For He Must Reign

Biblical Reasons to Believe Jesus Wins

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Will some be "left behind" and endure a seven year "tribulation" with an Antichrist ruling the world? Will this happen very soon? Will there be a future 1000 year kingdom in which Jesus physically reigns from earthly Jerusalem, complete with a rebuilt temple at which blood sacrifices are offered? Is the world getting worse until there will finally be a cataclysmic "end" with destruction? Should we suspect an "end of days" conspiracy with a "one-world" ruler? Is the "antichrist" alive today?

Answering these questions involves getting into the world of Bible prophecy. This is the subject of "eschatology" (from the Greek term *eschatos* which means "last"). "Eschatology" is the study of "last things." It is really not as difficult as it may sound. To begin, consider a few distinctions.

Personal Eschatology and Programatic Eschatology

The study of "last things" (eschatology) includes personal eschatology, addressing what happens to individuals at death and thereafter (e.g., heaven, hell, purgatory, and the time between a person's death and the final Resurrection). The subject I am addressing here is what I will call "programatic eschatology." It's the "program" and sequence of the end of the world events like the coming of Christ, the rapture, the tribulation, the millennial kingdom, etc.

I take the ordinary protestant perspective on personal eschatology. Here are two Westminster Shorter Catechism questions that summarize this view and which are tremendous pastoral resources for truth at a funeral. When a child asks, what happened to Grandpa? Have Q. 37 ready to go (assuming he is a believer).

> Q. 37. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death*? A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection. Q. 38. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection*? A. At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

Evangelical Eschatologies

Our task here is to address the main issues of the views that are found in the Christian world and then to argue for a specific view from the Bible. In the limited nature of this work, I will restrict the alternate views to the most popular evangelical options which garner the most shelf life and air time.[1]

Without doubt the most popular view is *dispensational pretribulational premillennialism,* or just dispensationalism for short. In America it is on tap everywhere. It has been distributed in scholarly, as well as popular works. If it's on TV and someone is talking about the coming of Jesus, it's probably this. It is the "Left Behind" view, made even more popular by the 16 best-selling novels of this title by Tim Lahaye and Jerry B. Jenkins (over 80 million copies sold), as well as a number of films in the franchise (from 2000-2014). This view requires a strong distinction between what God is doing with the Church vs His dealings with Israel. So, it holds that the official reign of Christ will not begin until a secret rapture of the Church, a seven year tribulation (focused on Israel), and the second coming of Jesus (proper) happens. Then the reign of Christ from Jerusalem will be literally 1000 years long before the final judgment and the eternal state (new creation/heaven/hell). I will discuss the sequence of this view as it relates to biblical prophecies below.

A lesser known view is amillennialism, which literally means "no millennial reign." Many of those who hold to historic forms of Christianity, such as many Reformed protestants, Lutherans, Anglicans, Anabaptists, as well as Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox have this basic view. This view holds that Christ's "millennial" reign is now, but many (not all) amills are pessimistic about the affect of the "kingdom" on the world. Most amills do not except the elaborately detailed future views of dispensationalism (above) relating to the place of Israel, the tribulation period, an antichrist figure, etc.

Amillennial movies are difficult to imagine. It's difficult to create a thriller book or film out of the basic, "we don't know when or what will happen, but it will come crashing to an end one day" plot. So, there are no blockbuster popular level depictions of amillennialism, unless, "No Place for Old Men" counts.

I do have a suggestion for an aspiring novelist or playwright. It goes like this. "There's this guy, you see, Chris. He works in an oppressive office building. On the top floor is the boss, Mr. TanSa. Some days go really well and Chris is happy. But most days, almost all days actually, are bad days. He never gets his job done, never makes his sales quota, and constantly fears being fired. Then it ends with a comet crashing on the building, just as Chris and two other friends walk out of the building safely. I am not sure you could sustain this plot over 16 books and a handful of films.

Does Jesus Lose?

What these two views (dispensational and amillennial) have in common is that in this world's time and space, *Jesus loses*. Of course all Christians believe that Jesus wins in some sense, but my qualification is "in this world's time and space." I mean that without a supernatural return of Jesus and without a supernatural, extra-inning of history called the "millennial kingdom" (in the case of premillennialism), Jesus' work and purpose for this cosmos in history fails. There are only two basic views regarding the current epoch: *Christ loses or Christ wins.*

So for the *pessimillenialists*, Satan reigns now. Satan's will be done. But let us "give the devil his due." Satan used to reign. There was a time in which Satan was "in office." Some resisted, but his policies were in force. He held the power of death and the keys of death (Heb. 2:14; Rev. 1:18). Satan *reigned* (past tense) right up to the time that Jesus crushed his head on the cross (Gen. 3:15; Rom. 16:20), bound him (Mt. 12:29; Rev. 20:2), disarmed him (Col. 2:15), cast him out (Lk. 10:18), and sent an army of disciples to invade his territory (Mt. 28:18-20; cf history since 35 AD). It is not Satan that has "all authority in heaven and on earth," it is Jesus! (Mt. 28:18). Just pause to reflect on the Great Commission here cited. How can we accept it and deny that Jesus wins?

One particular Christian cult that holds that Jesus is losing is the Jehovah's Witnesses. Unfortunately, like many Christians today they assert that Satan controls the world today. When JW's come to my door I often ask them if Satan is reigning. They usually reluctantly say, "yes." Then I point out that they are attributing more power to Satan than to Jesus and so they are "functional devil worshipers." I love the way that rolls off the tongue: you, my friend, are a *functional devil worshiper*. Of course, this is an overstatement for rhetorical purposes. But there is truth

in it. Those who believe that Satan is in control are giving the devil much *more than his due*, given the conquest of the cross, resurrection, and Christ's rule from heaven. Satan has no authority or power to control the world, but he does have influence through false teaching. But believers are to "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (Jm. 4:7). Note the amazing level of supremacy of believers over the devil through submission to God in Christ.

