

“Eschatology”
(Part 4: Will Christ’s Coming Be Premillennial?)

II. The events that take place when Christ returns rule out a millennium to follow (cont.).

G. The fact that God’s plan for both the Jew and Gentile ends at the resurrection rules out a millennium to follow.

1. Dispensationalism believes that the Lord intends to turn again to Israel in the future.
 - a. They teach that Israel’s rejection of the Messiah placed God’s plan for them on hold and that He will finally fulfill all His promises to Israel during the Millennium.
 - (i) The Lord has turned primarily to the Gentiles during the Church Age, though some Jews are also being saved.
 - (ii) But when He turns to the Jews again, it will usher in a new and glorious age: “Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!” (Rom. 11:12).
 - (iii) When they receive their Messiah, they will receive His life and be gloriously saved: “For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will *their* acceptance be but life from the dead?” (v. 15).
 - (iv) But it won’t happen until after the Lord is finished with the Church: “For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery – so that you will not be wise in your own estimation – that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so (or in their understanding, “then”) all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob’” (vv. 25-26).
 - b. However, we’ve already seen that even though some Jews rejected God’s plan and didn’t receive the promised blessings, there were some who did receive Him and in Christ the blessings of God’s covenant.
 - (i) “What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened” (v. 7). The elect *received what Israel was seeking after*, while the rest were hardened.
 - (ii) Paul tells us in Romans 11 what His plan actually is for ethnic Israel:
 - (a) It’s not to restore the kingdom to them in a future millennial period.
 - (b) Rather, it is to provoke them to jealousy by turning to the Gentiles that they might receive God’s promised salvation in Jesus Christ and come into the church.
 - (c) Paul is speaking here of what the Lord was doing among them in his day, and what He would continue to do until His plan of redemption was finished, not of something unique that would happen in the future.
2. What is God’s plan for the Jews?
 - a. First of all, Paul makes it very clear that the Lord has not rejected Israel, at least not His elect from among Israel.

- (i) In verse 1, he points to himself to prove his point, “I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin” (v. 1).
 - (ii) If God had promised to save all of ethnic Israel – the children according to the flesh – then it would appear that His promise had failed. But this is not what He promised, as Dispensationalists believe.
 - (a) “But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants, but: ‘Through Isaac your descendants will be named.’ That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants” (Rom. 9:6-8).
 - (b) Paul tells us that “God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew” (11:2), that is, His elect from among ethnic Israel.
 - (iii) It is equally clear that He has rejected ethnic Israel.
 - (a) “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it” (Matt. 21:43).
 - (b) “You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell? Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, so that upon you may fall *the guilt of* all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!” (Matt. 23:33-38).
 - (c) Matthew 24 and the Book of Revelation are all about God’s divorce of ethnic Israel.
- b. Paul tells us that this is always how the Lord dealt with His people Israel: there was never a national conversion but always a remnant.
- (i) “In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to *God’s* gracious choice” (v. 5).
 - (ii) Many Dispensationalists believe that when Paul says “all Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:26), that every individual descendant of Abraham alive at the time would be saved.
- c. Paul goes on now to show us that Israel’s future is really tied to the church and not separate from it.
- (i) By turning to the Gentiles, the Lord is seeking to make the Jews jealous that they might receive Christ and the blessings of the covenant in Him.
 - (a) Verse 11 is really a summary of his argument: “I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their

transgression salvation *has come* to the Gentiles, to make them jealous” (v. 11).

- (b) His goal: “But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them” (vv. 13-14).
 - (c) When the Jews rejected their Messiah, God gathered His elect from among them – Paul and the other disciples – hardened ethnic Israel, and then turned to the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy. This is the process He is using to gather in both His elect from the Jews, as He gathers His elect from among the Gentiles.
 - (d) Note well that God’s plan is to bring the elect Jews into the Church – which shouldn’t surprise us since the church is the fulfillment of the Jewish covenants.
 - (e) This isn’t something Paul was looking for the Lord to do in the future, but something the Lord was doing in his day. Paul tells us as much in verses 30 and 31 by his use of the word “now”, “For just as you once were disobedient to God, but *now* have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also *now* have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may *now* be shown mercy.”
- (ii) The fact redeemed Gentiles are represented as being added to the same tree the unbelieving Jews were broken out of further illustrates the point that the church is the fulfillment of Israel’s covenants.
- (a) “But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, *remember that* it is not you who supports the root, but the root *supports* you” (vv. 17-18).
 - (b) The Gentiles are participating in the very blessings which belonged to the Jews, but which were forfeited because of unbelief: “Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called ‘Uncircumcision’ by the so-called ‘Circumcision,’ *which is* performed in the flesh by human hands – *remember* that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into* one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is* the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the

saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:11-22).

- d. After all the elect have been gathered in from both Jews and Gentiles, then Christ will return to raise the dead.
- (i) This is what Paul is referring to in verses 12 and 15.
 - (a) "Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!" (v. 12).
 - (b) "For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will *their* acceptance be but life from the dead?" (v. 15).
 - (ii) When all the Jews will have been saved, so also will all the Gentiles:
 - (a) "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery – so that you will not be wise in your own estimation – that a partial hardening has happened to Israel *until* the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved" (v. 25).
 - (b) "Fullness" here refers to the full harvest or all who will be saved from each group.
 - (c) After the fullness of Israel (vv. 12, 26) and the fullness of the Gentiles (v. 25) have come in, what could be left?
 - (1) All have been saved that will be saved. This is why the resurrection and final judgment immediately follow.
 - (2) How can there be a millennium afterwards with no one left to enter it?
- e. The word "so" in verse 26 further shows us that this hardening and provoking to jealousy is God's final plan for the Jews.
- (i) "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery – so that you will not be wise in your own estimation – that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and *so* all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob'" (vv. 25-26).
 - (ii) Dispensationalism understands this word to mean "then" – when the Lord has finished with the Gentiles (the church age), then He will turn again to the Jews and save them through the Tribulation – the 70th week of Daniel – and bring them into their millennial kingdom.
 - (iii) But this word doesn't mean "then", it means "thus", "so", "in this way." The partial hardening of Israel and turning to the Gentiles to make Israel jealous is God's means to gather all His elect from Israel.
 - (iv) He will save all He intends to save before He comes again, not afterwards.