

OpenTheo

Revelation 20:4 And The History of Millennial Thinking



When Shall These Things Be? - Steve Gregg

In this discussion, Steve Gregg delves into the history of millennial thinking and the translation biases of different versions of Revelation 20:4. He explains that the word "chiliasm" is often used interchangeably with "premillennialism" and that early church fathers such as Polycarp and Justin Martyr held premillennial views, with some exceptions. Gregg also touches on the dominance of dispensationalism in modern evangelicalism and the lack of New Testament teaching on a seven-year tribulation. Ultimately, he encourages listeners to consider alternative interpretations of eschatology.

Transcript

I'd like you to turn to the handout in the packet I gave you, which has as its title simply Revelation 20.4, that is, Revelation chapter 20, verse 4. There is a handout. It should be probably the next one after the last one we looked at in our last session. In our last session, we were talking about the millennium in Revelation chapter 20.

Now I want to look at a particular verse in Revelation chapter 20, because it is a verse upon which the translation of a single word may tip the scales toward a premillennial view of the millennium. There are very few verses where the translation of a single word has so much hanging on it, and yet this is the case. In Revelation 20, we read of the binding of Satan for a thousand years.

We read of the saints enthroned and reigning with Christ for that thousand years. We're told that he saw thrones. Let's just look at that, that verse 4. I saw thrones and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them.

And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. Now, that statement, they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years, is not translated quite that way in all translations.

In many translations, perhaps most modern translations, it says something like, they

came to life and lived with Christ for a thousand years. If you have the King James Version or the New King James Version before you, it will say what the version says that I just read. They lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

But if you have almost any other version of the Bible, it may say and probably will say something like, they came to life, or they came to life again, or they lived again, or something like that, suggesting a returning to life, or coming to life after they've died. Now, it's not so simple as just to choose your favorite translation and go with that. But there is very much at stake in this translation of this word lived.

The King James and the New King James translate the word lived. All other versions I'm aware of translates it something like, came to life, or lived again, or came to life again. And I've given you, for example, what is it, about eight or nine of the leading translations, looks like eight, or no, nine of the leading translations in this little chart on the page that says Revelation 20 and verse 4 at the top.

If you look in the final column, it's a four-column chart. The first column shows what translations are being consulted. The fourth column tells how they translate this particular word in Revelation 20 and verse 4. We'll talk about the middle two columns of that chart in a moment.

But you can see that the King James and the New King James translate it lived. The New American Standard translates it came to life. The NIV also came to life.

The Amplified Bible translates it lived again. The Good News Bible translates it came to life. The Jerusalem Bible came to life.

Revised Standard and Revised English version both translate it came to life again. So, it sounds like if we're simply to vote, take a vote of the major translations, that the translation would be that they came to life again. However, that doesn't necessarily mean that the majority of translations are correct.

This has got to be considered on a little more deeper level than just the biases of translators. This is a very good test case, this verse, to tell you what the theological bias of the translators of your Bible are. Most modern translations are translated by pre-millennialists and they typically translate this they came to life.

The King James and the New King James simply follows the King James in this, was translated by all millennialists. The King James translators were all millennialists. They were not dispensational pre-millennialists and therefore they translated it lived.

Now you might say, what's the big deal here? Well, this particular Greek verse is telling us about the people reigning with Christ during the thousand years. The question is, are they living on in heaven after they have died or are they living again after they died? That is, have they been resurrected? If it says they came to life and reigned with Christ,

it suggests they were resurrected from the dead. They died and came to life again.

This would suggest very strongly their resurrection from the dead. If so, this would support a pre-millennial idea because on pre-millennial assumptions, the saints are raised from the dead at the beginning of the millennium and therefore the reign of the saints during the millennium is a reign of resurrected saints on earth with Christ after his second coming. I hope you're wide awake because these things may be clearer to me than they are to you and I hope that you can follow.

I'm trying to make them crystal clear. If this says they came to life or they lived again, suggesting that they died but now they've come back to life again, it suggests a strong possibility that it's talking about their physical resurrection and they've been raised from the dead at the second coming of Christ and now they're reigning after the second coming of Christ on earth with him in the millennium. That supports a pre-millennial framework for the chapter.

