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B1004 – January 24, 2010 – Resolution Of The Millennial Issue

Today we want to resolve the controversy of how we interpret prophecy, whether we're amillennial, premillennial, or postmillennial. I'm going to offer evidences of the premillennial position, and as I do this I'm going to rely on something we covered; it's a way of approach I call strategic envelopment. I've quoted Cornelius Van Til before and I want to quote him again to be reminded of the approach. Dr Van Til was one of the foremost Christian apologists of the 20th century and unfortunately he's not very well understood. Now he's speaking of the approach of how to defend the Christian faith during WWII so this is 70 years ago. He says, "We may...perhaps conceive of the vindication of Christian theism as a whole to modern warfare. There is bayonet fighting, there is rifle shooting, there are machine guns, but there are also heavy cannon and atom bombs, All the men engaged in these different kinds of fighting are mutually dependent upon one another. The rifle men could do very little if they did not fight under the protection of the heavy guns behind them. The heavy guns depend for the progress they make upon the smaller guns. So, too, with Christian theism." What Van Til is getting at is that the defense of Christianity is no piece-meal affair. Christianity must be defended as a unit. You don't go in and try to build your system on one verse. Just like when you fight a war you don't just hang your hat on the bayonet men. Christianity is a series of truths that all work together. The Bible is internally self-consistent, and it's self-consistent because God is perfectly rational. So today we're going to rely upon the framework we've been building because the evidences for premillennialism depend upon other parts of the framework. This is not resolved by I've got a verse over here. We have to face this discussion from the perspective that we're working with the plan of God and God has perfect rationality so the plan has perfect rationality and all these things that He teaches us fit together.

We're going to make heavy use of the creation event, and what it teaches us about God, man and nature. Don't think of these as past topics, think of these as part of a web that fits together. There's a web of events and a web of truth; they all interlock. So although we have a sequence of revelation, this is a very integrative way that God has presented His plan for history.

We talked about these three views quite a bit; we've said that they basically have to do with the nature of the Kingdom of God. We've developed a vocabulary so we can think about it, because the tool of thinking is a vocabulary. You've got to have a vocabulary, and we developed a vocabulary, speaking of mortal man and immortal man. Those two words give us tools and handles to get a grip on things. The issue is whether or not the Kingdom of God shows itself inside mortal history, or the Kingdom of God is basically a synonym for the eternal state.

The nature of the case, then, concerns what is the Kingdom of God? Thinking in terms of mortal and immortal, in the premil position you have history go on, you have the return of Christ, you have this strange period of a thousand years, and then you have the eternal state. This strange period of a thousand years is made up of mortal humans being the chief actors; they act under an immortal human leadership, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, and the resurrected saints of the Church. So you have the Kingdom for a thousand years inside mortal history, showing that man even fails in a perfect environment, because the demonstration of a thousand years will be that even if you have a perfect government you can't get a perfect society. People won't be able to argue that there's evil in the government institution.ⁱ Here men will live for a thousand years under perfect government and at the end of a thousand years there will still be people who are not saved. Once again, even though the thousand years starts with all people saved, it winds up with not all people saved, because children will have been born during that period of mortal history that will not believe in the Lord. They will enter into a league of unbelief, and when the Lord Jesus Christ releases Satan right at the end...in a matter of days the whole world is stirred into a revolt against the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, it eliminates the argument that could be made in history that if we only had a perfect government then we could get world peace; if only we had a perfect environment everything would be great.

The earthly millennium with these features are counter demonstrations to these great excuses of man.

Each one of the ages in history refutes an excuse of man. The age of innocence in the Garden refutes the idea that if I lived in a perfect environment without any sin whatsoever then everything would be cool. The Garden disproves that. Then we had an age on earth when there was no capital punishment, people were free to do whatever they wanted to do and all they had was conscience, no government. So the libertarian idea, the anarchist idea, do away with government, has been answered. The whole antediluvian period was a historical demonstration that man still screwed up, even without government. Therefore we come to the next period in history when God institutes government, and He puts the sword into the hands of man, and says now you have a government, now it's up to you to enforce the authority. I'm not doing it and the angels aren't doing it, you're doing it. You fussed at Me, let's see how you do. We've seen how we do, so that knocks out that excuse. You can look at each one of these ages as a refutation of the excuses of sinful man. The thousand years has that function also, like the previous ages.