Biblical eschatology is about what *will* happen and thus *predicts* the outcome of Christ's work in history. History is not yet over. Of course, some objector will look at the score at any given time or location on the field and note the problems. If the game were over (at that point), Jesus may have lost. But *the game is not yet over*. An eschatology is a biblically informed (or ill-informed) "bet" on Who wins: Jesus or Satan. My money is on Jesus. It will not do to say, "My money is on Jesus too, but He won the spirit of the game, even though Satan actually got more points." For the analogy here, consider points to be human souls over the course of history. For a sneak peak of this, consider the score in Revelation: "myriads of myriads" (countless numbers from every nation, Rev. 5:11ff). God so loved "the world."

To many the idea that God will save more people than He will condemn to hell is radically unbiblical. Is it unbiblical because somehow we just know things must be getting worse and worse? Let's challenge that with the Bible and especially the Bible's clear teaching about the kingdom of Christ. Part of the problem here is that many passages are exhortations to call for faithfulness, rather than statistical predictions. But one must look to the predictive passages to predict, rather than the calls to repentance. Repentance and faith are the means for many to come into kingdom life. Others may have specific negative passages in mind which may be dealt with in the coming pages.

Chronology and Character: Millennium and Tribulation

To identify an eschatology one must address: a) the chronology and character of the millennium and b) the chronology and character of the tribulation. The terms "pre vs post" are chronological terms. The "A" of "A-mill" negates something about the character of the millennium. "Futurist vs preterist" on the tribulation (see below) relate to chronology and sequence in time.

On the Millennial Kingdom

The term "millennial" is based on the term in Rev. 20, "thousand years" (*chillio* in Greek, *millennium* in Latin*)*. The "millennium" is the period of the reign of Christ. On the chronological sequence, the amill and postmill views agree on the sequence of the kingdom as prior to the coming of Christ. The coming of Christ is "post" (after) the kingdom. Whereas the premill view holds that the coming is "pre" (before) the kingdom. Postmills and amills disagree on the nature of the kingdom of Christ and how this reign will affect the world and history. There are a range of views, but most amills do not have confidence that the kingdom will radically change this world, whereas postmills expect transformation of the world to some observable extent by the end of history.

On the Tribulation

The "great tribulation" is referenced in the Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24:21; Mk. 13:19). This discourse is Jesus' answer to the question, "Tell us, when will these things happen [including the destruction of the temple], and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Mt. 24:3). There are a number of views of the timing of this in relation to Christ's coming and/or the "rapture of the Church." Some dispensationalists believe the secret rapture of the Church (ala, "Left Behind") is before the tribulation (pre-trib), some believe it is "mid-trib" and some that it is "pre-wrath." Some premills (historic) believe that the Church must "go through the tribulation" (post-trib) before the coming of Christ after the (future to us) tribulation.

All these details might cloud the *two main views* of the tribulation for our purpose: *futurist or preterist.* "Preterist" is based on the Latin, "praeter," meaning "past"). Does the Olivet Discourse describe a events future (to us) or events past? To make it even harder, some premills and amills accept a preterist (past) view of the tribulation, but that is not the ordinary view.

In terms of current, popular views, postmills tend to be preterists and hold that the "tribulation" events Jesus described were fulfilled in the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Premills and amills, as well as all dispensationalists, tend to hold to a future tribulation, though many amills believe that the entire Christian era is a kind of tribulation.

Dispensational Premillennialism

Premillennialism was known in the early Church, but the dispensational version of this (with a rapture, etc.) began being taught by J.N. Darby about 1830. Then it became highly popular in the early 20th century through the Scofield Reference Bible (1909). In the case of the "dispensational pretribulational premillennial" view (full title), the sequence is complicated for the uninitiated. The next prophetic event is 1) the secret rapture of the Church to heaven; 2) then seven years of tribulation on earth (complete with Antichrist, rebuilding of the temple, and boatloads of Middle East action); 3) the Second Coming with judgment; 4) followed by a 1000 year kingdom ruled by Jesus bodily in Jerusalem over the earth of mortal people; 5) at the end of the millennium, there is Armageddon: the destruction of a horde of unbelievers unhappily besieging Jerusalem; 6) finally, there is the eternal state of resurrection and the new creation cosmos. Lots of action steps here. This is why charts are necessary, as the one below from "Chart No. 4" of Clarence Larkin's modestly titled, *The Greatest Book on Dispensational Truth in the World* (1920).

The Amillennial and Postmillennial Views

The amill view definitely has simplicity going for it in comparison. No CAD software is necessary for charting it out. Draw a straight line divided in half: 1) Christ is reigning now from heaven and the next thing on the chart is 2) Christ's return with the complex of resurrection and the eternal state. So, a few good things happen, lots of bad things happen, there's probably an antiChrist person toward the very end (but don't get too specific). Then "crash!" A general judgment comes, resurrection, then heaven and hell. You too can start your "greatest book" on amillennialism by drawing your very own amill timeline, but it will no doubt not be very elaborate.