Now the amillennialists who translated the King James Version and may, I don't know what the commitments were of those who translated the new King James Version but they largely followed the King James in their wording, they believed that these saints did not rise from the dead as it were in the sense of their physical resurrection in order to participate in this millennial reign but rather John just sees people who have died on earth and he sees them in heaven, they're still living. Their bodies have died but as Christian doctrine teaches when your body dies you don't die. Jesus said that a Christian will never die, we just go on living somewhere else.

We leave the body and we are absent from body and present with the Lord. So all Christians who have died, the Apostles and all those who died before us are now living still. Not here, their bodies would be composed in their graves but they are still alive and if you could be caught up in heaven you could see them there as John did.

Now if he says of these people they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years it doesn't mean, if lived is the right translation, it just means that although they had been beheaded on earth they're still living, they lived on. He saw them in heaven, he was caught up to the sphere where they have gone to and he says oh they're alive, they're living. As I saw them there they lived even though they had died.

This would not suggest that the resurrection has already occurred, it would suggest that since they died they still they've gone to heaven and this it would actually be before the resurrection, it would have to be because after the resurrection you're not going to see disembodied spirits living on in heaven. When Jesus comes back he brings them with him it says in 1st Thessalonians and the dead are raised and the spirits of the saints are joined with a resurrected body and John would not see disembodied spirits of Christians living on in heaven if the resurrection had already occurred and that happens at the second coming of Christ. I hope you I hope you're good at thinking logically this early in

the morning.

Hope you've had your coffee because if you are not well acquainted with eschatological frameworks this may all be foreign language to you. If you've had an interest in eschatology and studied it before these things might fall immediately into the right slots in your thinking and you may understand it well. I'm not going to assume that you know more than you probably do.

Here's the deal remember the whole question of the interpretation of Revelation 20 is does the second coming of Christ come before or at the end of this chapter? Is this chapter describing things that will happen after Jesus comes back and therefore the coming of Christ is before Revelation 20 or is it describing things that happen before Jesus comes back and therefore his coming is at the end? In our last session I thought to show you that the coming of the Lord is most likely described in the closing verses of the chapter and that the binding of Satan at the beginning of the chapter probably refers as do many places in the scripture to the binding of Satan when Jesus was here the first time. It's figurative, it's flamboyant images, it's luxurious imagery but it's nonetheless imagery and symbolic and it represents the age of the church now. Now this is the our millennial view but the question is easily decided if we could decide whether these saints are in their resurrected bodies did they come to life again as many modern translations say are they in their resurrected bodies now? If so then they are likely on earth and of course it means that the coming of Christ has already occurred because that's how they got in their resurrection bodies Jesus came back and resurrected them.

If however they are not in their resurrected bodies if they did not live again but they're just still living they're living on as it were they died on earth but they're living on elsewhere in heaven then we're talking about the saints who have died prior to the resurrection and the second coming of Christ has not yet occurred during the thousand years. You see how that would decide everything if we could if we could decide the meaning of this one word if they lived again then we've got to be pre-millennial. If they're just living on in heaven without saying they came to life again having been dead now raised up then we we move in the direction of all millennialism.

Well which is correct as I said if we simply took a vote among the modern translations we'd have to go with the pre-millennial view because almost all of them translated came to life or lived again or something like that but truth is not determined by a majority vote especially when the vast majority of modern translators are pre-millennial. The question is is there a deciding factor in the Greek or in the context or anything about this and here's what I want to examine and this page I've given you gives you very adequate evidence of what the how the problem is to be considered. First of all the word that is either translated lived or came to life.

These are just different English translations of the Greek word in the text. The Greek

word there is Edsaison. Edsaison or Edsaison.

It's the it's a form of the Greek word zao which means to live. Someone asked me the other day what Zoe means. Zoe is a Greek noun for life.

Zao is the verb cognate of that which means to live. Zao. Now Edsaison is that verb in a in a particular tense and form.

It is the aorist indicative active of zao. Now you might say well I'm already lost I might as well check out and think about what I'm going to do this afternoon because I don't know anything about aorist tenses and Greek grammar is way over my head. Okay well I'm gonna bring it down to earth because it's way over my head too.

And I did all this study myself. I prepared this chart from and and as a person who doesn't know Greek I had to go to more work than I would otherwise have to in order to prepare this information. But I'm saving you a lot of trouble if this matter interests you.

If it doesn't interest you much I think it should interest you at least a little. So please at least attend a little while to it. Edsaison or Zason.