We also said the postmillennial view says that history goes on and just sort of blends into the Kingdom, Christ comes back and the eternal state starts, and people like that. What did that do historically? We said historically in church history one of the corollaries of that position is that the Church gets very involved in social welfare programs, and the social gospel movement in the 19th century was based on postmillennialism, i.e. that the Church, besides evangelizing, ought to go out and Christianize the world, Christianize government. We saw how that did. After WW I and WWII we were a little less optimistic about man.

Amillennialism says that there really isn't a Kingdom. There are two versions of amillennialism, i.e. that the Kingdom of God is equated with the eternal state, or in a spiritual way the Kingdom of God is identified as the Church. In that case, if the Kingdom of God is identified with the Church, then it means that the Church is one to one with the Kingdom. What happens to Israel? What's happened to that connection between Israel and the Kingdom? It's severed. The Church has basically replaced Israel. And that breeds anti-Semitism.

Those are the three views and today we're going to deal with four criteria of resolving it. The first criterion is how you are going to interpret passages like Isaiah 65. In Isaiah 65 the wolf lies down with the lamb, children play by the dens of vipers, people live 900+ years; if someone dies at a hundred they're considered a youth, so there is death in the millennial kingdom but it's rare, it's a disciplinary judgment. There's agricultural abundance, there's economic security, you produce goods and no one's steals the goods either by hands on removal or inflation or inheritance taxes. How do you handle that? Is that allegorical or is that literal?ⁱⁱ

To solve this let's go back to our basic framework. Always go back and ask yourself, what do I already know from the word of God that can help me resolve the problem? You want to train yourself to do this. It takes time, it takes effort but if you discipline yourself to think in terms of the basic framework it will pay off. So let's start with the first one, **The Implications of a Creationist View of Nature**. Kingdom passages speak of a revived nature, a calm nature, a nature in harmony with man. What do I know already about the doctrine of nature from the creationist perspective? Is there any precedent in history that would establish grounds for such radically altered conditions? Turn to Gen 3:14. Gen 3 is the event of the Fall which we've treated as historical. By the way, why do we treat this as historical? This is Gen 3. I mean, the events of early Genesis are myth, right? Let's say they're myth. Gen 3, the Fall of man is a myth. If I mythologize man's fall into sin then what logically do I also have to mythologize? The cross. If I don't have a literal fall I can't have a literal cross that delivers man from sin. So there's a correspondence, the truths of Scripture aren't independent, they're interdependent, they're woven together into an inextricable whole, there's a harmony here and obviously so - our God is a coherent God. Look at the effects of the Fall on nature in verse 14. Here's God, he's talking to who? The serpent. The serpent is a part of nature. Who's the serpent? He's Satan, we know that from Rev 12. Satan has come to dwell within a serpent. And the Lord is cursing the serpent here. Verse 14, "The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life;" Look at that and tell me what did the snake look like before the Fall? Do you detect any anatomical changes to the serpent? Obviously it didn't go around on his belly before. Something's different. Do I

know what it looked like? No. But I know it wasn't what I see today. So were there changes in nature at the Fall? Apparently so. It's not just the snake, what else is in the verse, "Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field;" What's the implication for cattle and beasts of the field? That they're cursed too, at the Fall, not to the degree that the snake was but still cursed. So we don't really know what the animals looked like before the introduction of sin at the Fall. All we know is that what we have today is derived genetically from the originals, but could there have been physiological changes? Could there have been anatomical changes? These verses suggest strongly there were.