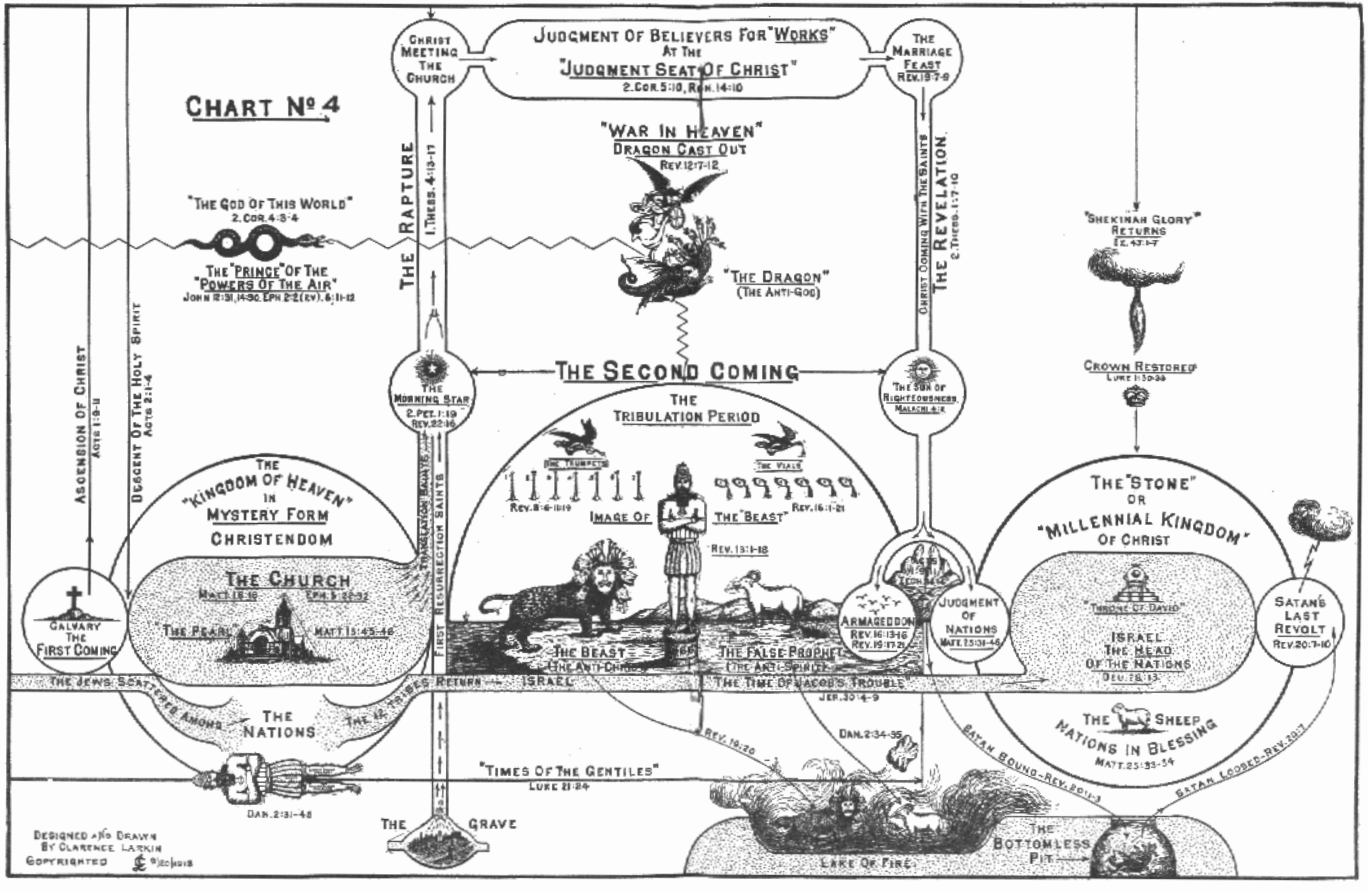
CHART Nº 4
CHRIST MEETING THE CHURCH
JUDGMENT OF BELIEVERS FOR "WORKS" AT THE "JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST"
2.COR.5:10, REV.14:10
THE MARRIAGE FEAST REV.19:7-9
"WAR IN HEAVEN"
DRAGON CAST OUT
REV.12:7-12
"THE GOD OF THIS WORLD"
2.COR.4:3-4
THE "PRINCE" OF THE "POWERS OF THE AIR"
JOHN 12:31,14:30, EPH 2:2 (REV), 6:11-12
"THE DRAGON"
(THE ANTI-GOD)
THE RAPTURE
I.THESS.4:13-17
CHRIST COMING WITH THE SAINTS
THE REVELATION
2 THESS.1:7-10
"SHEKINAH GLORY" RETURNS
EZ.43:1-7
CROWN RESTORED
LUKE 1:30-33
ASCENSION OF CHRIST
ACTS 1:9-11
DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
ACTS 2:1-4
THE SECOND COMING
THE MORNING STAR
2.PET.1:19
REV.22:16
THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
MALACHI 4:2
THE TRIBULATION PERIOD
THE TRUMPETS
REV.8:6-11:19
THE VIALS
REV.16:1-21
IMAGE OF
THE "BEAST"
REV.13:1-18
THE "KINGDOM OF HEAVEN" IN MYSTERY FORM
CHRISTENDOM
THE CHURCH
MATT.16:18
EPH.5:22-32
"THE PEARL"
MATT.13:45-46
TRANSLATION SAINTS
FIRST RESURRECTION SAINTS
THE "STONE" OR "MILLENNIAL KINGDOM" OF CHRIST
"THRONE OF DAVID"
ISRAEL THE HEAD OF THE NATIONS
DEU.28:13
CALVARY THE FIRST COMING
THE BEAST
THE ANTI-CHRIST
THE FALSE-PROPHET
THE ANTI-SPIRIT
ARMAGEDDON
REV.16:13-16
REV.19:17-21
JUDGMENT OF NATIONS
MATT.25:31-46
SATAN'S LAST REVOLT
REV.20:7-10
THE JEWS SCATTERED AMONG THE NATIONS
THE 10 TRIBES REIGNS
ISRAEL
"THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE"
JER.30:4-9
THE NATIONS
THE SHEEP NATIONS IN BLESSING
MATT.25:33-34
REV.19:20
DAN.2:34-35
SATAN BOUND-REV.20:1-3
SATAN LOOSED-REV.20:7
"TIMES OF THE GENTILES"
LUKE 21:24
DAN.2:31-45
THE GRAVE
LAKE OF FIRE
THE BOTTOMLESS PIT
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On the "Jesus wins" view or the postmillennial view, which I am advocating, it is quite similar in structure to the amill view on the millennium; however, we insist on the specific timing of the "tribulation" as past. This makes the drawing a little more complex. More on that is to come.

