.
 - B. Our argument, though, is not with the word but the use of the word and the system it advances.
- G. In order to show the unscripturalness of this system it necessitates our examining certain N.T. texts.
 - 1. The "rapture" theory is based largely upon an assumption.
 - A. That assumption being that the church is prophetically bound to go through the "Great Tribulation."
 - 2. The proponents of this theory believe that Mt. 24:15-31 serves as a proof text for the "Great Tribulation" theory.
 - A. The problem with this is that it is clear that the prophecy found in these verses relate to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and not to some yet unfulfilled "Great Tribulation."
 - B. Let us note some things in Matthew 24 that will show this to be true:
 - 1. First, in verse 3, the disciples ask either two or three questions.
 - A. Jesus had just spoken relative to the destruction of Jerusalem - 24:2.
 - B. The disciples logically ask concerning as to the time of this event - v. 3.
 - 2. Jesus now begins to answer the first question.
 - A. Verse 16 - if the "rapture," then only the believers would know.
 - 1. No reason for the unbeliever to "flee into the mountains" even if he knew what was happening.
 - B. Verse 17 - notice those on the housetop were told not to come and remove articles from the house - this suggests an instantaneous event.
 - 1. If the "rapture" then, again, these unbelievers wouldn't even know that something was going on.
 - 2. Further, there would be no need for the unbeliever to do this even if he knew of it.
 - C. Verse 18 - the same applies here.
 - D. Verse 19 - why would a woe be upon those who knew nothing of

what was going on?

- E. Verse 20 - what "flight" is in mind here?
- F. Verse 20 - why be concerned about the Sabbath?
- G. Verse 22 - if the "Great Tribulation," then who are the "elect" that, for their sake, the tribulation is shortened?
- H. Verse 24 - while we're at it, note the arising of False Christs (i.e., antichrists).
- I. Verse 31 - who are the "elect" here - remember, according to them, the church has been "raptured."
 - 1. On this some have attempted to argue that the 144,000 are "Jewish Billy Grahams" who were teaching others.
 - 2. The problem with this, though, is that these same people see the Holy Spirit as a "restrainer of sin" who is no longer operating in order to get these 144,000 Jews converted.
 - A. How would it be possible for them to turn to Christ if the world would be left without so much as a saved person and the Holy Spirit couldn't function as the so-called "restrainer of sin?"
 - 3. Clearly we can see that the events spoken of here are events that were to be imminent - Mt. 24:34.
- 3. Those who advance this theory see in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 their greatest proof text.
 - A. All other passages, including Matthew 24, are presented only in view of their understanding (should I say misunderstanding), of this text.
 - B. However, there are valid reasons as to why this text cannot be made to fit their theory.
 - 1. First, this "coming" is neither silent nor mysterious.
 - A. Verse 16 seems to be quite vociferous.
 - B. This passage has as somewhat of a parallel the words of 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9, where we see everything but silence and mystery.
 - 2. Secondly, after the church has risen to "meet the Lord in the air" Paul states that it shall "ever be with the Lord."
 - A. If the church is to forever be with the Lord "in the air" it is not possible for the return to earth so necessary for this theory.
 - 4. Another argument that is advanced to support the rapture theory is the one based upon the Greek words "parousia" and "epiphaneia."
 - A. "Parousia," so they say, speaks of Christ's coming for His saints.
 - B. "Epiphaneia," speaks of His coming with His saints.
 - C. Careful study of the N.T. usage of these two words will clearly indicate that there is no such distinction.
 - 1. For example in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 Paul uses both words to speak of the same event.
 - A. Brightness - epiphaneia.