No it's Edsaison is the aorist indicative active of zao. Now you might say well I don't know what aorist means I don't know what indicative means I don't know what active means. I say okay fair enough let me just say this.

The verb in that same tense in that same form appears two other times in Revelation. And while you might not know enough about aorist indicative active to you know to put in your eye you know I mean there's you can say well here's a couple other cases where the same verb in the same form appears two other times in Revelation. Those two times are Revelation 2 8 and Revelation 3 excuse me 13 14.

I'd like to read those in context for you. I'm reading the New King James and so it will read a little differently than some versions do because as as in the case of Revelation 20 in verse 4 this word is translated variously in different translations in these other two occurrences as well. But Edsaison is found in Revelation 2 8 where Jesus said or it says unto the angel of the church in Smyrna right these things says the first and the last who was dead and came to life.

The expression came to life is Edsaison and it's talking about Jesus. He died and he rose again. This would seem to support the use of the term Edsaison as came to life because well I guess we could say it's not impossible that it could just be translated live here.

I mean Jesus could describe himself as one who was dead and lived afterwards. It would of course be it would allude to the fact that he had risen from the dead but what it would be saying essentially that even though he had died he has since come he is alive he lived after that. But it's most natural to translate it as came to life in Revelation 2 8. If we

apply that over to Revelation 20 in verse 4 then we'd be we'd lean toward the pre-millennial view of Revelation 20.

But this isn't the only data we have to work with. Look over at Revelation chapter 13 the only other place where this word appears in this form. Revelation 13 and verse 14.

Speaking of the beast who is said to have seven heads and ten horns it says he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which was this is the second beast deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast that is the first beast telling those who dwell on earth to make an image of the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. Now the word lived there again is Edsaison the same word in the same Greek tense as we find in Revelation 20 in verse 4. Now here it's talking about the beast. The beast we were told earlier had been wounded in verse 3 it says I saw one of his heads as it had been mortally wounded and his deadly wound was healed and the world marveled and followed the beast.

Now here we have an image of an animal. We know the animal stands for something other than an animal but in the imagery of the passage the discussion treats it as an animal all the way through in order to keep the to not break character to keep the image consistent. So we've got an animal here with seven heads it's received a deadly wound in one of its head but it healed and in verse 14 it says of that fact this beast was wounded by the sword and Edsaison lived or came or lived again.

Which would it be in the case like this would it be lived merely as it's translated here or would it be better translated lived again or came to life again. Well in this case the beast never died. One of his heads received a deadly wound but he had six more heads that weren't wounded.

The beast was never killed. The beast was only wounded one of its heads had received a mortal wound but the other six heads were still intact and the beast never died. It just lived on it received a deadly wound but continued living.

Therefore it would be most reasonable to suggest that in Revelation 13 14 the best translation of Edsaison is exactly as we have it here in the New King James. He was wounded and yet lived. That is he lived on despite the wound.

Now this isn't very helpful at all because we're trying to decide in the only remaining occurrence of the use of this word here in Revelation 24 does it mean lived or does it mean lived again. Well we look at the other two occurrences in one case it's about Christ it certainly means he lived again. In the case about the beast it certainly does not mean he lived again but rather he just lived on.

Now this tells us of course that this particular Greek word in this particular form can depending on context it can be translated lived on as in the case as it certainly should it

seems in Revelation 13 14 or it can be translated lived again as it seems like it should be in Revelation 2 8. These comparisons only tell us about the flexibility of the word. They don't tell us how it should be translated in Revelation 20. They only show us that it can mean either one depending on context and so we you know it just because most translators say well lived again in Revelation 20 in verse 4 doesn't mean that that's what the word necessarily has to mean to translate it lived or lived again simply reflects the translators disposition because the translator is either all millennial or pre-millennial and you have to decide whether this word is translated lived or lived again based on context.

Well the context of Revelation 20 verse 4 is what? Revelation 20 and therefore the translators interpretation of Revelation 20 that is of the Millennium is going to determine his preferences in translating this particular word in this particular place. So regardless how many translators translate it one way or another they you know you can line them up and count the numbers but it doesn't tell you anything except that the translators whether you're all millennial or pre-millennial it doesn't really tell us which word has better Greek attestation both are equally possible. If you'll notice I have listed the uses of the word in all three of its occurrences in Revelation in the chart here for all the versions in Revelation 2 8 in the King James they translated Christ died but is alive in Revelation 13 14 did live and in Revelation 20 verse 4 live there's not a total consistency there but but the idea is they don't translate it came to life or lived again in any of the three places.