Now turn to Gen 9. Look at this one. You premillennialists always yak yak yakking about the lamb lying with the lion, give me a break, it's ridiculous! Well, what do you do with this verse? Gen 9:2, this is after the Flood, so we've just had a major disruption to the physical environment and God has some words here for the new world. There's going to be a change in diet. Why do you have a change in diet? Because there's been a change in physiology, maybe in anatomy, certainly in the environment. So he says, "The fear of man and the terror of man will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky;" What's the implication? If this terror is being injected at this moment in history what's the implication for pre-Flood history. There was no terror before; there was no war between man and animal. Now transfer yourself over to Isa 11, Isa 65, what do they say about the future kingdom of God? The lamb will lie with the lion. Have we ever seen that in history before? You bet we have. If you come at Genesis from a literal creation perspective. And then he turns to the diet, verse 2b, "with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hands they are given. ³Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant." What's the implication for diet before the Flood? Now man is a carnivore. Were people carnivorous before the Flood? Apparently not. Gen 1, God gave man every green plant, every seed for food, they were herbivores.

So these are changes, changes in man's diet, changes in zoology, at least with the serpent and presumably with other animal forms. So you have all these changes that occurred once, if you interpret Genesis literally, *if* you interpret Genesis literally. Once you interpret Genesis literally, and you acquire this view of nature, then what's the problem with interpreting prophecies that

basically argue that the state of the world in the Kingdom of God, the thousand year millennium - what is to say, if this is the Church age, this is the return of Christ, this is the thousand years, that the conditions during that Kingdom very much approximate what was going on on earth prior to the Flood? There's no biblical or logical reason for not taking those prophecies literally, *if* you believe in a literal early Genesis.

In fact, there's even a story in our own day of a lion named little Tyke who was rescued from her mother out of the zoo. It's a fascinating story of how this little lioness came to be raised at Hidden Valley Ranch. This was in the 50's and 60's. The mother, apparently when she would give birth, would maul the cubs. The zookeepers could never get to them quick enough to rescue them. And one day she gave birth to this little cub and she started mauling him and she hurled him at the fence and a man reached out and caught the cub through the fence. In the recovery she ended up at the ranch and get this, the lion wouldn't eat meat. They couldn't get it to eat meat and they were afraid the lion was going to die. They did every thing to get this lion to eat meat. Biochemically lions have got to have meat because meat is protein and one of the amino acids in the protein is essential to the lion's diet. If they don't have it in two weeks the lion will be blind, after a few more they'll develop cardiomyopathy and that's it, they'll die. Maybe you didn't know but the lion is the strictest carnivore in the world. Little Tyke lived for years, never ate a single bite of meat and never harmed a fly. The thing was raised with chickens and pigs and cows, never was interested. People marveled at this. Why did they marvel? Because intuitively man knows that the war with nature isn't normal just like we know death and suffering aren't normal. Our being doesn't answer to that. Our being answers to man being in harmony with God and man being in harmony with nature. So we have a case already inside mortal history of a non-carnivorous lion. Can that happen again on a global scale? If you're a parent I encourage you to get a little book written about it. I've got an electronic copy of it I'll gladly e-mail you. It's called, *Little Tyke: The Amazing True Story of the World Famous Vegetarian African Lioness* by Georges Westbeau. It's a fascinating history, you'll love it, you're children will love it and you'll be investing in them a new way of thinking about God's plan for nature. So, summarizing this point; we go back to prior biblical history and let that govern our interpretation. And we have even seen glimpses in modern times of the harmony of man and nature and we've seen how men respond to that.

