

Postmillennialism

- Taylor DeSoto

Overview

“Postmillennialism expects the proclaiming of the Spirit-blessed gospel of Jesus Christ to win the vast majority of human beings to salvation in the present age. Increasing gospel success will gradually produce a time in history [which they identify with the “millennium”] prior to Christ’s return in which faith, righteousness, peace, and prosperity will prevail in the affairs of people and of nations. After an extensive era of such conditions the Lord will return visibly, bodily, and in great glory, ending history with the general resurrection and the great judgment of all humankind. Hence, our system is *postmillennial* in that the Lord’s glorious return occurs *after* an era of ‘millennial’ conditions” (“Postmillennialism,” in *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, 13-14).

Essential Terminology

Partial Preterism - A hermeneutic that claims that most of Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled by the end of the “present day” (70AD when temple fell), except for the Day of the Lord and second coming, and the future promises of Matthew 24:1-14. Only a partial amount of prophecy in Matthew 24 was fulfilled with the destruction of the temple in 70AD (v.15-28) and (v.1-14) are still being fulfilled.

The Millenium - In the postmillennial view, the millenium is a metaphorical time period that was inaugurated when the Son came to Earth, died, resurrected, and ascended to the right hand of the Father. This hermeneutic is also employed by the Amillennialist position, only their view of the Kingdom of God is different.

One Kingdom Theology - Christ has all authority over Heaven and Earth now, in the present age. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords right now (Matthew 28). The Kingdom of God is represented by the people of God on Earth.

Theonomy - Stemming from the two greek words θεος and νομος meaning “God’s Law”. The practical application of this in postmillennial theology is that as the nations become evangelized, Christians will elect Christian leaders that honor God’s law in government and libertarian principles in economics.

Reconstructionism - The restoration of God’s law in society and government can be accomplished through faithful preaching of the gospel and discipling of the nations.

“The postmillennial conception of victory is of a progressive *cultural* victory and expansive influence of Christianity in history. . . . The personal status of the believer and the corporate standing of the Church in salvation *is* . . . one of present victory – in principle. . . . The distinctive postmillennial view of Christianity’s progressive victory, in time and history, into *all of human life and culture*, is postmillennialism’s application of the doctrine of Christ’s definitively

completed salvation” (“Whose Victory in History?” in Gary North, ed., *Theonomy: An Informed Response* [Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1991], 215).

Scriptural Support

Old Testament

1. Psalm 2:6-9
2. Psalm 22:27-28
3. Psalm 110:1-2
4. Jeremiah 31:31-34
5. Daniel 2:31-35
6. Zechariah 9:9f; 13:1; 14:1

New Testament

1. Matthew 13:31-33; 28:18-20
2. John 12:31-32; 16:33
3. 1 John 2:13-14; 3:8; 4:4,14; 5:4-5
4. Acts 2:32-36,41
5. Romans 11:25-32
6. 1 Corinthians 15:20-26,57-58
7. Hebrews 1:8-9,13; 2:5-9
8. Revelation 2:25-27;3:7-9;7:9-10;11:15;19:11-21

Summary

“The thing that distinguishes the biblical postmillennialist, then, from amillennialism and premillennialism is his belief that Scripture teaches *the success of the great commission in this age of the church*. The optimistic confidence that the world nations will become disciples of Christ, that the church will grow to fill the earth, and that Christianity will become the dominant principle rather than the exception to the rule distinguishes postmillennialism from the other viewpoints. All and *only* postmillennialists believe this, and only the refutation of that confidence can undermine this school of eschatological interpretation. In the final analysis, what is characteristic of postmillennialism is not a uniform answer to any one particular exegetical question . . . , but rather a commitment to the gospel as the power of God which, in the agency of the Holy Spirit, shall convert the vast majority of the world to Christ and bring widespread obedience to His kingdom rule. This confidence will, from person to person, be biblically supported in various ways The postmillennialist is in this day marked out by his belief that the commission and resources are with the kingdom of Christ to accomplish the discipling of the nations to Jesus Christ prior to His second advent; whatever historical decline is seen in the missionary enterprise of the church and its task of edifying or sanctifying the nations in the word of truth must be attributed, not to anything inherent in the present course of human history, but to the unfaithfulness of the church,” (Bahnsen, *Ibid.*, p. 68).