- B. Coming - parousia.
- D. Even Walvoord admits the truth on these terms and that they do not buoy up their position.
 - 1. "The use of parousia in these passages proves it is not a technical word. The same word is used of the coming of the Lord at the translation (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:19; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1; James 5:7, 8; 1 John 2:28). Some pretribulationists have erred in claiming the word parousia as a technical word referring to the rapture. That this is not correct is shown by its usage in passages referring to the coming of Christ after the tribulation (Mt. 24:3, 27, 37, 39; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Thess. 2:8; 2 Pet. 1:16)." Walvoord, John E., The Rapture Question, p. 156.
- 5. Let us now bring this portion to a conclusion by considering certain points which disprove or "rupture" the "rapture" theory.
 - A. First, the Bible knows of only one resurrection - Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29; 6:37, 40, 44, 54.
 - 1. Yet, this theory calls for four resurrections.
 - A. The first at the time of the "rapture."
 - B. The second at the beginning of the millennium, seven years after the first.
 - C. The third is the one they refer to as the "final" resurrection of the wicked.
 - D. But they've forgotten about their righteous dead who died during their so-called millennium.
 - 1. Therefore, four resurrections.
 - B. Secondly, the separation of the righteous and the unrighteous is to occur at the end of the world - Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50; 1 Thess. 5:1-4; Acts 17:30, 31; 2 Cor. 5:10.
 - 1. The "rapture" theory, though, denies this by their division at the "rapture" and subsequent resurrections.
 - C. Thirdly, following Christ's ascension, the N.T. speaks of only one literal coming of Christ - Heb. 9:28.
 - 1. At this time all the dead will be raised simultaneously - John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15.
 - 2. At this time all human beings, good and bad, will be judged simultaneously- 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Thess. 1:7-12; Acts 17:30, 31; Eccl. 12:14.
 - 3. At this time this globe will be destroyed - 2 Pet. 3:7-13.
- 6. Indeed, Christ is coming again and we must be prepared.
 - A. But this gives us no reason to develop such a fanciful theory to connect to it.

5. THE GREAT TRIBULATION EXPLAINED.

- A. By now we have already covered some of the necessary material on this point.
 - 1. However, there is still some material that needs to be examined.

- B. Following the events known as the "rapture," which we have already "ruptured." the premillennialist sees a seven year period of tribulation upon the earth.
 - 1. When this period is past the Lord will come again to the earth and establish His kingdom over which He is will reign a 1,000 years.
- C. One author stated, "The fact that a time of great tribulation is coming upon the earth is firmly established in the scriptures." Smith, Chuck, *The Tribulation and the Church* p. 1.
 - 1. To support this he cites Dan. 12:1 and Mt. 24:21, 22.
- D. In order to refute this theory, in its entirety, we would need to spend more time than we have.
 - 1. Not that it is so difficult to refute, only that so many scriptures are misapplied to support it.
 - 2. One author states, "The alert and knowledgeable Bible student will recognize that the above is a skillfully but artificially arranged mosaic of tidbits of mostly unrelated Scriptures found here and there over the Bible." Wright, Cecil N., *The Premillennial Doctrine of The Tribulation Is False*, *The Spiritual Sword*, Vol. 9, Number.1, p. 32.
 - A. Incidentally, both numbers 1 and 2 issues of Vol. 9 deal with this matter.
 - 3. Another said, "Nowhere in the Bible is the word 'tribulation' used in connection with a seven year period at the end of the age, either while the Church is still on the earth, as Historic Premillennialism holds, or after the church has been removed from the earth, as Dispensationalism holds. Instead, it is used to describe: (1) the sufferings of Christians during this present age, (2) the sufferings inflicted upon worldly rejecters of Christ, (3) the sufferings especially prophesied for the Jewish nation at various times in its past history." Boettner, Loraine, *The Millennium*, p. 177.
 - 4. Foy E. Wallace, referring to Daniel 12:1 stated, "If the millennialists can find a passage in the Bible or the Almanac that refers to 'wrath' or 'trouble' or 'battle' they jump to the tribulation, the millennium and Armageddon." *God's Prophetic Word*, p. 519.
- E. Examination of Daniel 12:1.
 - 1. The "time of trouble," mentioned herein, historically has absolutely no reference at all to any pending "Great Tribulation," as far as we are concerned.
 - 2. Actually, it has prophetic reference to the evil Seleucidan domination some 167 years before Christ.
 - A. It was at that time that Antiochus defiled the temple in Jerusalem. (see Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book 1, p. 429ff).
 - 1. Joseph ben Matthias, circa 37 -100 a.d.
 - B. Things were such that "In fact the Jews of that day called this evil ruler's ungodly tactics 'the abomination of desolation.'" Ramsey, Johnny, *The Rapture and the Tribulation*, p. 189.
- F. Examination of Daniel 9:23- 27.
 - 1. When one studies this text from a premillennial perspective they quickly run into problems relative to consistency.

