

The Case for Futuristic
Premillennialism

*The Unified Testimony of the Early Church
(and beyond)*

- The Biblical Case for Futuristic Premillennialism is supported by Seven Lines of Reason:
- 1) *It's 1) the Fruit of a Consistent "Hermeneutic."*
 - 2) *The Unconditional Promises in the Biblical Covenants.*
 - 3) *The Hope of the Old Testament Saints and Prophets.*
 - 4) *The End Times Teachings of Jesus Christ*
 - 5) *The Progressive Revelation of the New Testament.*
 - Tracing 6) *The Invisible Hand of Divine Providence (throughout the ages).*
 - 7) *The Unified Testimony of the Early Church (and beyond).*

The Unified Testimony of the Early Church

"History is not authoritative like Scripture is, but it does affirm the Premillennial position, indicating that the earliest generation of Christians (and Church theologians) interpreted the apostolic witness through a Premillennial lens— one in which a FUTURE, THOUSAND-YEAR Messianic kingdom was expected ON EARTH."



"The testimony of the early church fathers, although not authoritative, is particularly instructive with regards to how the first generations of Christians understood the teachings of the N.T. apostles."

On Sunday AM we have made the biblical case that Jesus and the Apostles clearly taught that there will be a future, earthly Millennial kingdom...



"We would expect Premillennialism to be the predominant view of the early church fathers.
And that is exactly what we find."

World class church historians clearly affirm this historical analysis (even if they themselves are not premillennialists)

19th century historian Philip Schaff wrote: "The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age (i.e., the era prior to AD 325) is the prominent chiliasm, or millenarianism, THAT IS THE BELIEF of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years, before the general resurrection and final judgment."



-History of the Christian Church (8 Volumes by Philip Schaff)

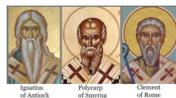
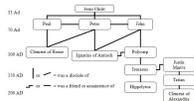
World class church historians affirm this historical analysis (even if they themselves are not premillennialists).

William Algers, "Almost ALL of the early Fathers believably looked for a millennium, a reign of Christ on earth with his saints for a thousand years."

Donald K. McKim, "The eschatology of the early [patristic] theologians regarding the kingdom of God is marked by the development of chiliasm, a TERM THAT REFERS TO the 1000 year reign of Christ (Rev. 20:1-10) connected with his second coming, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgement."

Church historians of various traditions agree with our Seventh Line of Reason:

Roger Olson- "Augustine {in the fourth century} developed what has come to be known as amillennialism, whereas most of the earliest church fathers were premillennialists."

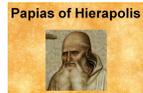


The leading teachers in the post-Apostolic Church held the fundamental tenants of what is called today historic premillennialism

Including but not limited to Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Methodius, Hippolytus, Melito, Tatian, and Lactantius."

These were the John MacArthur, R. C. Sproul, D.A. Carson, Wayne Grudem, Michael Vlach, Larry Pettigrew, and Charles Ryrie's' of the ancient church.

Papias (60-135)



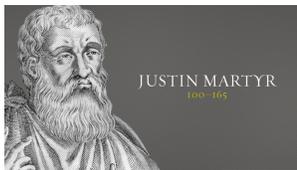
“One of the earliest and most important Premillennialists in the early church.” Papias had learned from the apostle John himself.

Some of his teachings have survived in the writings of some of his future disciples.

The 4th century Eusebius, recorded Papias’ Premillennial views: Among these things Papias says he received from the Apostles is this eschatological understanding... “After the resurrection of the dead there will be a thousand-year period, during which the Kingdom of Christ will exist tangibly here on this very earth.”

Papias believed (as we do) that this present earth will be renewed and restored during the future reign of Christ.

Justin Martyr (100-165)



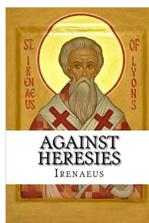
Justin Martyr (100-165)

The most important defender of the Christian faith in the 2nd century.

