

## **Anointed Prince Or Crowned King? #2**

There is another problem which premillennialists must cope with. In their theology the church was an "afterthought" with God, no subject of prophecy and was just something that was brought into being because the offered kingdom with its king was rejected. Yet, the Holy Spirit expressly predicted that Christ would be rejected, die and be resurrected (Isa. 53; Ps. 16; Jn. 2:19). Think for a moment. The angel told Mary that God would give unto Jesus the throne of his father David (Lk. 1:32f). Yet shortly after his birth, when he was presented to the Lord in the temple, Simeon warned Mary and Joseph that Jesus was set for the falling and rising of many in Israel, that a sword should pierce through their own soul (Lk. 2:34f). This is a clear implication of the crucifixion of Jesus even from his infancy. When Jesus cleansed the temple at the beginning of his ministry and was asked by the Jews what sign he would show them, he said, "*Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up*" (Jn. 2:19). This again is Jesus' reference to his death and resurrection -- all which took place precisely as Jesus predicted. John the Baptist introduced Jesus to the nation as "*the lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world,*" a clear implication of Jesus' death (Jn. 1:29). Jesus predicted his death on many occasions, often saying, "*The Son of Man goeth even as it written of him*" (Mt. 26:24). The scriptures foreshadowed what happened to Jesus. It simply will not do to say that the rejection of Jesus brought about his changed purpose to build the church instead of to set up the kingdom, for from the very outset of his preaching he predicted his rejection, death and resurrection. Furthermore, the church has been in the mind of God for ages, that it exists according to the eternal purpose of God (Eph. 3:9-11). How can the premillennialist explain a credible Christ who predicted the kingdom was at hand, that some living would not die until it came, yet all the while knowing it would be at least 2,000 years before it finally was realized?

Add to this the greatest problem of all (to my mind, at least): Calvary. Had the Jews accepted Jesus, there would have been no Calvary. That would mean that Calvary was not in the mind of God at all. The premillennialist theory opts for a 1,000 year reign of Jesus on earth without His shed blood in lieu of the permanent forgiveness for sins which his blood offers.

### ***Examining The Proof Texts***

Let us now examine some of the passages which premillennialists set forth as proof of their doctrine.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18. This passage was designed to comfort the Thessa-

Ionians who were troubled that certain of their number might "miss out" on eternal rewards by reason of their death before Jesus came. Paul assured them that when the Lord returns the living will have no advantage over those dead saints. He said that when Christ comes "... *the dead in Christ shall rise first.*" From this statement is drawn the inference that Christ will first raise the righteous, then the wicked will be raised later. This explanation misses the mark and "puts words" in the apostle's mouth. The resurrection of the wicked is not discussed in the text. There is indeed a "first" and a "second" order but the "first" is the resurrection of the righteous dead and the "second" is that the righteous living will be caught up with the resurrected dead to meet the Lord in the air. This passage offers no support to two physical resurrections: the first of the righteous, the second of the wicked.

Acts 3:20-21. In this passage Peter spoke of Jesus "*whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration of all things.*" Premillennialists see in this passage a reference to another "age" after our present one; an age in which Christ will return to earth and restore all things, which to the premillennialist's mind means the kingdom of Daniel 2:44.

A look at the text will show that they have drawn an improper conclusion. Peter says all the prophets had spoken of the "*time of restoration of all things.*" He quotes Moses who said, "*A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all things*" (Dt. 18:15; Acts 3:22). Question. Since in the days of restoration of all things we are to hear the prophet like unto Moses, when are we to hear him, now or later? We are to listen to the prophet in the times of restoration of all things. We are to listen to that prophet now. Now is the time of restoration of all things.

But, Peter continues by adding that "*all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days,*" that is, the times of restoration of all things (Acts 3:24). Notice Peter's next words: "*Ye are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away everyone of you from your iniquities.*" The Jews of Peter's day were the sons of the prophets, i.e., they were the ones who would receive the blessing the prophets promised. In saying this Peter clearly asserts that the people of his day were living in the time of restoration of all things. We live in the age of restoration today. Until that is completed, Christ will remain in heaven. When it is finished, Christ will come for his chosen ones. Acts 3 does not teach there is another age

after this age called *"the restoration of all things."* Today is the *"last days,"* the *"end of these days"* and the *"time of restoration of all things"* (Acts 2:17; Hb. 1:1).

Amos 9:11f. *"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins and I will build it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom ..."* The Premillennialist looks at this prophecy as something yet to be fulfilled. Unfortunately for the doctrine, this passage is quoted by James and is said to have already been fulfilled in the spread of the gospel among the Gentiles (Acts 15:14-17). James said the prophecy has already been fulfilled.

Zechariah 6:12-13. This prophecy reads: *"Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of Jehovah, even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."* Premillennialists see in this a future building of the temple by Christ since it is evident that Christ did not build a literal temple. They are correct in identifying Christ with *"the man whose name is the Branch;"* they are correct in asserting that Christ did not build a literal temple, but they are incorrect in asserting the prophecy has not been fulfilled. Christ did build his temple, his church (Mt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 1:2; 3:16). This passage actually denies premillennialism rather than establishing it. The man called the *"Branch"* would build the temple and at which time he would (1) sit and rule upon his throne (i.e. reign as king) and (2) be a priest upon his throne. David had prophesied that Christ would be a priest like Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4). There are many features of similarity between Christ and Melchizedek but one was that Melchizedek was both king and priest at the same time (Hb. 7:1). So also is Christ. Christ is now priest (Hb. 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:5f; 6:20, etc.). Since Christ was to be king at the same time he was priest, he is now king, for it is evident that he is our priest.

Revelation 20:1-6. Without doubt, this is the most significant passage offered by premillennialists. The passage reads, *"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hands; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the deed lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrec-*

*tion. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."* Still, the passage is far from saying what Premillennialist try to make it say. It does not mention a physical resurrection, it mentions souls. It does not mention the second coming of Christ, the throne of David or earth: all necessary ingredients to the premillennialist scheme of things. (Continued next week).

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