

Revelation 6: 1; The 4 Major Views of the Book of Revelation (Part 7),
"Pre-Millennialism, Continued", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on February 25th, 2007, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

In looking briefly at the subject of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism last week it became apparent to me, that there is such a vast amount of information from so many writers and sources that it threatens to overwhelm the one who is trying to understand. I believe that when the Bible speaks of Christ's 2nd coming it speaks of it as one event; not two events or three events, but one great event. It is to be looked forward to, by all Christians because it will mean the end of the age and the end of the world as we know it now, and how men have known it since the Fall. All men have been affected by the entrance of sin into the world, and all men are now affected by its influences upon their nature while in this life. It will be this way until Christ appears. At that time all the dead, great and small will be raised from the dead and stand before the Lord in judgment. Every eye will see Him, the great King of Kings when he comes. Sin will be removed from all of God's dear people. I want to speak to you simply and straightforwardly about the Pre-Millennial view of Christ's Second Coming and their view of the Millennium because I believe that it is the greatest weakness of their system. They believe that it is the greatest strength of their system. It is not essential to fight over these things. It is necessary that we look at the Bible and gaze at the plain truth. It is because the Bible plainly teaches only one literal physical Second Coming of Jesus Christ that I believe that the whole system of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism can be set aside and forgotten. It is a positive hindrance to evangelism and the great forward progress of the Church which we should expect in this present evil age. It is somewhat harder to set aside the claims of the Historic Pre-Millennial view because they do believe in only one literal physical Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It is their view of what Christ's Second Coming will mean, and how they conceive of the Millennium, that I believe has definite problems with it. I am not planning on trying to solve all of the problems related to this view in this one sermon. I want simply to try to overview what is believed by the Pre-Millennialists and point out to you to what I believe is the correct view, in the process. I want to do this by asking a question. What is wrong with the Pre-Millennial view of Christ's Second Coming? I want to answer this question by giving to you 2 declarations of Biblical truth. May the Lord help me to be simple and clear.

1st of all- Christ's Second Coming is one coming; not 2 or 3 Comings.

I think that the main thing that is wrong with the Pre-Millennial view is that it declares that there will be a secret second coming of Christ for believers in the Rapture, and a visible Second Coming of Christ at the end of a 7 year period of Tribulation, followed by the Personal Visible Reign of the Lord in Jerusalem for a thousand years. This view of the Dispensational Pre-Millennialists seems to do violence to the Scripture in several ways that I will mention. The Historic Pre-Millennial view is a simpler view which maintains the idea of one visible Second Coming of Christ to destroy the Antichrist and his forces, followed by a Personal Visible Reign of Christ over all the earth for a literal thousand years. The problem with these views is they do not take into consideration the doctrine of Christ's Second Coming being linked with the resurrection of the dead and the restitution of all things. It is true that there will be a Rapture of those saints who "are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord." But it is simply not true that there are 2 or 3 personal Comings of Christ, and various different resurrections. Look with me at Hebrews 9: 27 and 28 for a moment. Paul is here speaking of Christ's once for all sufficient sacrifice putting an end to all sacrifices being made for sinners and for sins. He

concludes by saying that Christ will not have to suffer again, and he adds, "Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment; so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, not to bear sin, to those who eagerly await him." It is very apparent that there is "a" coming, not 2 or 3 comings, some secret and some visible. 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 1 is just as conclusive. "Now brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering unto Him, we ask you not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as the day of Christ had come." Notice that Christ's coming as a general event to all men seems to be mentioned first, and then included in it is "our gathering unto Him." 2nd Thessalonians Chapter 1 also confirms this. The believers at Thessalonica were suffering persecution for their faith. Paul wants to give them the assurance that Christ will avenge the wrongs done to them. He says in verse 6, "since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." "These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes in that Day to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed." This is the Second Coming of Christ. It is one coming. I could list many other references to further establish this truth. But the truth is that He will come on a certain day that all believers look forward to, which is only known unto the Father.

We can also go on to say now, that it is not true that there are two separate literal resurrections separated by a literal thousand years. If you will turn over with me to Acts Chapter 3, we can begin to sort out this tangled mess. Here in Acts Chapter 3 Peter is preaching to his own people, the Jews, in the Portico of Solomon. He tells us in verse 18, "But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled." "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all the prophets since the world began." Now here, I believe we see a good representation of the doctrine of Christ's coming. We find how it is that Christ comes spiritually, and we find how Christ comes personally and visibly. Jesus came the first time, in His Incarnation. He suffered so that our sins could be blotted out. In His sufferings came the fulfillment of what God foretold through the prophets. When we are believing the gospel concerning Jesus Christ, we repent of our sins, we are converted; our sins are blotted out, and times of refreshing come to us from the presence of the Lord. Peter speaks to us Gentiles today through these same words of gospel truth. But in the context of these verses, Peter was speaking to the Jewish people and so he is telling them to repent, not only individually, but as a nation of people who had rejected their Messiah. If they would do this, Christ's presence and blessing would come to them. God would "send Jesus Christ who was preached to them before." There would be a spiritual coming to them. They would be saved, they would be revived, they would be refreshed. Peter and the others with him were persecuted for saying this. They just kept on preaching Jesus. But it is verse 21 that we should take special notice of. Jesus Christ would be sent to them in a spiritual way of His coming if they believed the gospel and were converted. And then Peter explains, "whom heaven must receive until the times of the restoration, or restitution, of all things." He must stay in heaven, Peter says, until this time.