For a sharper definition, biblical postmillennial-preterism is not liberalism, social-gospelism, universalism, perfectionism, or nationalism. Rather, it is the biblical conviction that 1) chronologically, the "tribulation" is past and Christ's return follows His kingdom rule which extends from His ascension to His Second Coming. Hence, His return is "post" (after) His "millennial" reign. 2) The nature of Christ's (millennial reign) kingdom is a world transformation by means of the gospel and the effects of the gospel which reverberate to all aspects of life. Let's chart this all out.

Millennial Chronology

PREMILL
DISP

"End Times" starting after Israel 1948

Secret Rapture of the Church

Church Age: More Lost than Saved

7 Year **Tribulation** dealing with Israel; rise of Antichrist, rebuilt temple, temple destroyed

Literal 1000 year Millennial Kingdom with Jesus Physically Ruling Jerusalem Besieged,

New Heavens & Earth

Supernatural Time

AMILL

Amill Spiritual/Heavenly Kingdom not Transforming Earth

"**tribulation**, apostasy, … Antichrist" are "characteristic marks"

2nd Coming/ Resurrection Last Judgment

New Heavens & Earth

Supernatural Time

POSTMILL

Tribulation Past 70 AD Destruction of Jerusalem

Postmill: Change is Incremental, via Gospel Mission affecting Family, Business, Law, Governments, Art . . . Great Commission Fulfilled

2nd Coming/ Resurrection Last Judgment

New Heavens & Earth

Supernatural Time

Seven Theses Proving the Postmill View

When it comes to areas of Christian disagreement, it is easy to simply shy away from stating facts. I believe it is quite necessary in this case to state the facts and I believe they are decisive. These seven theses entail a "post-millennial-preterist" chronology and an optimistic view of what Christ's kingdom accomplishes on earth.

1. The kingdom of Messiah is the mediatorial reign of Jesus Christ referenced throughout the Bible (Ps. 2, 110; Is. 65) and in Rev. 20 (i.e., the "millennium").
2. Christ's reign "officially" began when Christ was seated at the right hand of the Father (Ps. 110:1; Heb. 1:3; Acts 2:33).
3. Christ's Second Coming is after His reign (1 Cor. 15:23-25).
4. Christ's reign will overcome all His enemies, the last of which is death (1 Cor. 15).
5. Christ's kingdom is overwhelmingly represented in images of growth and conquest over all enemies (1 Cor. 15:25; Ps. 110, 2; Mt. 13:31-33; Dan. 2:44, 7:13-14).
6. Language regarding imminent or immediate actions meant near-in-time action (Mk. 13:29; Rev. 1:3).
7. The "Great Tribulation" took place in the first century since Jesus specified, "this generation will not pass away until all these things take place" (Mt. 24:34, cf. 23:36; Mk. 13:30; Lk. 21:32).

Each of these propositions is demonstrable from a plain reading of the texts cited. Propositions 2-4 require a postmill chronology. Propositions 4-5 requires a victorious or optimistic view of the accomplishments of the kingdom. Propositions 6-7 require a preterist (past) chronology of the tribulation, centering the fulfillment on the destruction of the Jerusalem's temple (70 A.D.).

An Exegetical Defense of the Postmillennial View

In order to understand the sequence of the coming of Christ and His kingdom, it would be ideal to find a passage which addresses this with sequential terms. There is only one passage in the Bible which does this: 1 Cor. 15.[2] The two critical points to demonstrate are: (1) The chronology that the reign of Christ is prior to the coming of Christ (over against premillennialism) and (2) that the kingdom is world transforming and not limited to an unobservable spiritual realm (over against

amillennialism).

Consider 1 Corinthians 15:21-26:

> For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Here we have the chronological sequence of the reign of Christ in relation to His coming. The "end" is "when" "He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father," "after He has abolished all rule and all authority and power" (15:24). Paul teaches that the kingdom is consummated at the "end/His coming." This is not when the kingdom begins (contra premillennialism). Further, His victory does not happen all at once at His coming (contra amillennialism). His abolition of rule, authority, and power (of His enemies) has taken place prior to the "end" specified in v. 24.

From this text, postmillennialism (His coming after His reign) is compelling for at least three reasons. a) The last enemy (death) is overcome at the Resurrection ("at His coming," 15:23). So, His reign is prior to the Resurrection of believers at the end. b) Paul expresses this reign (v. 25) in a paraphrase of Psalm 110:1: "Sit at my right hand [reign] until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." The Bible is clear that this reign began when Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:33, 34, 5:31). c) Though Christ is ruling in the "midst of His enemies now" (Ps. 110:2), His reign will overcome all of His enemies. "For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet" (15:25). Thus, the kingdom will be demonstrably victorious.

This passage fully confirms the time-frame of His reign and the victorious character of the kingdom. Just as death will be vanquished (1 Cor. 15:54), so shall all His enemies perish (Gen. 3:15, Jdg. 5:31). Emphatically and repeatedly we are taught that Christ is currently at the right hand of God the Father. Thus, the ascended Christ is on a throne (Acts 2:30), reigning over His kingdom (Col 1:13), having dominion (1

Tim. 6:16; 1 Pet. 4:11, 5:11; Jude 25; Rev. 1:6), and even ruling "the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5).

Please note that the chronology of the premill view is exegetically impossible from this text. Christ ascended (40 days after His resurrection) to the right hand of God in fulfillment of Psalm 110:1 and Dan. 7:13-14, therefore His reign has begun and the last enemy, death, is to be abolished at the final resurrection. Therefore, contra premills there cannot be an era after the coming of Christ in which there are enemies of any sort, especially death. But of course the premill view of the kingdom includes death after the resurrection at Christ's "second coming" (proper).

The amill view has the same chronology as the postmill view. Still, the "a" part of "amill" is in tension with this passage because of the character of the kingdom reign of Christ. Paul declares (with Psalm 110) that Christ vanquishes His enemies *throughout* His reign. These verses are optimistic about the accomplishments of Christ's reign, as are virtually every other verse about His kingdom.

