

ESCHATOLOGY

FALL ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL SERIES

POSTMILLENNIALISM

Critical Questions for Postmillennialism

1. Do we have biblical warrant for such optimism? Yes.

1) The original purpose of God for man was that man, as His image-bearer and representative, would rule over creation, guarding and cultivating it, bringing it to full maturity (Gen. 1:28).

2) The first promise of the gospel in history indicates this. (Genesis 3:14-15 “So the Lord God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. ¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”)

Satan’s seed shall suffer the same fate as he, they too will “lick the dust” (Isaiah 49:23).

God will crush Satan and his followers through His people (Romans 16:20 “And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”)

God will subdue all His enemies under Jesus (Psalm 110:1 “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”)

This promise is repeated by Peter on the day of Pentecost in reference to the resurrected and ascended Christ (Acts 2:34-35 “For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, ³⁵ Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”)

God promised the nations to His Son upon His resurrection and ascension (Psalm 2:8 “Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.”).

This promise is repeated by Jesus and given to His faithful people. He will defeat His enemies by the power of His Spirit working in and through the Church (Revelation 2:25-27 “But hold fast what you have till I come. 26 “And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— 27 ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’— as I also have received from My Father”).

The gates of hell will not prevail against the Church (Matthew 16:18 “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”)

3) By the power and grace of God, on the basis of Christ's finished work, the world will be filled with men who fear God and kept His commandments. The seed of the woman, will not be a few here and there – but multitudes no man can number:

This was the promise given to Abraham (Gen. 12:2-3 “I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”).

Genesis 13:16 “And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered.”

Genesis 15:5 “Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

This same promise was repeated to Isaac (Gen. 26:4 “And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed”).

And to Jacob (Gen. 32:12 “For You said, ‘I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.’ ”).

This was confirmed by all the faithful prophets (Hosea 1:10 “Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ There it shall be said to them, ‘You are sons of the living God.’”).

These words did not refer to the physical descendants of Abraham but to those who believe (Gal. 3:7,29 “Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham . . . 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”).

4) Thus, we are told that Jesus' work of redemption embraces the world (1 John 2:2 "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.")

2 Cor. 5:19 "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation."

John 3:16-17 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

1. This language obviously does not mean that everyone in the world will be saved, but it does imply that the vast majority of the world shall be saved. Thus the Great Commission is simply restating what was intended from the beginning (Num. 14:21 "but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord").

2. God's worldwide purpose is echoed throughout the psalms (Psalm 22:27 "All the ends of the world Shall remember and turn to the Lord, And all the families of the nations Shall worship before You.")

Psalm 66:3-4 "Say to God, 'How awesome are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power Your enemies shall submit themselves to You. 4 All the earth shall worship You And sing praises to You; They shall sing praises to Your name.'"

Psalm 67:1-2, 6-7 "God be merciful to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us. Selah 2 That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations . . . 6 Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. 7 God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him."

Psalm 72:7-11 "In His days the righteous shall flourish, And abundance of peace, Until the moon is no more. 8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth. 9 Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, And His enemies will lick the dust. 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles Will bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba Will offer gifts. 11 Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; All nations shall serve Him."

Psalm 86:9 "All nations whom You have made Shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And shall glorify Your name."

The original purpose of having a world peopled with men who honor the Lord will be realized (Isa. 11:9 "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.").

After the completion of His work (death, resurrection, and ascension) Jesus is given all authority in heaven and earth (He is King of kings and Lord of lords) and God has given all the nations to Him (Psalm 2:6-8 “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.” 7 “I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.”).

Jesus, as the One who has been given all power and authority, has commanded His people to forth making the nations His disciples (Matt. 28:18-20). And assures us that He be with us throughout the entire time of our labors (“lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”). His authority and power assures the success of the mission. David says, His rule will result in the conversion of the nations (Psa. 22:27-28 “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. 28 For the kingdom is the LORD’S, and He rules over the nations.”).

His dominion will result in all nations serving Him (Dan. 7:13-14 “I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.”).

Daniel interprets the dream God gave Nebuchadnezzar in this way (Dan. 2:34-35,44-45 “You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. . . . ⁴⁴ And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. ⁴⁵ . . . the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”).

This kingdom will be the one that disciplines the nations (Isa. 2:2-4 “Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. ³ Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴ He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”).

This is exactly what John sees in the last vision God gives in the book of Revelation (21:23-24 “The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. ²⁴ And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.”).

His kingdom will fill the earth (Matthew 13:31-33 “Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, ³² “which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.” ³³ Another parable He spoke to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”)

Daniel 7:22,27 “until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. . . .
²⁷ Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”

5) The spread of the gospel throughout the nations will produce a time of prosperity and peace prior to Jesus’ return (Isa. 2:1-11; 11:1-9; Ezekiel 48:1-12).

Critical Questions for Postmillennialism

Question #1: Did Jesus give us a command to do something that He knew would be impossible and that God would not enable us to accomplish?

Question #2: Will God keep His promises to convert the nations?

Question #3: Did Jesus command us to pray for something He knew was not the will of His Father? “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be *on* earth as it is in heaven.”

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