- A. For example, in order for the premillennialist to use "the seventy weeks of Daniel" they must apply what is called the "day a year" theory.
 - 1. In other words the seventy weeks, according to them represent a 490-year period.
- B. It should be understood that the "day a year" concept is Biblical.
 - 1. But in those cases where it is used prophetically, there is no question at all about the propriety of such - Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:4-6.
- C. But it should be likewise understood that this principle is not the rule.
 - 1. For example the 400 years of Genesis 15:13 did not work on this principle.
 - 2. Neither did the 70 years in Jeremiah 25:11, nor the 65 years in Isaiah 7:8.
- D. Actually, we have only the two clear-cut cases of such usage in the Bible.
 - 1. And we know this to be so because we are told it is so.
 - 2. The problem of consistency viewed.
 - A. There are two views that must be considered.
 - 1. Chronological
 - 2. Non-Chronological.
 - B. How do they determine that the 70 weeks must be understood as 490 years?
 - 1. Why not a literal 70 weeks?
 - 2. Or, why not follow the regularly accepted prophetic view of it speaking of years instead of days?
 - C. Secondly, how do they know that the tribulation is literally only seven years?
 - 1. Why not 2,555 years by application of the "day a year" principle? (7 X 365)
 - D. Thirdly, how do they know that the 1,000 years of Revelation 20:4 is not actually 365,000 years based on the "day a year" principle?
 - 3. There is nothing at all in this context that indicates that Daniel was prophetically speaking of events yet to happen at this present hour.
 - 4. Further, based upon the accepted prophetic principle that the weeks are not days but years, we end up with 69 weeks bringing the Jewish system up to the time of the crucifixion of Christ - thus the non-millennial chronological view.
 - A. This leaves one week left to complete the seventy.
 - B. Which is from the point of the crucifixion to the conversion of Cornelius, when the covenant was confirmed "with many" as required by Dan. 9:27.
 - C. ▼ **DECREE 483 years Baptism of Christ ["CUT OFF" ▼ 458 B.C. (69 Weeks) "IN THE MIDST OF THE WEEK"**
 - 5. Brief explanation of the chart above.
 - A. The command to rebuild the city begins with 458 when Artaxerxes gives approval for Ezra to go to Jerusalem - Ezra 7:1-10.