In contrast the New American Standard Bible translates it in 2 8 as has come to life in Revelation 13 14 as has come to life and in Revelation 20 verse 4 as came to life. In other words the New American Standard translates it consistently with the idea of resurrection whereas the King James translates it consistently with the idea of not resurrection but living on or just living simply living. Apart from those two translations apart from the King James and the New American Standard no other version translates it consistently in all passages.

The NIV takes came to life again in the first passage then yet live which means simply lived on in the case of Revelation 13 14 and then they get back to lived again or came to life in Revelation 20 verse 4 reflecting their pre-millennial commitments but but notice that they recognize that the beast didn't live again or come to life again the the beast who is wounded still live or yet live. So you really cannot find any consistency in the translations of the nine translations I surveyed which are principal ones in use today no translation took a consistent approach to the translation of this verb in this tense in all three cases except the King James and the New American Standard and they were consistently different from each other. The King James was consistently simply lived in all cases and the New American Standard was consistently came to life again in all cases.

Now I only say this to show that if someone wants to match up Greek authority against

Greek authority we can go either way on this so there's just no way that we can say strictly on the basis of the Greek meaning of the word it means lived or it means came to life. People have their favorite translations but we need to be careful that we don't simply let our favorite translation make the decision for us we have to let theological considerations biblical considerations in general contextual considerations make the decision for us. A.T. Robertson who is most people consider one of the greatest modern Greek scholars and has written a great deal is often quoted as an authority by almost anybody wanting to establish the authority of their position from a Greek consideration in his word pictures of the New Testament talking about Revelation 20 in verse 4 the expression and they lived or they came to life again he says there's a possibility that this is an ingressive heiress or a constantive heiress well if you are already confused when we just use the word heiress you're probably really getting in deep doo-doo when we talk about ingressive heiress or constantive heiress these words mean I must confess nothing to me either except that A.T. Robertson I mean I'm not a Greek scholar but A.T. Robertson says this if this is intended as an ingressive heiress then it means came to life or lived again as in chapter 2 of Revelation verse 8 you know it's Jesus died and came to life or lived again but he says if it's the constantive heiress here that is Revelation 20 in verse 4 and in verse 5 then it could mean increased spiritual life or simply ongoing spiritual life in other words it would not necessarily mean living again or coming back to life so we don't know whether this verb in this form which could be either way it could be intended as an ingressive heiress or as a constantive heiress if it's if John intended it as ingressive that means it should be translated came to life if he intended it as a constantive which is equally possible it could be translated as live and so both are possible translations you know A.T. Robertson points out something interesting though that the very phrase this word appears in in Revelation 20 in verse 4 they lived and reigned or with Christ the word reigned there which is linked with lived is the heiress active indicative active of bas-religio which and that is the it's the word is the bas-religion and that is the word terrain but it's the same verb tense as the form of za'o that is in live here so you know it's both verbs are the same tense now we could say is it better to think of it as they came to life and began to reign for a thousand years or they lived and reigned for a thousand years well either is possible though A.T. Robertson said that in the case of bas-religio and its form here he thought it was more clearly constantive he felt A.T. Robertson feels that it's more likely to say they reigned for a thousand years than they began to reign for a thousand years because they didn't begin to reign for a thousand years they began to reign and their reign in lasted for a thousand years but beginning to reign is in a moment of time and it wouldn't be as sensible to say they began to reign for a thousand years but rather they reigned and if that is correct and if the verb previous to it linked only by the word Chi a and is intended to say we then lived and reigned would be a more consistent way you'd take both verbs in the constantive and therefore you'd take it in the more all-millennial sense now there's no essential reason that one has to take it this way but Robertson and frankly I also of course I lean toward all-millennials in these days so I can't claim to be unprejudiced but