Justin wrote, “But I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare...”

“...those who believed in our Christ would dwell a 1000 years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place.”

Irenaeus (130-202)



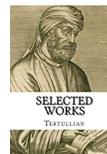
Irenaeus- A defender of the orthodox faith. A gifted apologist (1 Pet. 3:15) and a true contender (Jude 3)

Leading Postmillennialist Keith Mathison writes, "According to Irenaeus, the end of the present age will be marked by a three year reign of the Antichrist, who will desecrate the temple in Jerusalem (the abomination of desolations). His reign will be cut short by the return of Christ, who will cast him into the lake of fire. At this point, Christ will inaugurate the millennial age. When the Millennium is over, there will be a general resurrection, the final judgment, and the inauguration of the eternal state."

Where did these men derive these doctrinal convictions from?



Tertullian (160-220)



"The Father of Latin Theology."

Tertullian wrote, "But we do confess that a Kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely built city of Jerusalem, 'let down from heaven'... the apostle "while declaring that our citizenship is in heaven, he predicates of it that it is really a city in heaven. This both Ezekiel had knowledge of and the Apostle John beheld."

Summarizing the early church fathers end times position:

In the earliest generations of the ancient church Premillennial eschatology was the dominant position.

This was based on the first 6 lines of reason that have been presented 2000 years later at LCBC. That's a really wonderful thought.

The Rise of Amillennialism

"Scholars have suggested four factors that contributed to the rise of Amillennialism (which was formerly systematized by Augustine):

- 1 and 2) A modified (allegorical) hermeneutic (think Origen) and accommodations of Greek Philosophical thought (namely Platonic dualism).
- 3) The growing opposition to unbelieving Jews (see lessons 1-4); Christians began to view them as the enemies.
- 4) The major sociopolitical changes that took place in the Roman Empire between the first and fourth centuries.

The events of AD 70 and 135 (Jewish-Roman wars)



The merger of Church and state in the 4th century under Emperor Constantine.

Christianity became the official state religion... "some viewed this as a sign that the kingdom had arrived and that the millennial blessings foretold by the prophets were to become the possession of God's people here and now. Indeed, Eusebius, the father of church history, specifically stated that the kingdom had already come."

Despite the rise of Amillennialism church history and the careful witness of Scripture brings about this conviction...

"Premillennialism, then, is not a recent development. Rather, it is the oldest eschatological viewpoint in church history. That reality adds tremendous credibility to the Futuristic Premillennial position!"



The Case for Futuristic Premillennialism

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(and beyond)*

Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661)



This warm blooded Puritan knew that Israel has a special place within the eternal purposes of God. He clearly lived in light of the prophetic future as revealed in the Scriptures! He had a special place in his heart for Israel (like Jesus and Paul)!

"I could stay out of heaven many years to see that victorious triumphant Lord act that prophesied part of His soul-conquering love, in taking into His kingdom the greater sister, that kirk of the Jews... Oh, what joy and what glory would I judge it, if my heaven should be suspended till I might have leave to run on foot to be a witness of that marriage-glory, and see Christ put on the glory of His last-married bride, and His last marriage on earth; when He shall enlarge His love-bed, and set it upon the top of the mountains, and take in the Elder Sister, the Jews, and the fulness of the Gentiles."

Does it stir your heart to prayer and praise when thinking about the prophesied future?

Samuel Rutherford provides a great example (Heb. 13:7) of this: "O to see the sight, next to Christ's Coming in the clouds, the most joyful! Our elder brethren the Jews and Christ fall upon one another's neck and kiss each other! They have been long asunder; they will be kind to one another when they meet. O day! O longed-for and lovely day-dawn! O sweet Jesus, let me see that sight which will be as life from the dead, Thee and Thy ancient people in mutual embraces."