Just as looking to 1 Cor. 15 as the (only) place addressing the coming of Christ in *sequence* to His reign, should we not look to texts that address the reign of Christ to understand the *characteristics* of Christ's reign? In these texts we see a note of triumph and growth (Is. 9:7; Dan. 2:35, 7:13-14; Rev. 11:15; 1 Cor. 15:25, Mt. 13:32-33). Looking at passages on the reign of Christ we find optimistic notes: "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" (Dan. 7:14).

The Past Fulfillment of the Great Tribulation

Most postmillennials today are preterists regarding the tribulation. In 1 Cor. 15 we see a clear and unassailable basis for the postmillennial, victorious return of Jesus. In the Olivet Discourse, we see a clear and unassailable basis for the preterist view of the tribulation. If we take seriously the time-texts in the "signs of the times" (or pessimistic) passages we find that they are directly applicable to the first century, especially the events surrounding the destruction of the temple (70 A.D.). Jesus stated a definite time-frame for when the events of the tribulation

would happen: "this generation will not pass away until all these things take place" (Mt. 24:34, cf. 23:36; Mk. 13:30; Lk. 21:32).

The challenge to a preterist view here is that for many, the Olivet Discourse is assumed to be about the end of the world (the Second Coming). The very phrases of this passage are used as watch words for the "signs of the times" for the end of the world:

- "wars and rumors of wars"
- "nation will rise against nation"
- "famines and earthquakes"
- "false prophets will arise and will mislead many"
- "the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION"
- "false Christs and false prophets will arise"
- "THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken"
- "the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory."
- A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER"
- "Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left"

Certainly on first glance to many these look as though they could only be describing the end of the world. Repeatedly the word, "coming" as in the coming of Jesus, is used. However, looking more closely at the details several things should be seen:

1) Several of these are not very unique to any time in history: "wars and rumors of wars," "nation will rise against nation," "famines and earthquakes," "false prophets will arise and will mislead many," "false Christs and false prophets will arise." To some extent these things were happening in the midst of the 1500s in Europe and one may find continual examples throughout history of these kinds of actions. However, there are unique fulfillments during the first century.[3]
2) This passage actually is limited to one geographical area of the world. Note the details: they are at the temple in Jerusalem which is

to be destroyed (24:1); the abomination of desolation happens "in the holy place" of the temple (24:15); instructions are given to "those who are in Judea [to] flee to the mountains" (24:16); it is in a place (Judea) in which traveling on the "sabbath" is a problem (24:20); false Christs will be "in the wilderness" (i.e., the Judean wilderness); the "tribes of the earth" or "land" refer to the tribes of Israel (24:30); and the "gathering together" alludes to many verses, each designate Jerusalem, Zion, or Israel (Zech. 2:10; Jer. 32:37; Ezek. 34:13, 36:24).

3) In the case of the words in upper caps, these are quotations from the Old Testament. This cosmic imagery (sun darkened, stars falling, clouds of heaven) first applied to events that happened before the birth of Christ. For example, Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 13's "oracle concerning Babylon" in which "the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light" (Is. 13:10). In this historic fall of Babylon to Persia (539 B.C.), God "will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken from its place," for the "day of the Lord is coming" (Is. 13:13, 9). This language did not mean the end of the world in its original context (Isaiah), rather it referred to the fall of a great city.

4) Luke's version of the Olivet Discourse was written with a Gentile audience in mind. So he leaves off descriptions thick with Hebrew prophetic references. He writes, "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city" (Lk. 21:20-21). Further, the location is plain: "there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to *this people*; and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and *Jerusalem* will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (21:23-24).

5) The Olivet Discourse is found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. I believe John's "Olivet Discourse" is an expanded version of the discourse known as the book of Revelation. Revelation 18 describes the fall of another "Babylon," "the great city." Of course this can't be physical Babylon and the two basic cities which commentators believe this addresses are either Rome or Jerusalem. But the descriptions make clear that this is Jerusalem: "And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the

earth" (Rev. 18:24). This is exactly Jesus speaks prior to the Olivet Discourse as He enters Jerusalem: "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" (Mt. 23:36-37). Revelation 11:8 describes "the great city" as "where also their Lord was crucified." Thus, John's Olivet Discourse centers around the destruction of harlot "Babylon" (unbelieving Jerusalem) and the replacement of the unfaithful harlot with a new bride who is a city: "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2). Jesus cites Is. 13's oracle against Babylon, a great city, but Jesus applies this unquestionably (in the Olivet Discourse) to Jerusalem. Revelation is John's Olivet Discourse. Further, Revelation's city is identified, as "the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, *where also their Lord was crucified*" (11:8).

Psalm 110: Jesus' Prophecy about His Own Kingdom

In His ministry on earth, Jesus referred to Psalm 110 on two occasions recorded for us in the Gospels. a) He silenced the religious leaders of Israel using Psalm 110:1: "The LORD says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'" In Matthew 22:44ff Jesus questions the religious leaders about the identity of the "Lord" of David. This had the effect of silencing the conversation. b) In His trial Jesus brought together Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13-14 in answering whether He was the Messiah. The high priest asked, "'I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.' Jesus said to him, 'You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN'" (Mt. 26:63-64; cf Mk. 16:62; Lk. 22:69). Jesus asserted that those who sat in judgment on Him would see these things fulfilled which requires a "this generation" timeframe.

Psalm 110 addresses the Messiah at the right hand of God and Daniel 7 speaks of one like a Son of Man ascending to the Ancient of Days and all nations worshiping Him (cf Ps. 2). "To Him was given the kingdom . . ." So, *when* is this kingdom? Must we await the Second Coming? No. Jesus identifies His ascension with the first verse of Psalm 110, "sitting at the right hand." Ascending to the right hand of the Father is when He took His seat on the throne over the world.