A second one, **The Implications of a Creationist View of Man.** Turn to Gen 1:26; the human race is characterized as having a mission under God. The universe is not complete without man, that's a Biblical position. Gen 1:26-28 is a key controversial text that is vilified by the philosophical leaders of modern ecology. The modern "green" movement uses verse 26 and it's amazing they even read verses 26-28, but they are taken by leading thinkers in the ecology movement as proof that Christianity is hostile to the environment. Therefore it's Christianity that must yield and be destroyed and eradicated from the planet in order that we can have people that don't think always of dominating nature. This is a very modern quip, it's been around actually for about a couple hundred years, but what's wrong with that interpretation? They're reading verses 26-28, probably don't read anything else; they just come to verses 26-28, so immediately what have you got? Interpretation without context. Theologically what's the context of verses 26-28? What are you going to say? Their argument is that see, that's Christianity, there it is, man's going to go out and crush the environment, man wrecks the environment, and he doesn't have to respect the environment. What's wrong with that reading of verses 26-28? What's being left out? God. Who is it that's telling man this? And to whom is man responsible? Man is responsible to God. Who is it that made the environment? God made the environment. Did He make it good? Verse 31 tells us the environment was very good. Well, God says in a very good environment I want you to make it better, I want you to subdue it, not wreck it. We don't wreck God's handiwork; none of that is in here. So the interpretation is far out; to say that wreckage is envisioned in verses 26-28 is nonsense; that's just taking a verse out of context and not paying a dime's worth of attention to it. Read, read, read! Society is full of people who can't read.

So in Gen 1:26-28 the purpose of the human race in the Bible is to rule the earth. Psalm 8, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." Why? To rule the earth. What do you mean "rule the earth?" In the immediate context in this part of the Bible where do you have a simple, common picture of what it means to rule the earth? Genesis 2. What is man doing? The first ruling of man - two simple illustrations of how man rules: number one, what is he told to do in the Garden? To till it and keep it, so gardening is a form of subduing the earth. This is before thorns and thistles, this is before weeds. To subdue

the earth. What is produced by subduing the earth? Fruit, food, beauty, its man as the decorator of God's creation. God provides the materials and man provides the decorations and brings them to fruition. In verse 31 God is perfectly pleased with His work. But remember, the "very good" in verse 31 includes man subduing the earth. That's God-pleasing because He knows that He's got all the material here, and He's saying go for it, do something with it, and that's "very good."

What is the second illustration of man subduing the earth that we have in the immediate passage, Gen 2? Besides gardening, what else did Adam do before Eve came along, part of finding her? He named the animals. So that's classification, that's coming to think God's thoughts after Him through observing His world. That's how you come to know God. You study what God made. So that's man's subduing the earth. We get technology, art, all the industries; everything comes out of this Gen 1:26-28. This is before the Fall, *before* the Fall! No sin, no damage, no inefficiency.

The subduing is not necessarily talking about sin. It's talking about producing something. We evangelicals, and rightly so, focus so much on the gospel, the gospel, the gospel, salvation, salvation, salvation, that we tend to get a little fixated about that, forgetting if salvation is all there is, then what do you do for eternity. Man's purpose is greater than being saved. Being saved restores him to his original position, which was to subdue. Salvation is a step on the way; salvation is to enable man to be restored to his original purpose. If man's original purpose is to subdue the earth and bring it to fruition, through industry, technology, art, question: were Adam and Eve in immortal bodies when they were given the command in verse 26-28 to do that, or were they in their mortal bodies? Answer: they were in their mortal bodies; therefore, here's the argument. We've covered one of our criteria, the doctrine of nature. Now we're going over and look at the doctrine of man.

What view of the kingdom best fits the doctrine of man? What's the ultimate purpose of the human race with respect to the creation? It's to beautify it; it's to utilize it the way it should be utilized. It is mortal people doing this, not immortal people doing it. If that's the case, then which of the three views has the Kingdom of God that accomplishes this? Amillennialism, postmillennialism, or premillennialism? Which of the three views deals with mortal history? Postmillennialism and premillennialism. So you can dispense with

amillennialism because they don't have a Kingdom inside history to fulfill the doctrine of man, so that's eliminated. That doesn't fulfill verses 26-28 does it? Is there ever a time when the human race corporately attains the goal of verses 26-28 on an amillennial scheme? No. Therefore, that leaves only two views, postmillennialism and premillennialism. Both of them do deal with the Kingdom of God inside mortal history, and both of them are seriously concerned with verses 26-28, of seeing creation come to fruition.

