

## What Does Postmillennial Mean?

by Tony Warren

*T*he word millennium is from two Latin words. [*mille*], meaning thousand, and [*annum*], meaning years. The word post means after. So this is a term that refers to the eschatology that teaches the return of Christ comes "*after*" this 1000 years or millennial reign. What does postmillennial mean? In theological terms, postmillennarian or postmillennialist identifies Christians who believe that the Kingdom of God is now being extended throughout the world through the preaching of the gospel of Christ. In this point only, this eschatology is quite similar to historic reformed amillennialism, which also teaches the same post-millennial return of Christ. There are other distinct differences that make these two eschatologies incompatible and contradictory toward each other.

For one, postmillennarians believe that the world will eventually become Christianized and that the millennium will be a long period of world righteousness and peace on earth. Those who believe in Postmillennialism have a strong view of the church's calling to carry out and exercise Christ's power and authority in the world. So in their view, Jesus Christ has both given and will use all the needed power in His servants to make sure God's righteous Kingdom will overcome the world. They lean upon Scriptures such as found in the book of Daniel to support this.

### **Daniel 2:44**

- "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. And the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break to pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

Postmillennarians places the rights, authority, and power of the risen Christ within believers so high that they see Christianity instituting a great global revival. While other theologians feel that they have an unrealistic and overly optimistic outlook for "this world," postmillennialists believe these other eschatologies are pessimistic about history and the future. Those who believe in this eschatology delight in pointing to the spreading of the gospel throughout the world and the adoption of some biblical

principles in law and governments as examples that the kingdom of God is being greatly advanced in the world.

When one asks, what does postmillennial mean, there is the general practical view that a millennial or "*Golden Age*" will come to this world through the activities of the church before the return of Christ, in order to usher in eternity. Their anticipation is that the church will so influence society, that the whole world will become Christianized. The weakness in this position is that many theologians believe that it overlooks the persistence of human sin, moral decay, and prophesied departing from the faith (*apostasy*). Another objection is that it is obvious that history shows we live in a period when the church has never been more rebellious toward God, and the world never more lawless. Many Christians think Postmillennialists seem to be oblivious to these seeming contradictions and patterns. Moreover, the postmillennarian seems to establish a unjustified dichotomy between triumph and tribulation. They support their view with Scriptures such as Psalms 110.

### **Psalms 110:1-2**

- "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
- The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies."

They say that such passages illustrate that Christ must bring a peace in the midst of His enemies, and so conclude that this will only happen in the worldwide peace of the millennial reign.

Postmillennialists "generally" believe that by the work of the Spirit, and through the gospel, the nations of the world will be progressively converted to Christianity. And that this is what will usher in what they see as the yet unfulfilled promised golden age of peace and prosperity.

Peace,

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