- B. Dan. 9:25 states that from that command unto the Messiah is 69 weeks.
 - 1. Based upon the principle of a week equals a year this would be 483 years.
- C. Add 483 years to 458 B.C. and you get 25-26 A.D.
 - 1. This would coincide with the time of the baptism of Jesus and his having received the anointing of the Spirit.
- D. Verse 27 states that in the middle of the 70th week the Messiah would cause the sacrifices and oblation to cease.
 - 1. This would be accomplished by his death and the nailing of the law to the cross - Col. 2:14.
- F. Further, we note that the Lord's earthly ministry lasted approximately 3 1/2 years, which resulted in his death.
- 6. This way of understanding this text best fits the prophecy.
 - A. To be quite honest, there is no actual proof that the day equals a year principle is operative here either.
 - B. But, on the other hand, it is clear from a historical perspective that there is no literal chronological system that will fit this prophecy - thus the non-chronological view.
 - 1. Therefore, we are compelled to apply a non-literal interpretation to it
 - 2. Also the "seventy weeks" are decreed on Daniel's people and the holy city.
 - A. However we see this prophecy it must be seen as embracing the desolation and end of the Judaic system.
- 7. Also, one can see that there are six things dealt with that are to occur during these "seventy weeks."
 - A. To finish transgression - v. 24.
 - B. To make an end of sins - v. 24.
 - C. To make reconciliation for iniquities - v. 24.
 - D. To bring in everlasting righteousness - v. 24.
 - E. To seal up prophecy - v. 24.
 - F. To anoint the most holy - v. 24.
 - 1. All of these can be associated with the destruction of Jerusalem.
- 8. Perhaps this context is best summed up in the words of Boettner, "The correct interpretation of Daniel's prophecy is, we believe, that the events of the 70th week were fulfilled during the public ministry of Christ in Palestine, including the completion and abolition of the Old Covenant. After a further period of Grace, some 37 years later, the final breakup of the Jewish economy came with the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem and the final dispersion of the Jewish people." The Millennium, p. 183. 10 A.D.
- G. Examination of Matthew 24.

1. Quite often this context is seen as a valuable text to support this theory so long as it is seen in conjunction with other such passages.
 2. We have, already, covered this text in detail as we studied the "Rapture" theory.
 - A. In having done so, I believe, we refuted both theories based upon this text.
 1. Therefore, there is no reason to go over it again.
- H. Examination of Revelation 20.
1. You will recall that we have previously discussed this to some degree.
 - A. Remember that those who push for a literal interpretation of the 1,000 year reign fail to be consistent on the overall text.
 2. Further, it should be asked as to exactly who it is that is to "live (ed) and reign (ed) with Christ a thousand years"?
 - A. Those who "sat upon" the "thrones" would be the saints of whom Christ had promised that they would share in ruling over the nations - Rev. 2:26-29; 3:21.
 - B. There is also "souls" involved in all of this.
 1. Here, again, we have to see the inconsistency of those who claim to literally interpret the chapter.
 2. If you follow the literal interpretation, then just this point will rule out any literal millennial reign on the earth.
 3. It is said that these "souls" "lived" which, due to it being aorist tense (i.e. point action), we have the implication of their having "came to life."
 - A. This would have to imply people as souls (i.e. spirits), do not die.
 - B. Therefore, we have to imply a non - literal application.
 3. The basic problem or difficulty with these Revelation passages is the arbitrary application of literal and non-literal interpretation.
 - A. Note what Boettner said of this, "For according to that interpretation, chapters 4-19, a total of 16 chapters, are used to describe the comparatively short seven year Tribulation while only six verses in chapter 20 are used to describe the glorious 1000 year reign of Christ upon the earth, with all the great and mighty events that undoubtedly would happen during that time. Such a method of interpretation is absurd on the face of it." Boettner, Loraine, The Millennium, p. 202.
- I. Clearly, there is not one scripture that teaches a "Great Tribulation" period yet somewhere off into the future.
1. Note what Johnny Ramsey stated here, "No one, reading the Bible by itself, would ever find these matters in the sacred pages. One needs help - and lots of it - from sectarian sources - to even find a hint of such teaching in any of the 66 books of the Bible." The Rapture and the Tribulation, p. 185.
- J. In conclusion, on this point, let us suffice to say that the fact is the "Great Tribulation" has not the slightest relationship to Truth.
- 6. WHAT IS THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON?**
- A. Although much has been, and now is being said of the "Battle of Armageddon," it

may surprise you how little the Bible has to say on the subject.