Now the question is how far will mankind subdue the earth? This is an issue of degree here between the postmil and the premil. The postmil argues that the golden era which the Church is supposed to bring into existence will not be essentially different from our own as far as the basic facts of life are concerned. The postmillennialist, therefore, would see mankind's subduing some of its social problems and some technological difficulties, but mankind would not subdue all nature under its feet in the sense that the geophysical environment itself, human longevity, and zoological transformation would be included. The premillennialist, on the other hand, consistent with his doctrine of creation foresees a far greater degree of submission. He sees mankind (through Christ) as subduing the animal realm so effectively, for example, that a child will be able to lead a young lion. That's not a figure of speech; that is a literal zoological fact. To bring about this degree of change, Christ executes a complex strategy of total renovation of the environment, removal of evil spirits from historical influence as well as the commingling of immortal saints with mortal humans. The precedent, of course, for such an environment including the commingling of divine and human beings is already established by the pre-Flood order and the short period after Christ's resurrection (e.g. John 20-21).

There's nothing there that breaks Biblical precedent. The premillennial view of the Kingdom is not doing something new; it's not violating any precedent that we've already seen in past history. As a matter of fact, positively the doctrine of man comes to a historical fulfillment, in that man finally does corporately... *corporately* subdue the earth; music, art, industry, flourishes under the government of the Lord Jesus Christ. By the way, I don't believe from the pictures that you get of the Kingdom in the OT that Christ is going to do the art, Christ is going to do the technology, or the risen Church is going to do it. It's going to be the mortal human beings that are still in their natural bodies. It's the person; that's their moment of history. Christ and the

resurrected saints, their job is more of a ruling job, kicking the demons out and letting the environment be conducive to the human race fully doing what they were made to do, have dominion.

Another tool that man will use to subdue, that he's been given by God, is the tool of language, naming. In language you have the figurative and the literal. Both are valid. What I'm trying to say is the figurative use of language isn't an excuse that you use whenever you don't like the literal. The figurative use of language would have been there from the very instant of creation, because God has created the universe with unseen qualities. Nobody knows what logic looks like. Has anybody seen a logic walking around? That's a quality. Anybody see number 1? Nobody's ever seen 1? 1 is an abstract quality. They're not things that you can touch, feel, taste or hear. So there's always been figurative language, that's not the problem.

The problem is this, if you're going to argue that whatever this Kingdom is, it's so ethereal that it can only be figuratively spoken of, you've got a problem, because now you're saying that the Kingdom of God can't be touched, it can't be heard, it can't be seen, it can only be spoken of in figurative language. What does that do to a fulfillment? How do you get that kind of a figurative Kingdom fulfilled ever. It could be happening right here, right now, right? You can't touch it, can't see it, can't taste it, can't feel it, can't speak literally of it. Why can't it be happening right now? Obviously that just doesn't fit well. So the idea again is that language does not require anything other than the premillennial position.

The third criteria is **Mankind's Genetic Linkage**. We mentioned before the genetic unity of the human race. All men ultimately got their genes from Adam. Why do we have to deal with this with prophecy? Because prophecy lists a number of nations involved, it lists them by names and amillennialists will come along and say, you premillennialist, don't you know those countries no longer exist! Obviously your scheme is wrong, you can't take that literally. Here's the answer to that. The Bible thinks about man in terms of genealogy, not in terms of geographic or political boundaries. This is what makes some prophecy difficult. We tend to think in terms of political boundaries, I've got this nation, I've got that nation and I read of Persia in prophecy and Egypt and Ammon, those aren't political borders, those are people that are genetically tied to one another from Gen 10. Racially speaking, everyone in

this room has a history. You have a genetic history, your father, your mother, their fathers and their mothers; all the way back to Noah and his family. There were genes in people and animals before the Flood that were lost and never recovered and when we say that it means there was greater capacity for diversity in the world then than now. Genetic capability lost forever in the Flood. The only genes that man and animal have available are those that came across the floodwaters in the ark. Whatever the people looked like before the Flood, we know all have a genetic history back to one family. That's the Biblical answer to racism; that's the answer. Nobody likes that answer because it requires a belief in a little Scripture, but if you get your head screwed on and people think about that it resolves the racial issue. We are not different groups that evolved independently on different continents at different places, like 19th century people thought, and like the Nazi's believed that you have superior races, more highly evolved so we get into ethnic cleansing; you don't have polygenetic evolution of the races, that's baloney. All the races come out of one family.