John Owen (1616-1683) A Puritan Theologian



John Owen (1616-1683)

John Owen believed that the Jews would one day be **"brought home into their homeland."**

As to their place in God's purpose/plan- **"There is not a promise anywhere of raising up a kingdom unto the Lord Jesus Christ in this world but it is either expressed, or clearly intimated, that the beginning of it must be with the Jews."**

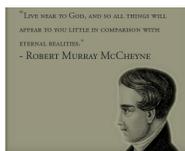
Robert Leighton (1611-1684) Church of Scotland

Christians must seek the spiritual good of all men, especially the Jewish people! (Note Romans 1:16; Romans 9-11)

"They forget a main point of the Church's glory, who pray not DAILY for the conversion of the Jews...Undoubtedly, that the people of the Jews shall once more be commanded to arise and shine, and their return shall be the riches of the Gentiles (Rom. 11:12), and that shall be a more glorious time than ever the Church of God did yet behold."

Robert Murray McCheyne (1813-1843) Church of Scotland

One of the godliest Christians of all time.
McCheyne loved the Jews!

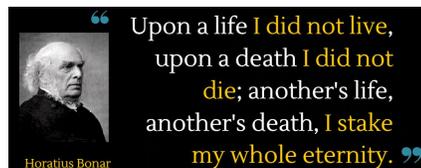


After returning from Palestine in 1839 he preached a sermon from Romans 1:16 called **"Our Duty to Israel."**

He said that **believers today must preach the gospel to the Jews first. WHY? 1) Because judgement will begin with them... 2) Because God cares deeply for them. 3) Because there is an open door to do so (near and far). 4) Because they will give life to the whole world.**

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

Prophetical Landmarks; Containing Data For Helping To Determine The Question Of Christ's Pre-Millennial Advent (Church of Scotland)

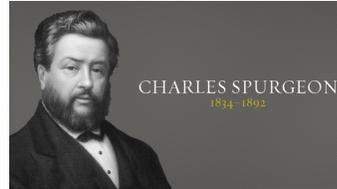


**Bonar's "Lamp and Light Hymns"
God's plan for Israel is something to REJOICE in!**

Everlasting Remembrance.
"O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." (Isaiah 44:21)

1. Forgotten! no; that cannot be:
all other names may pass away,
but thine, my Israel, shall remain
in everlasting memory.
5. Forgotten! no; that cannot be:
the oath of him that cannot lie
is on thy city and thy land,
an oath to all eternity.
6. Forgotten! no; that cannot be:
the grace of ages deep and broad
is grace without decay, the grace,
O Israel, of the Lord thy God.
7. Forgotten! no; that cannot be:
sun, moon, and stars may cease to shine,
but thou shalt be remembered still,
for thou art his, and he is thine.

Charles Spurgeon- demonstrated fervent interest in the Jewish people (Baptist)



Spurgeon (1864) while speaking on Ezekiel 37

... "First, there shall be a political restoration of the Jews to their own land and to their own nationality; and then secondly, there is in the text (Ezk. 37:1-10), and in context, a most plain declaration, that there shall be a spiritual restoration, a conversion in fact, of the tribes of Israel..."

... "They are to have a national prosperity which shall make them famous;"

Spurgeon on employing proper "hermeneutics" while studying biblical prophecy.

... "the literal sense and meaning of this passage- a meaning not to be spirited or spiritualized away- must be evident that both the two and ten tribes of Israel are to be restored in their own land, and that a King is to rule over them."

Spurgeon viewed these prophetic texts as very important...

Israel's Future Salvation should "supply our faith with encouragement" knowing that Jewish evangelism is often a difficult and barren work (in terms of conversion)!

God is in no ways through with the Jews (Hosea 3:4-5; Luke 13:34-35; Romans 11:26)



Other well known *friends of Israel* include:

- Charles Simeon
- William Carey
- HCG Moule
- Corrie Ten Boom
- John MacArthur
- John Piper
- Wayne Grudem

Final Takeaway

"There is a bitter, ugly anti-Semitic stream that has flowed for many centuries through the Church and Gentile dominated world. It flows to this very day. There is also a pure and holy stream of love and compassion."

WHICH STREAM FLOWS IN YOU?