seems likely that this would favor the King James reading and the New Conjugating they live and reign and any other reading simply reflects what the other translators think about the Millennium now so you see a great deal hangs on the translation of this one verb and yet both translations are possible we have to decide the meaning or what how the translation of that verb should be based on what other considerations context the general theological implications of it the question must be decided on other grounds whether the thousand-year reign is talking about something that happens after the resurrection of the Saints or whether the thousand years occurs before the resurrection of the Saints that as I showed yesterday can be decided on internal evidence it can be decided by comparing scripture with scripture throughout the New Testament that the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of Saints comes at the end of the chapter whereas the pre-millennialist believes that there is there is evidence for coming at the beginning of the chapter well whichever of these is true will be the deciding factor as to whether this verb is translated came to life or simply live and I say this if you if you have the New King James you I say listen there was no I didn't have any problems in the first place you know I live to reign okay I didn't even raise the question but the point is a lot of people will look at this will listen to these takes we'll have reusing a different translation of the Bible and they'll say wait Steve you've just said that these Saints in Revelation 24 are reigning in heaven however this says they came to light and reigned it doesn't that mean the resurrection well it does if that's the right translation but what I'm trying to point out to all concerned is that that may not be the right translation we cannot decide the millennial issue on the basis of the way one prefers to translate this one word rather the translation of the word must be determined on the basis of the millennial issue that's the point I'm trying to make now it is true that in verse five and six it refers to this as the first resurrection and therefore you know if we take resurrection always mean a physical resurrection that would favor the idea of they came to life this is the first resurrection they were resurrected but if as all Millennials believe the first resurrection refers either to the fact that they are born again which is a spiritual resurrection or even as some on Millennials think that they're being they're going to heaven at death is the first resurrection spiritual thing followed by a physical resurrection later when Jesus comes back then the reference the first resurrection does not militate in favor of that particular translation came to life so it's really kind of a toss-up based upon other considerations yet I have to deal with it as I have because so many people would rest their case on a particular translation of that word in their Bible let's turn the next page you know I want to talk to you about the history of eschatological views in throughout the age of the church I've tried to acquaint you with what it means when we say pre-millennialism what we mean by our millennialism what is meant by post-millennialism and what is meant by dispensationalism these terms came up in our first session our introductory session and were defined there I should point out that the word millennialism as you know comes from the Latin form of thousand years the Greek term for a thousand years gave rise to the word Chile asm and therefore people who are who believe in a future millennium principally pre-millennialist used to be called Chile

asks people who believed in the Chile asm which was the Greek word for the thousand years so we've got the Latin form is millennium or millennialism the Greek form of the same word to be Chile asm and in older church history when people were talking about pre-millennialism even even sometimes still today it was referred to as Chile asm so if you encounter that word we will know that Chile asm is just another word for pre-millennialism now what did the church think throughout history well we know a little bit but we don't know everything because not every Christian who lived has left a record of what they believed on this subject there are however some very important church fathers from the first and second century principally the second century who in their surviving writings did mention and explain what they believed about the Millennium and as it turns out they were pre-millennial the church fathers I have in mind are Papias who lived from 60 AD to 130 AD Polycarp who lived from 70 AD to 155 AD of course both these men their lives began in the first century but by the time they were adults the second century was already there or upon them so they're largely second century witnesses because in their adult life in their writing careers and leadership careers they were basically second century Justin Martyr is another of these he lived from 100 AD to 165 AD and Irenaeus who lived from 130 AD to 202 AD these early fathers some of the most important church fathers whose writings have survived from the essentially from the second century from the 100s AD were all pre-millennial they believed that Revelation 20 was talking about a future Millennium that would occur after Jesus comes back this has been for many people the strongest argument in favor of being pre-millennial I gave you my reasons for being all millennial in our lectures in our last lecture previous system but I once was talking to a friend a Bible teacher who heads up a Bible college and he he and I were talking about this he was pre-millennial his wife was on millennial and she was also a teacher in the Bible college that he headed up and his mentor was on millennial but he was pre-millennial but because he was so close to certain on millennial as he had come to hear and appreciate the arguments for all millennialism and I he and I were discussing these arguments he says you know Steve he says I would be fully convinced of all millennialism in a heartbeat if not for one thing that just prevents me from being on millennial he says that's the United testimony of the Church Father he said all the church fathers in the second century were pre-millennial and he says whatever we may say about the exegetical biblical arguments for all millennialism as strong as they are he said it seems that if they were true these early church fathers would have believed that but they all believe in pre-millennialism now that man has since become an all-millennialist himself but that was his objection to all millennialism at the time when I first met him and I don't think I convinced him of all millennials and more likely his wife did but anyway he he stated what many people must certainly think if the early church fathers were pre-millennial then that must count for something especially someone like Polycarp who is reputed to have been a disciple of John himself John wrote the book of Revelation and Polycarp was his disciple and Polycarp's writings are pre-millennial likewise Irenaeus another of these men he was alleged to be a disciple of Polycarp who was John's disciple so these men form a very