So when we have prophecy like Gen 10:22 where God identifies Asshur with the Assyrians, and He makes a prophecy about Asshur in the future; who's He talking about? The people that have the genes of Asshur. Can God track them? Sure He can. What are we doing now in crime with DNA analysis? Aren't we tracking people? What are people doing now with the Jews? Aren't we tracking genealogical markers in their DNA? If we can do that, how come God can't know them all by His omniscience? Why can't He make a prophecy about Asshur? Why can't He make a prophecy about Persia? He knows where the genes are, He knows who's got the DNA. Not only that, but I give you the example that we've mentioned several times, the tribe of Levi. That Jewish tribe still exists today with their last names, Cohen, Levi, Kohane; they're all the tribe of Levi. That's one that's very clear cut in their genetic lineage.

Now we come to the fourth criteria. We dealt with the doctrine of man, the doctrine of nature, we've dealt with genealogical connections, now we're going to deal with **The Covenants**. All during the OT time, the last two years I kept emphasizing that, when you have a covenant or a contract, it's got to be clear to all the parties of the covenant what are the terms. Why? Why do you have a contract in the first place? To monitor behavior. A contract has to be clearly enough written so it can be verified. Was the contract fulfilled or was it not. Now we apply it to prophecy.

Israel is the only nation in history that claimed to have a written contract with its God. Such contracts or covenants rest upon the creationist foundation of language...Think about it. If these contracts aren't literal like creation is literal then how can you ever know how or when they're fulfilled? Contracts and treaties need verifiability. The meaning of contractual terminology, therefore, cannot be 're-interpreted' later when things don't appear to be turning out the way the contract originally stated. We have contracts regarding the land, the seed and the worldwide blessing. For the life of me, I have never figured out why this land promise can get so butchered in prophecy. Think of yourself as Abraham, God told you this land... *this* land Abraham, where was he standing when he said "this land?" Palestine. And the land has to come to the descendants of Abraham; it can't be New York, Brooklyn, Rome, Paris, that wasn't where Abraham was standing. He was standing in Palestine. So where's the Kingdom of God going to be centered? In the land. What land? The land of Palestine. But if you're going to make the land the Church, everywhere the Church is, what does that have to do with Abraham standing in the land of Palestine? You've changed the meaning of the word l-a-n-d. That's not in the original contract and that's not the way somebody who had that contract in their hand would have interpreted it.

See what we're doing? You've got to keep the interpretation of the original people who got the contract or you've changed things. It'd be great to change your house contract, your car contract - if the payments don't work out, just change it; figuratively interpret the contract. See if you get away with that one! Yet theologians get away with it all the time. The amillennialist gets away with this. And yet if the amillennialist buys a car he doesn't want the bank to interpret his car contract the way he's interpreting the Abrahamic Contract.

We have the seed promise through David. What does it say? It says the Messiah has to be the son of Abraham, the son of David. What do we find the Gospels doing in the front end of all the Gospels? Genealogies. Why's that? To show that Jesus is related to the son of Abraham. Why do they bother with that? He's got to be Jewish. With all due apologies to the white Arians the Messiah is Jewish, not Gentile. The Kingdom of God is Jewish not Gentile. Judaism, OT Judaism is the custodian religion of man. It gave us the Bible

and it gave us the Messiah. He's also got to be the son of David. Why is that? Because it says He's got to be the seed of David. You can go through all the contracts. How have they all got to be fulfilled? Literally.

