

**Revelation 6: 1; Part 6 of the 4 Major Views of the Book of Revelation -  
"Pre-Millennialism", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on  
February 18th, 2007 in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

We have given an overview of Amillennialism and Preterism in past sermons. Amillennialism believes that we are presently in the Millennium of Revelation 20. They define the binding of Satan as his inability to prevent the conversion of God's elect in the New Testament era, based upon Christ's having "bound the strong man", casting him out of his position of being able to have and hold the sinners whom God intends to save, in his kingdom of darkness any longer. The gospel would not be fettered by him, it would come to the gentiles, the nations, and the barrier between Jew and Gentile is broken down so that all the Gospel success that God has intended will be accomplished. All of this, because Christ has overcome the evil one; he shall "deceive the nations no longer". The effects of this binding will continue during the whole Church age, except for a short time at the end of the age when Satan shall be released and have his "little season". The Antichrist will be revealed at that time, and after a time of his succeeding in overcoming the saints, Christ will return and judge him and all the world. The Preterists conceive, as I have told you, that Nero was the Antichrist of the book of Revelation and that all, or most, of the prophecies of Matthew 24 and many portions of the book of Revelation are already fulfilled. However, Partial Preterists for the most part, appear to hold that there will be a Millennium in the future, before the return of Christ. Many believe that the Kingdom of Christ will slowly and gradually advance to conquer among the nations.

Now, I would like to proceed on to look at Pre-Millennialism. Certainly, out of all of the views that we have examined thus far, Dispensational Pre-Millennialism is the most popular in our day in Evangelical circles. With the writings of Hal Lindsey in the 1970's popularizing and dramatizing the major events of this view, with Tim LaHaye and others writing the Left Behind novels of what might happen according to this prophetic view, it is no wonder that so many people embrace this system of prophetic interpretation, even though they may have not looked carefully into the details of it themselves. And even when a person does take the time to look into the details of what is being asserted by those who hold this view, the order of events cannot be definitely proved from the Scriptures themselves. What we have in this system is assertions without definitive Biblical proof. What I want to do this afternoon is to introduce to you the Old and the New Pre-Millennialism. I want to do this by first asking the question, What is Dispensationalism? And then secondly, "What is the problem with it? And then, next Sunday I would like to try to speak to you about the Pre-Millennial view of Christ's Second Coming and the Millennium which they believe will follow.

**1st- What is Dispensationalism?**

I know something of this, as I came into the Christian faith in 1975 and accepted the whole Premillennial Dispensational view of prophecy readily, because the Ryrie Study Bible, the Scofield Reference Bible and so many other publications promoted it. I read the notes of these study Bibles avidly. I did not question their observations or conclusions for years. I am, however, a reader and collector of many old books. And as I read the Puritans and other great Christian men who came after them, I did not find

the Pre-Millennial dispensational view of prophecy in those writings. I did find that some of them believed in a Pre-Millennial view of the return of our Lord. But there was nothing of the Rapture, the 7 year Tribulation period, followed by Christ's second 2nd Coming in glory to set up His Millennial kingdom. This view, I discovered, was popularized in the last 100-150 years. It needs to be said at the outset of a brief overview like the one that I am doing, that the Historic Pre-Millennialism of Spurgeon, of Bishop Thomas Newton who wrote a great book called On the Prophecies, of E.B. Elliott who wrote what Spurgeon termed "the standard work" on the subject of Historical Pre-Millennialism; all of these men did not believe in what has come to be known as the Dispensational view of prophecy. They were Pre-Millennial but they were not Dispensational. When I speak of Dispensational Premillennialism, I am speaking of a view which had its origins back in the time of the 1840s when the Plymouth brethren leader J.N. Darby in England and Edward Irving in Scotland convinced many Christian people that they should not expect a future conversion of the nations to Christ during the Millennium, but that many judgments were yet to come upon the world and that things in the world would come to be so much worse that only the coming of the Lord would be able to put a stop to it. They rejected the Post-Millennial position of men like Jonathan Edwards, William Carey, Adoniram Judson and many others. Then in the early part of the 20th century C.I. Schofield and Clarence Larkin and others made a major push forward of their view that there were not 2 Dispensations of God's dealings with men; the Old and the New, but there were 7 Dispensations. The word dispensation is not a bad word in itself. The Apostle Paul Himself uses the word in Ephesians 1: 10. It says there, "that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on the earth -- in Him." This is the kind of Dispensationalism that the Bible truly speaks of; that which related to Christ Himself. But C.I. Schofield in his study bible says that "a dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God." The dispensations mentioned in the Schofield Reference Bible are: Creation(innocency), Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Law, Grace, and Kingdom. The Bible's view of things, on the other hand, is that God has ever dealt with men, after the Fall, in accordance with faith in His promises in terms of either the Christ who was to come, or the Christ who has come. So there are only two basic Dispensations in human history, one before Christ came and the one after He came. In our Bibles we have Old Testament and New Testament.