Psalm 110 is certainly a key to understanding the apostolic view of the kingdom of Jesus since it is directly quoted or referred to at least 21 times in the New Testament—more than any other Hebrew Scripture verse! Including references to the later verses of the psalm in Hebrews (Heb. 5:6, 7:17, 7:21, 5:10, 6:20, 7:11, 7:15), Psalm 110 is cited at least 28 times in the New Testament. Why so? Because the apostles concluded that the ascension of Jesus was the direct fulfillment of this central Messianic Psalm.

For example, note the end of Mark's Gospel: "So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God" (Mk. 16:19). At Pentecost Peter preached: "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit …" (Acts 2:32–35). In Peter's next sermon he said, "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:32). Thus the earliest declarations of Jesus' position emphasized that He is reigning from the right hand of the Father from whence He will subdue all of His enemies.

So Jesus' own prophecy of His kingdom and that recorded and preached by the apostles is that He would ascend to the right hand of the Father (Ps. 110:1) in the "clouds of heaven" (Dan. 7:13-14). This was demonstrated by His judgment on Jerusalem and Lordship over all the nations. Therefore, He commanded: "'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations'" (Mt. 28:18ff).

Answering the "Pessimistic" Passages

In a number of the presentations and debates in which I have participated, in the Q & A the issue usually turns to the passages which seem to predict that everything will get worse and worse. If my view is correct these texts address limited times and circumstances. The methodology I endorse follows from what is above: consider the time-frame that is indicated. Does the "pessimistic text" have a time reference, if so does it apply to the entire period of the reign of Christ or the "generation" on whom judgment was promised? My claim is that wherever the reign of Christ is addressed, it speaks of growth and

conquest; on the other hand, there are many judgment warning texts which speak of a soon coming judgment which was fulfilled within the first century context. Of course there are many general warnings throughout Scripture which warn men and nations to "kiss the Son" and worship Him or receive judgment (Ps. 2).

In a magazine debate with me, a prominent representative of (pessimistic) amillennialism,wrote, "amillennialism interprets the 'signs of the times' (for example, tribulation, apostasy, the spirit of Antichrist) to be characteristic marks of the present period of redemptive history (see, for example, Mt. 24:4-14; 2 Tim. 3:12; James 1:2-4; Heb. 12:6; 2 Thess. 2:3; 2 Pet. 1:10; 1 Jn. 2:18, 22)."[4] Let's consider each of these.

1) Matthew 24 has been addressed sufficiently, but please take note of the "a-chronology" of calling what will happen to that first century generation a "characteristic mark" of the entire period from Christ's Ascension to His Second Coming. Jesus specifically limits the fulfillment of the events geographically (Jerusalem) and to within the lifetime of that generation. It is "a-stretching" to extend it for thousands of years.
2) First John 2:18 - "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour." This cannot describe the entire reign of Christ. John's time reference is plain: "*this* is the last hour." So, the "last hour" is two thousand years? This is "a-temporal." This denies the meaningfulness of biblical terms about time. John identifies the coming of antichrist(s) in his own day, implying strongly that the Left Behindism view of such a figure in our own day is quite mistaken.
3) In 2 Timothy 3, Paul is writing at the end of his life from Rome's subterranean Mamertine Prison just before he was martyred by Nero (ca 61-65 A.D.). He was calling Timothy to persevere through such desperate times. Paul was told he would suffer from the first word of his calling. Jesus (in red letters, no less) said of Paul, "for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:16). Given this, what should we expect the tone of this final letter to be? In this last will and testament of Paul he writes: "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, … always learning and never able to come to the

knowledge of the truth. 8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith." This passage provides a long list of degeneration. But three important observations must be made: a) this is a "time-text" since it begins with "in the last days." b) Paul goes on to say, "But they [like J & J] *will not make further progress*; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes's and Jambres's folly was also." c) The implication is that the power of God (just as in the days of Moses and J & J) will destroy these evil doers. While all those who have died martyr deaths in such prisons should not be denied the comfort which Paul's experience affords, Is it a reasonable interpretation of this passage, given the writer and context, to conclude all Christian experience for thousands of years will replay Paul's experience and circumstances? I do not believe that all Christians will or have suffered to the extent of Paul. This passage is firmly set in the context of a great apostasy leading to a great display of God's power for that generation—more on the "last days" in a moment.

4) On James 1:2-4 (various trials with joy), Heb. 12:6 (chastening sons), 2 Pet. 1:10 (make your calling sure), these manifestly do not give "marks" of the whole period of Christ's reign. Rather they are simple exhortations to faithfulness, rather than predictive prophecy. Of course trials and tribulation are a reality throughout the reign of Christ, but not so to the same extent in every place and time. For example, a current struggle in America might be the loss of Christian influence on the public square. This is a far cry from being stoned (Stephen), crucified upside-down (Peter), or beheaded (Paul). In other words as the gospel influences the world then trials and tribulations are radically affected.

A few statements, not included above, have a strong resonance with the idea of most people will be lost. Postmillmillennial, Princeton Theologian, B.B. Warfield (1851-1921), wrote an article, "Are They Few that Be Saved?" He noted several passages used to address the issue, especially, Mt. 7:13-14; 22:14; Lk. 13:24. For example, Matthew 7:13–14: "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."

The most difficult statement is, "there are few who find it" (Mt. 7:14). It is important to remember this is from the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7) which includes many hyperbolic over-statements, calling the hearer to action: "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out" (5:29). According to our principles above, note the first century, Jewish context: relatively few would find the way of Jesus. That "few would be saved" from *them* is especially tragic, since Jesus was the Messiah of Israel. As John poetically notes, "He came to His own and His did not receive Him" (Jn. 1:11). The contrast in the historical setting of first century Israel is worth noting: though Israel did not receive Him, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (Jn. 1:12). So the contrast is that first century, Christ-rejecting Israel would indeed receive judgment and not enter the narrow gate, follow the narrow way that leads to life, and not be among the few finding Jesus. Yet, the promise is that a world-wide kingdom would emerge following Israel's rejection. This is history.