close link to the actual writer of the book of Revelation and these men were pre-millennial that is this not a consideration worthy of some weight it is it is a consideration worthy of some weight though that does not define and decide the issue as far as I'm concerned there are other things to consider which we will look at suffice it to say that the witness of most of the church fathers that of all the church fathers who wrote on the subject from the second century appears to have been essentially pre-millennial in the third century that is the 200s AD we begin to find church fathers defending the all millennial view one of the earliest of these that we know of was origin many people like to reject origins testimony because a he was an allegorizer his approach to the scripture was was a different approach than most of us would approve of in many cases he not only spiritualized he allegorized I mean he he felt there were two meanings to every passage the literal meaning and an allegorical meaning and the allegorical meaning was really far-fetched in many cases and totally subjective and many scholars just reject origins input because he you know he was an allegorizing especially pre-millennial theologians do because origin was also one of the earliest witnesses for the all millennial position he lived from 185 actually you know born near the close of the second century on into the third century he died in 254 AD another early all millennial witnesses Eusebius who wrote the earliest known church history apart from Luke's version Eusebius lived from 260 AD to 340 AD he's mostly known as the father of church history though he was also a leader in the church Augustan or st.

Augustine disease is it sometimes pronounced around the year 400 was considered and is considered by historians believe one of the most influential Christian theologians in history perhaps the most influential influencing men like Calvin and Luther and not only reformers but Catholics were strongly influenced by Augustine Augustine in fact was a we could call him a Roman Catholic he believed in submission of the Pope's and all that kind of stuff but much of his theology was followed by Luther and Calvin and is still he's still regarded by both Catholics and Protestants as essentially one of the most important theologians in church history I myself disagree with Augustine on many things it so happens though he was an all-millennialist and his influence in the church tended to convince the whole church of all millennialism until Augustine's time there were pre-millennialists and all-millennialists side-by-side in church disagreeing with one another but the writings of Augustine or Augustine actually did away with pre-millennialism for the time being Augustine was so convincing and so influential that he had basically eradicated pre-millennialism from the church and established all-millennialism as the norm of all Christian Orthodoxy and his writings were around the year 400 now sometimes pre-millennialists who are trying to explain away the strengths of all-millennialism they'll say well that was just Augustine's doctrine Augustine he just brought that in and he convinced the church he's a Roman Catholic and we can't trust what he said blah blah blah well actually Augustine didn't originate the all-millennial viewpoint his influence was around the year 400 AD but back around the year 200 AD we have origin and and we have Eusebius also in the 200s and early 300s you know two

generations before Augustine they were all-millennial in fact Eusebius the church historian referred to pre-millennialism as an early heresy he considered pre-millennialism to be an early heresy among some of the early church fathers now of course that was his own prejudice he was an all-millennialist and he considered pre-millennialism a heresy but I'm saying that very early in church history we have both views present and by the time of Augustine one view wins out the debate all-millennialism becomes official and virtually the entire church and all theologians afterwards with maybe very few exceptions after Augustine were all-millennial for many centuries at least up into the 1700s and then in the 1700s another view emerged it's very much like all-millennialism but since a modification of it that's post-millennialism the actual origins of post-millennialism are not a hundred percent agreed upon but most modern historians believe that Daniel Whitby in the 1700s was the theologian who originated what would be called today post-millennialism this view as we know is that it's like all-millennialism it is the view that the church is the modern Israel that there's not you know a future for ethnic Israel the all-millennialist and the post-millennialists have believed that the church is modern although there is a difference post-millennialists do believe there is a spiritual future for the conversion of the national Israel in the future that agrees with pre-millennialism that in the future national Israel will experience conversion but the post-millennialists never had the view that national Israel must go back to their land and establish a Jewish state set up the temple again and all that stuff in that respect post-millennialism resembled all-millennialism it was simply much more optimistic about the future and the end time because all millennialism held that although you know the church reigns with Christ as it were through the whole church age yet in the end Satan will be loosed and there'll be a bad time at the end so the ultimate final picture for the all-millennialist was negative whereas the post-millennialist believes that the loosing of Satan for a little while is only going to be for maybe for a few minutes or hours or days at the most and the attempt will be absolutely abortive that there will be no significant withdrawing of the progress of the church and that the church's final hours and final days will be glorious not a defeated church as the all-millennialists tend to think and therefore you've got these two views have much in common but the the glorious future of the church represented by post-millennialism became the Protestant perspective in the 1700s and the 1800s to a great extent and even into the into the 1900s into the present century there are some post-millennialists even today of course they are not in the majority by any means but there are significant number of post-millennials today but no one would say that is the dominant view today not even close but it was the dominant view in Europe and America in the 18th and 19th centuries and early in this century too in some quarters representatives of this viewpoint would not only be Daniel Whitby who is credited with its founding but Jonathan Edwards famous leader of the Great Awakening in New England and the one who preached sinners in the hands of an angry God and had tremendous signs of power and anointing from the Holy Spirit and success in preaching the gospel and spearheading a Great Awakening in America some generations ago and he was very strongly post-millennial some of the names I could give you a post-