We come to the fifth thing. We've looked at the contract issue; it's pretty easy to understand that one. Now we come to a more complicated one, and that is the issue of the rejection of Christ, and that's leading to the inter advent age, the parenthesis. Here's the first coming and here's the second coming; here's the sufferings of Christ and here's the glories which shall follow. In the OT, those two events were not seen as separate. They were different, that's why they projected two Messiahs. But they weren't visualized as one Messiah coming two different times.

The rejection of Christ by God's covenant nation created a very complex situation. No longer was history a straightforward movement into the promised Kingdom of God on earth through Israel." Think about it, what was John the Baptist's ministry to the nation? What was his function? Before Jesus ministry got started He was introduced on stage by a prophet, just like the OT kings. A prophet—king maker. So the King-making prophet in the NT is John. That's why several Gospels start not with Jesus but with John. John connects Jesus with the OT prophets that introduced the king. And John said what? Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand. That means that if the nation had repented, what would have happened? The Kingdom of God would have come. The nation rejected, now what happens to the Kingdom of God that was supposed to come? That's the \$10,000 question.

The rejection of Christ introduced a surprise that wasn't foreseen in the OT. Now we've got a big problem here. That's why the disciples didn't get it. They got it after the fact, but if you go through all four Gospels they just don't get it, the Messiah says He's going to suffer and die? Wait a minute, hold it, Messiah is supposed to reign in glory, you're not going to die. This I'm going to die business, where does that come from? Because the nation is doing what by halfway through all four Gospels? It's quite evident that they're rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore things are going to happen that weren't foreseen quite as clearly.

So here we are introduced to the inter-advent age dilemma. What about this age in the OT wasn't seen? That is the source of the problem. Can the inter-

advent age be identified as the Kingdom? Think about it from this perspective. I gave you the amil, the premil, we drew little diagrams, but now think of it this way. If the inter-advent age is new, and is a result of the separating out of the First and Second Advent of Christ in time, and it wasn't seen in the OT, can it possibly be identified with the Kingdom of God that was seen in the OT? It's highly unlikely. The Kingdom of God was clearly seen in the OT, so it's very speculative to now take this inter-advent age that wasn't seen in the OT and claim that this is the Kingdom of God. It's far better to say this is a whole new age, and the Kingdom of God is yet to come, it's been put off, it's been postponed, because of all the upset and turmoil and rejection of Christ and everything else, but it's still scheduled in the future. It's just that this age in which we live is a separate deal.

The separation of Christ's career into two parts with a parenthetical age in between 'stretches out' the 'simple' prophecies of His coming. Have we seen any stretching out of prophecies before? Is there any precedent for that? What did we see with Daniel's study of Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years of Exile? 70 years and you're going to be restored. That turned out to be only a partial restoration. The total restoration was stretched out into a 490 year period. So yeah, we've seen what appear to be simple prophecies get stretched out. There's precedent for saying by analogy that when the nation Israel rejected Christ, what appeared to be a single coming stretched out into two. We don't mean in the plan of God there was a change, by the way, we just mean that God amplified and gave more explanation to prior prophecies that were previously unforeseen. So due to that we have this parenthetical age called the Church. Then afterward the Kingdom.

Now, that's how this kind of a problem is resolved. You've got to go back to the framework events and think it through. This isn't just all up in the air, there's a skill to thinking through the biblical events, there's a linkage, there's a consistency and that's what I've tried to demonstrate by resolving it this way.

ⁱ The argument of communism has been that evil is imbedded in human institutions, therefore you have to have a revolution to undo the human institutions. Hence, therefore communism was not just replacing a regime in theory; communism in theory was to do away with all regimes. It was to be the end of institutions because those institutions were intrinsically evil. So if you believe that, obviously

the communist message has an appeal. It's your diagnosis of what the problem is, where it is located so that's where you attack.

ii The late Dr David L Cooper made famous the Golden Rule of Interpretation which is as follows, "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths indicate clearly otherwise."

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