Warfield eloquently responds in summary to these passages, "We can always learn from these passages that salvation is difficult and that it is our duty to address ourselves to obtaining it with diligence and earnest effort. We can never learn from them how many are saved." He cites Charles Hodge (Princeton): "that the number finally lost in comparison with the whole number of the saved will be very inconsiderable. Our blessed Lord, when surrounded by the innumerable company of the redeemed, will be hailed as the 'Salvator Hominum,' the Saviour of men, as the Lamb that bore the sins of the world"; Robert Dabney: "that ultimately the vast majority of the whole mass of humanity, including all generations, will be actually redeemed by Christ." William Shedd: "when the whole course of the Gospel shall be complete, and shall be surveyed from beginning to end, it will be found that God's elect, or church, is 'a great multitude which no man can number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues,' and that their voice is as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, 'Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.'"[5]

Are We in the "Last Days"?

Let us define the "last days" biblically. This phrase is found in passages such as Acts 2:17, 2 Tim. 3:1, James 5:3, 2 Pet. 3:3, etc. Consider several views.

1) View one: the "last days" of disco view. One popular and sensational

view is that the "last days" somehow started up recently. "*We* [currently] are in the Last Days!," e.g., Hal Lindsey's, *Late Great Planet Earth;* Edgar C. Whisenant's, *88 Reasons Why Christ is Coming in 1988 (then 1989, 1993, and 1994), ad naseam*. These coincide roughly with the era of disco, hence my title. Defining the "last days" in this way has led to decades of pinning the tail on the prophetic donkey every time something happens in the Middle East. Hence book titles like, *Armageddon, Oil, and the Middle East Crisis* by (dispensational) professor John Walvoord (1991) just rolled out in the days of the Gulf War with Iraq. Prophecy books claiming these are the "last days" just keep flying off the presses concurrent with cable news reports: *War on Terror: Unfolding Bible Prophecy,* Grant R. Jeffrey (2002); *Earth's Final Moments: Powerful Insight and Understanding of the Prophetic Signs that Surround Us,* John Hagee. The latter book "unveils how biblical prophecy and current world events are intersecting" with the tag, "Coming soon: Earth's final cataclysmic moment!" (Amazon).

2) View two: the "last days" are the thousands of years of the Christian era. This is a more reasonable view since the writers of the New Testament are *obviously* speaking of their own day (first century) and not awaiting the Cold War, the Gulf War, the War on Terrorism or the emergence of Donald Trump as world leader. In this view the "last days" began then and *continue to the present and until Christ's Second Coming*. One can understand this, but it removes "last" and "days" from any temporal consideration and fulfillment. For example, if I say to my daughter who is waiting for me, "I just have this *last* thing to do before we leave . . ." but mean, that the *last* thing can go on indefinitely—well, I am not being honest. "Last" (*eschatos*) points to the end of something and implies some kind of completion. It cannot be indefinite. That is precisely why the New Testament has imminent (about to happen) predictions to be fulfilled in the "last days" which I have argued *were, in fact,* fulfilled. To repeat, the "last hour" cannot be stretched to thousands of years. This view suffers from a lack of expectation that the New Testament writers believed something cataclysmic was about to happen (and did happen, just as Jesus predicted in three Gospels and in Revelation).

3) My view: The "last days" are the last years of the *old covenant era*. The question to ask is, "The last days of what?" Are we discussing the "last days" of the 20th century (ala, Hal Lindsey b. 1929)? This can't be right since we are already in the 21st century! Are we discussing the last days of the entire Christian era, which have kept on

mounting, generation after generation? Or are we talking about the "last" times of something very relevant to the immediate audience of the New Testament? The best way to understand the phrase, "last days," is to apply it to the original audience. The first century recipients of the New Testament were told that the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed, armies would besiege and conquer Jerusalem, the leadership of the Jews would be judged, and that the world (of that time) would be radically changes. All of these things happened. Moreover, this radical change brought about the end of the practice of old covenant religion requiring animal sacrifices at a central sanctuary. The apostles and writers of the New Testament lived during an overlap of the old covenant and the fully developed new covenant era. Paul could, in fact, faithfully worship at the temple via a vow which required sacrifice (Acts 21:26). But no Jewish Christian after 70 A.D. could do so. Those days came to an "end." The "last days" of the old covenant ended then. Hebrews has much to say of this, but one poignant phrase to describe that time is, "now once at the consummation (*suneleia,* completion or end) of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26).

The Transition to the New Covenant: Hebrews

The general theme of the entire book is the supremacy or superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ over old covenant forms of faith. In the first four verses we see, a) The Supremacy of the Word of the Son: though there is diversity of time and kinds of OT revelation, "at the end of these days" God has spoken "through/by a Son" and not by servants or stewards. There is a finality of revelation; the old covenant has been surpassed and superseded. b) The second and pervasive theme is, the Supremacy of the Work of the Son. In the first two chapters (alone), Jesus "made purification of sins" (1:3), upholds the cosmos (1:3), brings many sons to glory (2:10), has rendered powerless the devil (2:14); and made propitiation for the sins of the people (2:17). This is in contrast to all that has gone before, including actions of angels, Moses, priests, and sacrifices. Christ's accomplishment is the final cosmic basis for the removal of evil (2:17, 7:27, 9:12, 10:10).