### **Secondly- What is the problem with Dispensationalism?**

The problem with the Dispensational view of history is that it not only believes in too many dispensations, but it believes that God had different ways of saving men during each of these ages. Instead of one Covenant of Grace with 2 administrations of that covenant, the Old and the New, Schofield has 8 covenants. The Edenic, the Adamic, the Noahic, the Abrahamic, the Mosaic, the Palestinian, the Davidic, and the New Covenant. Perhaps he and others have a great love of endless distinctions and divisions; the Bible appears to have a much more simple and straightforward approach. But the great problem is what Mr. Schofield says about how God saves people under these various ages and covenants. Under the first dispensation which he calls "innocency", he says: "Man was created in innocency, placed in a perfect environment, subjected to an absolutely simple test, and warned of the consequences of his disobedience." "The woman fell through pride, the man deliberately." (1 Timothy 2: 14) This is a good

indication of how he comes to false conclusions about the way that people are saved under these various dispensations. Man was not simply created in "innocency", he was created "upright" it says in Ecclesiastes 7: 29. When he fell, he fell from his original righteousness. And although Mr. Schofield thinks that the test given to them, not to eat of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil was "absolutely simple", it was absolutely certain that they could not pass it with full freedom of will, and neither could Mr. Schofield or any of the rest of us have passed it. He believes that Eve fell because of pride, but it only says in 1 Timothy 2: 14 that she fell "being deceived." She believed a lie that she would not die. It could have been that when she believed the lie, that pride was engendered in her, to think that she was being wise to do this, and in this pride she offered the same forbidden fruit to her husband, but you can see that Mr. Schofield wants to draw conclusions that the text of Scripture will not furnish to him. This kind of reasoning sets the stage for conclusions wrongly drawn about the Church and Israel later on. Dispensationalism has as its basis, I believe, the premise that man has the free will to pass these tests in any of these stated Dispensations. It does not understand how grace came to the Old Testament believer based on the promises of God which would be fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ.

In his footnote on the 4th Dispensation: Promise, C.I Schofield says this. "For Abraham and his descendants it is evident that the Abrahamic Covenant(Gen. 15: 8) made a great change." "They became distinctively the heirs of promise. That covenant is wholly gracious and unconditional." "The descendants of Abraham had but to abide in their own land to inherit every blessing." "In Egypt they lost their blessings, but not their covenant." "The Dispensation of Promise ended when Israel rashly accepted the law." (Exodus 19: 8) "Grace had prepared a deliverer (Moses), provided a sacrifice for the guilty, and by divine power brought them out of bondage; but at Sinai they exchanged grace for law." "The Dispensation of Promise extends from Genesis 12: 1 to Exodus 19: 8 and was exclusively Israelitish." "The Dispensation must be distinguished from the covenant." "The former is a mode of testing; the latter is everlasting because unconditional." Dispensationalism has funny ways of looking at grace and law. For those of you who cannot understand what he is saying here, he is saying that Israel forfeited her blessings of grace which God had hoped to give to her through his promise to Abraham, because she went down to Egypt, and then after leaving Egypt she "rashly accepted the law". The Israelites should not have done this, he thinks. They failed the test. But they did not lose their covenant. But these things are contradictions in terms.

To further point out the problem, let me read to you what Mr. Schofield has written in his note on John 1: 17. "As a dispensation, grace begins with the death and resurrection of Christ." "The point of testing is no longer legal obedience as the condition of salvation, but acceptance or rejection of Christ, with good works as a fruit of salvation." You can see by this statement that he clearly believes that there was a different way for the Jewish person to be saved under the Dispensation of law; he says it was by works, and another way of salvation under the dispensation of grace which Jesus Christ brought in by His death on the cross. This kind of thinking has been the basis of the development of the Dispensational thought that God has 2 separate and distinct programs in the development of world history for the nation of Israel and the Church. God, through Jesus Christ, offered the kingdom to them and they rejected their Messiah and so Israel was set aside. The gospel was then offered to the Gentiles and they received it. The "times of the Gentiles" will continue then until the "fullness of the

Gentiles comes in" and then the Rapture of the Church will take place. At that time, then, God will resume his program with Israel. The Church thus becomes a parenthesis in the program of God and not His main program. But this an explicit denial of what the Apostle Paul says when he teaches that "the barrier between Jew and Gentile has been broken down," thus forming one new man or entity. (Ephesians 2: 11-18)

You may be asking yourself, "But what does all this have to do with the book of Revelation?" Simply this. That Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism does not believe that Church is to be found in the prophetic section of the book of Revelation. She has been Raptured at the beginning of Chapter 4 in accordance with 1 Thessalonians 4: 14-17. She has been secretly "caught up to be with Christ" and "thus she will ever be with her Lord." She does not have to face the persecution which the Jews will have to face during the last 3 and a half years of that tribulation, and before their conversion to Christ. The word "Church" we are told, is not used again in the book until all is fulfilled. The book of Revelation in its prophetic section is dealing with this great tribulation, a seven year period of time which follows the Rapture of the Church, when God shall again have dealings with the Jewish people and nation. The last 3 and a half years is called "the time of Jacob's trouble", a phrase which those who hold this view take from Jeremiah 30, verse 7. The Church, following the Rapture, is an already completed group of Gentile people primarily, and they are safe, having been delivered from God's wrath which is being poured out upon the earth. Now God reverts to his program for the conversion and establishment of the Jews as a nation, separate from the Church, so that they might have the literal fulfillment of all the promises given to them in the past. A temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem and sacrifices will once again be offered upon altar there. Antichrist will come and seat himself in this literal Jewish temple. But Christ, they say shall come and the Antichrist shall be destroyed, and then Christ will reign in this temple in Jerusalem, in the Millennium which shall follow his return. But if Christ has broken down the barrier between Jew and Gentile, making them one new entity called the Church, how can the Jews have a separate program for them so late in time? There has always been a remnant of Jews being converted in every generation of this Church age, and they become a part of the Church of Jesus Christ, part of His body. No, when the Jews are converted in a national way sometime in the future, it seems pretty apparent to me that they will have to, and want to, come into the Church. We shall attempt to address the Premillennial view of Christ's second coming and the Millennium which they believe will take place after it, the next time that we are together.