millennialist would be impressive to those who know theology but would not be known to average Christian B.B. Warfield Benjamin B. Warfield would be an example well-respected evangelical scholar at the turn of this century but many people he's definitely not a household word and many other important Protestant scholars were post-millennial right up into the beginning of this century and there are still as I say good scholars today who are post-millennial but in the 1830s arose dispensationalism and it began to compete with post-millennialism and with all millennialism which were both still around and it began to gain ground this pence including the New Testament writers we don't find any New Testament writer teaching there's a seven-year tribulation either but Darby rediscovered this truth from somewhere and then he suggested that the rapture of the church is not going to happen at the same time as the second coming of Christ which Christians always believed it would he said no the rapture the church is going to happen seven years before the second coming of Christ it's going to happen before the seven-year tribulation and so he introduced this notion so Darby is to be credited with quite a few important notions in eschatology that are now very dominant one is that Israel has yet a future as a nation with God that there are promises to national Israel that have never been fulfilled and are not subsumed in the church and therefore will be fulfilled in a future millennial kingdom with a rebuilt temple and animal sacrifices and all that stuff and there's a seven year tribulation and there's a rapture of the church before that tribulation and of course as we pointed out earlier Darby claimed that he got this by the consistent application of a literal hermeneutic this is what modern dispensations also claim for themselves though in an earlier lecture I tried to show that the claim to make is not entirely accurate all right now this gives you some idea of the drift of eschatological thought over the past 2,000 years many early church fathers were pre-millennial then by the time the third century dawn that is the year 200 and following many church fathers were becoming all millennial but just but pre-millennialism remained around by the year 400 or so pre-millennialism pretty much disappeared so at least faded out and all millennialism became the dominant Orthodox view of the church from about 400 AD to about 1700 AD about 1,300 years the majority of the church age Christians have been all millennial post-millennialism which as I point out is not very much different than all millennialism only in a few points is it was dominant very largely among Protestants in the 1700s 1800s and early in the 1900s and it had some notable people in in its in its camp and then of course in the 1830s arose Darbyism now Darbyism or dispensationalism has very clearly become the dominant or at least the most visible viewpoint in modern American Christianity evangelicalism I I'm not prepared to say that the majority of evangelicals are dispensational because I don't know what the majority of dispensate of evangelicals are you see the majority of evangelicals don't write books about prophecy the majority of them just go to church and mind their own business and don't impose their views on anyone else and we don't know what they believe I can say that there are massive movements of evangelicals who are all millennial for example virtually all Presbyterians are all millennial most Episcopalians are all millennial Catholics or tend to be all millennial these may not be the groups that we most want to identify