Hebrews is an apologetic to the first century Jewish congregation(s) in Jerusalem/Judea who were called to depart from the city *by faith* and thereby to show fidelity to Jesus as Mediator of the new covenant. The

"thesis" statement of Hebrews draws on Psalm 110:1 and is repeated five times: "When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (1:3; 1:13, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2). That the destination of the writing is Jerusalem, dating prior to the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. is shown by following: a) Hebrews warns of imminent (about to happen) judgment (esp. ch. 10, 12:25-27) and makes clear this judgment will be temple-related (8:13, 12:27, citing Hag. 1:2, 2:3, 6-9), which was an explicit prophecy of Daniel (9:26) and Jesus (Mt. 24:1; Mk. 13:2; Lk. 19:43ff). b) The book was written at a time when the temple in Jerusalem is standing (prior to 70 A.D.), as indicated by present tense priestly actions at the tabernacle/temple (e.g., 8:5, 13:10). c) The climactic appeal of the book is for believers in Jesus to "go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach (13:13). The term "camp" (*parembole*) is a technical term used of Jerusalem and the term "tabernacle" (*skene*) is used of the temple in Jerusalem in the Dead Sea Scrolls (4QMMT). d) The writer specifically appeals, "For here we do not have a remaining (*meno*) city, but we are seeking *what is about to be*" (*mello*, about to/near in time 13:15). e) The audience was likely converts to Christ in communities with a strong priestly influence (Acts 6:7, 4:36, perhaps under Barnabas, a Levite?).

Given the *context* of the book, the *content* of the book is predictable. We would expect calls for faith in Jesus as the superior Mediator of the new covenant and His *unmediated* (via Levitical system) salvation; essentially: turn from the Levitical system instanced in the Jerusalem temple to Mt Zion, the true heavenly sanctuary and city (9:23-24, 12:22), since they had received an "oracle" to do so having been "warned from heaven" (12:25, chrēmatizonta means "to make a divine message known"). Instead of staying in the Jerusalem-temple-system, they are called not to "neglect so great a salvation" (2:3), not to "fall through following the same example of disobedience" (4:7, 11), not to be like them who "have fallen away" (6:4-6), not to "shrink back" (10:38), and finally "go out to Him outside the camp" (13:13).

The book mounts sustained arguments to get out of the old covenant system, including: a) the superiority of Christ over angels and Moses (mediatorial agents of the old covenant); b) "entering Sabbath rest" which (ch. 3-4) calls for the readers to "hasten" (*spoudazo*) to enter the rest rather than fall in the wilderness over 40 years (Num. 14:29: AD 70 is 40 years after Jesus ministry); c) the superiority of the priesthood of

Melchizedek over the Levitical priesthood; d) the superiority of the once-for-all offering and sacrifice of Christ Himself over the Levitical system; and e) subsuming all of these—the supremacy of the new covenant (Jer. 31:31ff) over what the writer calls the "old covenant," stretching over four chapters (8-12), with two citations of the new covenant prophecy of Jeremiah 31.

Some may read this short summary of Hebrews with hesitation. Even if this book (Hebrews) did not calling for Jews generally and Jerusalem Jews specifically to leave the city/temple at that time, we know that Jesus did do so. It is recorded in three Gospels.

"Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. 17 "Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. 18 "Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. 19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 "But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. 21 "For then there will be a great tribulation" (Mt. 24:15-20).

"But when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION standing where it should not be (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. 15 "The one who is on the housetop must not go down, or go in to get anything out of his house; 16 and the one who is in the field must not turn back to get his coat. 17 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 18 "But pray that it may not happen in the winter. 19 "For those days will be a time of tribulation" (Mk. 13:14-18).

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. 21 "Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; 22 because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled. 23 "Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people; 24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nation" (Lk. 21:20-24).

Jesus Reigns, Jesus Wins!

Dispensational premillennialism gets the chronology of both the tribulation and millennium dead wrong. Because of that they must place any optimistic sounding descriptions of the kingdom into the supra-extra-inning of history they call the "millennium" (of a literal 1000 years after the return of Christ). The Christian era which began with the resurrection-ascension of Jesus is viewed as Satan winning here and now. But consider these (additional) verses which describe Jesus' reign now. Do these sound remotely like Jesus is losing in the here and now?

- Romans 16:20 - The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. (Note the time reference, "soon").
- Ephesians 1:20–23 - He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
- Colossians 1:17–20 - He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. 19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.
- Colossians 2:15 - When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.
- Hebrews 10:12–13 - after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.
- 1 Peter 3:22 - who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.
- 1 Peter 5:11 - To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- Jude 1:25 - To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

- Revelation 1:5-6 - Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth . . . 6 to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- Revelation 5:13 - To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.

Consider the many passages which assert that the kingdom transforms the world.

- Genesis 12:3 - And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.
- Psalms 2:7–8 - Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.
- Psalms 22:27–28 - All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, And all the families of the nations will worship before You. 28 For the kingdom is the LORD'S And He rules over the nations.
- Psalms 110:1–2 - The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." 2 The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of Your enemies."
- Isaiah 9:7 - There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore.
- Isaiah 11:9 - They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.
- Isaiah 65:16–17 - For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind.
- Habakkuk 2:14 - For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.
- Daniel 2:35 - But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.
- Daniel 7:14 - And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.
- Daniel 7:27 - Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the

people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.

- Zechariah 8:21–23 - So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD.' 23 Thus says the LORD of hosts, In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.
- Zechariah 14:9 - And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.
- Matthew 13:31–32 - The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; 32 it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.
- Matthew 13:33 - The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.
- Revelation 11:15 - The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.

Conclusion: Jesus reigns and therefore, Jesus wins!

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Endnotes

[1] I have engaged in several debates in the format of Dispensational Premillennial vs Historic Premillennial vs Amillennial vs Postmillennial in which I was the postmillennial representative. E.g., at Cairn University in 2014: http://www.wordmp3.com/details.aspx?id=16776. My video presentation may be viewed at https://vimeo.com/93335493.

[2] For a scholarly version of this argument, see several papers on postmillennialism at www.wordmp3.com/reformationresources.

[3] Many books detail this. E.g.,, *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church (4th ed.)* by Gary Demar (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision, 1999); as well as the teachings of Kenneth Gentry, see www.KennethGentry.com.

[4] Cornelius Venema in *U-Turn* magazine, available online: http://www.wordmp3.com/an-eschatology-of-gospel-victory-biblical-postmillennialism.

[5] This article is available online: https://reformed.org/eschaton/few_saved.pdf