The question now becomes, "When are the times of restitution of all things?" Because that is when Christ will return in His Second Coming. It does not say, "The restoration or restitution of

some things like, when the "the kingdom would be restored to Israel" after "the times of the Gentiles" being fulfilled, for that is not the restoration of all things. Christ's disciples who asked him of this in Acts 1: 6, did not understand God's purpose, that the Jews and Gentiles would be brought together as one entity in the Church. This was a mystery which was revealed later to the Apostle Peter in Acts 10, and by the Apostle Paul in his letters. Even when the Jews shall be converted as a nation, generally, in a time to come, they shall be brought into the Church. Rather, the restoration of all things refers to the time of the resurrection of the all the dead, all of which will take place at, and after, Christ's Second Coming. Indeed it will be His Second Coming that will be the beginning of that great restitution of all things. Further, Acts 3: 21 does not say "the time" but "the times of restitution." Literally the word means "times" or the period of restitution. Christ's Coming is but one event. But it is the start to a number of great events. There are to be a number of major events that will take place in these "times of restitution." If you turn over to 1 Thessalonians Chapter 4, we can begin to see what will happen. In verse 15 Paul says, "For this we say to you by the world of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep." "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God." "And the dead in Christ will rise first." "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." "And thus we shall always be with the Lord." The first event is the resurrection of all the believing dead; both Old Testament and New, to that point. Then will come the translation of the living saints who are those who remain alive until the Lord comes and descends in the air. These will be "caught up" or Raptured when the Lord returns. Then must come the resurrection of all the unbelieving dead as well, for then will come the Judgment of the World, in which Christ's saints will judge the world with Him. Listen to Jesus' words on this in John 5: 28 and following. "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." Notice that Jesus says, "The hour is coming" for both these resurrections. It is not two resurrections separated by a thousand years. It is an hour for both resurrections. The resurrections in each case have vastly different outcomes, but they come in the relatively same place of time; in the same "hour". The translation and resurrection of the saints will take place in a moment of time, as it says in 1 Corinthians 15: 52. The resurrection of the wicked dead may not take long either. The Judgment related to both may take some time. But these are the leading events in the times of restoration. But however long these events take, afterward shall come the redemption of the creation spoken of in Romans 8; a literal New Heavens and New Earth.

You can see this, if you will turn over to 1st Peter 3: 10 and following. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with a fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." "Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of person ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?" "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." You will notice that "the day of the Lord", the day that Christ returns, will come as a thief in the night. This will be a day of judgment to the wicked and a day of deliverance for the righteous. In Chapter 5 of 1 Thessalonians, the verses just following Paul's description of the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus, he says this. "But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you." "For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night." "For when

they say 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman." "And they shall not escape." "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief." Notice, once again, Christ's one and only coming is connected with the Day of Judgment, "this Day" it is called. So my conclusion is; why should we look for a secret rapture and then another Coming of Christ after a seven year Tribulation? I do not believe that Biblically we have grounds to do so.

In Closing, let me make one other declaration of Biblical truth. The truth of Christ's imminent return does not mean that it could not be a long time until His Second Coming.

This is another of the Pre-Millennial view's supposed strongholds. They reason this way. Since we do not know the hour and the day of Christ's Coming, that means that He could appear at any moment. So, they reason, the next event on the prophetic calendar is the Rapture of the Church. The Millennium cannot come before Christ's Second Coming because this destroys the truth of the imminency of that return. This seems to be an unassailable proof that Christ must come before the Millennium. But it is not so. I have already shown you that the passages which speak of the Day of the Lord refer to Christ's Second Coming and the Judgment that is to follow. They come together and at the same time. The truth of the imminency of Christ's return applies to all generations. In every generation we are to "watch". Listen to Mark 13, verses 32-37. "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the son, but only the Father." "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is." "It is like a man going to a far country who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch." "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning--lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping." "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" The Lord has not come in His Second Coming for almost 2000 years now. But, does that mean that each and every generation should not have watched or prayed? No, certainly not. There have been many things that God thought needed to be done and accomplished for Christ's kingdom until now. And I would say to you that there still are many things to be done and to be accomplished for Christ's kingdom by both God and man before Christ comes. Let us not forget that when Christ comes, we shall all be there, because it will be the day of the resurrection of all the dead. This is why it is incumbent upon all of us that we "watch and pray now, and every day of our lives. We must have the grace of readiness. We do not want to be like the foolish virgins who were caught sleeping when he comes. This is why the way that we live now affects the kind of resurrection that we will have. The question is not; will we be physically awake when Christ returns. The question is; will we have lived in such a way to show that we were and are spiritually awake and ready for His coming. 1 Thessalonians 5: 4 says it all. "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief." "You are all sons of light and sons of the day." "We are not of the night or of darkness." "Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober." For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night." "But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation." "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." You see, this is why we watch, and this is why we believe in the imminent return of Jesus Christ. Not that it might not be a long time yet coming, but because it will honor and glorify Christ, and show Him at his coming for us in life or in death, that we have spiritual life and discernment. We will speak of the Pre-Millennial and the Post-Millennial views of the Millennium next week.