1. One would think that since it is described as "World War III," by such people as Hal Lindsey, that the Bible would be replete with scriptures that relate to it.
2. Further, since it is viewed as "the battle in Israel which brings the great tribulation to a climax, as the Antichrist triumphs over the Jews to seize Israel's homeland for himself" (The Bible and Future Events, Leon J. Wood, p. 28), it would seem as if such an important eschatological event, as this, would demand a major portion of scripture.
 - A. Or, at least, more than what it does.
 - B. When one studies the Biblical references on this matter they soon realize how little there is to be found on the matter.
 1. Actually, there is only one passage in the Bible that mentions it - Rev. 16:16.
 2. Based on this Russell Boatman has said of Armageddon, "The term is a grossly overworked apocalyptic symbol in current eschatology." What The Bible Says About The End Time, p. 93.
 - C. The basic idea of the time of the so-called "Battle of Armageddon" is at the conclusion of the alleged "church age."
 1. Then will be the "Rapture," which will usher in the 70th week spoken of by Daniel in Daniel chapter nine.
 2. This 70th week will be a literal 7-year period known as the "Great Tribulation."
 3. At the conclusion of this tribulation there will be the "Battle of Armageddon."
 - A. Boatman refers to this as "Eastus vrs. Westus." ibid.
 4. At the end of the battle they say Jesus will come to set up His millennial kingdom over which He will rule for the 1,000 years.
 5. Following this Satan is to be loosed for a "short period," which will result in the final assault.
 6. Then judgment and eternity will follow.
 - D. Since we have already removed the "Rapture," the "Great Tribulation," the "Antichrist," and the "Millennial Reign" from the overall premillennial picture, we surely realize that this portion of the theory will, too, fall by the wayside.
 1. Actually, what you will see is that as one aspect of the theory falls so goes the whole theory.
 - E. In conclusion on this point lets give some thought to exactly what the "Battle of Armageddon" is.
 1. This, I believe, will help you see what it isn't.
 2. "The battle of Armageddon is best understood as an apocalyptic symbol of warfare per se, much as in modern times anyone who suffers a crushing defeat is said to have met his waterloo." Boatman, loc. cit., p. 93.

3. The Bible speaks of the area of Megiddo – Jud. 5:19; 2 Kings 9:27; 23:28, 29; Zech. 12:11.
 - A. "Megiddo was a city of the Manassites, situated in the great plain of the tribe of Issachar..." Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, p. 74.
 - B. "In the history of Israel it had been the scene of never-to-be-forgotten battles." I.S.B.E. Vol., 2, p. 1340.
4. Since we are dealing with an apocalyptic book, which should be understood from the viewpoint of signs and symbols, we should understand that this "battle" represents all who rebel against God and their eventual downfall or defeat.

7. THE CONSEQUENCES OF PREMILLENNIALISM.

- A. We've noted most of these points already as we've covered the material
 1. However, as we conclude this series I want us to see exactly what the consequences are and how damaging this theory is.
 - A. Denies that Christ is reigning now - Rev. 1:5, 6.
 - B. Annuls this dispensation as the last days - Heb. 1: 1.
 - C. Makes God false to His promises - Mk. 1:14, 15.
 - D. Alternates Judaism and Christianity - Heb. 8:5-7; 9:9, 10.
 - E. Minimizes the gospel and belittles the church - Mk. 16:15, 16; Eph. 3:9-11.
 - F. Revokes the great commission - Mt. 28:18-20.
 - G. Nullifies salvation to the Gentiles now - Acts 10:1-48; 15:15-18.
 - H. Demotes Christ from His throne in Heaven to His footstool, the earth - Heb. 1:3-13.
 - I. Makes the first coming of Christ a failure - Gal. 4:4, 5; John 17:1-14.
 1. The above points were taken from God's Prophetic Word by Foy E. Wallace, p. 349.

CONCLUSION:

1. Surely we have been made to see that the theory of Premillennialism is without Biblical support.
 - A. As those who seek to "speak where the Bible speaks" we need to be careful that we do not fall into the trap of this doctrine by using terms foreign to God's word.