ourselves with but the point is many of these people perhaps of Catholics not necessarily included in this statement but many of these people are evangelical believers and good Bible scholars John RW Stott J.I. Packer these men are not men of low credit and low rank in the evangelical world these are men of high rank and they are Anglicans they are they are they are all millennial and so is R.C. Sproul and some other people whose names Presbyterian guys there's a lot of evangelical guys out there who are all millennial today and and it may be that the quiet masses of evangelicals out there are very largely all millennial however the vocal evangelicals who vocalize their eschatology great deal tend to be dispensationalist more than anything else so you certainly would get the impression and I don't know how we could you know take a poll and find out the answer to this but I don't even care to tell you the truth but I'm simply saying that one would get the impression from reading all the popular books on prophecy and all the radio programs about prophecy that dispensationalism is the evangelical norm because you hardly will hear a man on the radio who is not dispensational anymore it seems J. Vernon McGee one of the most popular radio personalities is dispensational John MacArthur very popular radio teacher dispensational Chuck Swindoll dispensational I'm trying to think who else is out there there's a lot of people there's a whole lot of people out there you know the people I'll tell you what happens here Darby's views became popular even in his day but they became even more popular in the early 1900s when a man named CI Schofield decided to he was convinced of Darby's views and decided to merge Darby's views with the Bible itself and came up with what has been called the Schofield reference Bible and he I believe was the first many people have done it since most of them dispensationalist but he I think was the first if I'm not mistaken to merge his own notes and commentary with the Bible text itself in this within the pages of the Bible I mean there were Bible commentaries before but I don't believe anyone had ever yet put out a study Bible that had the actual explanation of the text in notes below the text on the page and anyone here who's had a study Bible knows what I'm talking about you've got the text of the Bible and you've got you know under a line below the text you've got someone's notes on the passages in that in on that page that was essentially what the Schofield reference Bible did and many people who found the Bible difficult really liked the Schofield reference Bible because whenever they read a difficult passage they could look at the bottom and read his notes and he'd tell him what it meant or what he said it meant in fact many people have become so enamored with the Schofield reference Bible that there have been people who simply cannot believe any interpretation that contradict Schofield Schofield's Bible I forget the numbers I believe it sold three million copies within the first 50 years that it was in in print and it may still be I know for for years and years decades long it was the best-selling study Bible others have come out since then the Ryrie study Bible you can be sure that's a dispensational one too and actually most of the study Bibles are and the reason for that is because you won't become a dispensationalist just from reading the text of the Bible you need the dispensational notes at the bottom to tell you that it means that this is really true on millennia people have often asked me Steve why don't you put out the Steve Griggs

study Bible and bring out all these on millennium point saying why bother just let people read the Bible without the dispensational notes at the bottom that's because the the on millennial simply takes in my opinion the Bible for what it says and doesn't try to shoehorn anything in there that doesn't belong there it just lets the New Testament interpret the Old Testament lets the Apostles with their inspired understanding explain what is meant by Old Testament passages just take it what it says don't add anything you'll never get a pre-trib rapture out of just reading the Bible you need the dispensational notes for that you'll never get a thousand year reign of Christ in any Old Testament passage just reading the Bible you need the dispensational notes to tell you that I mean you'll never get the impression that Israel remains an important entity as a nation by reading the New Testament you have to get that from the dispensational notes that tell you that because it's not there and therefore you will find again and again a new study Bible is emerged who wrote it nine out of ten times if not more often than that it's going to be a dispensational leader Dakes Ryrie Schofield you name it they're dispensational and they need to put their notes in the Bible so that you'll get their interpretations from it because you won't get it if you just read your Bible and no one ever did except Darby and I'm not sure he just read his Bible either I'm not sure what else he may have read but it took eighteen hundred and thirty years for the church to have someone read his Bible and come up with those ideas and a lot of people read their Bible before that you have a quick question but you'd buy a great set of other way you probably shouldn't you should just read your Bible I don't there's there's never going to be a Greg study Bible it has occurred to me there might someday be a Great Commission school study Bible in which case we would not we would just try to present all views of you know like like we try to do but but I'm not interested in people making me their guru but Schofield managed to become a guru to many people and in the early 1900s his Bible was a major bestseller and and dispensations and spread like wildfire another thing happened in the early 1900s in in 1924 a man named Lewis Perry Chaffer a dispensationalist follower of Darby's views started a seminary to teach pastors dispensationalism in 1924 when Lewis Perry Chaffer started Dallas Theological Seminary it was the only seminary in the world that was pre-millennial there was no other seminary in the whole world that was pre-millennial in 1924 but Perry Chaffer started Dallas Theological Seminary in order to promote not only pre-millennialism but dispensationalism I don't know if it's still the case but it used to be that you had to sign on that you were committed to dispensationalism or else you couldn't graduate from there and this has had a tremendous influence because Hal Lindsay who wrote The Late Great Planet Earth a book that sold over 20 million copies one of the major best-selling books in all history Hal Lindsay graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary and the views he promoted in The Late Great Planet Earth were what? They were dispensational views. Chuck Swindoll graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary and now he's the chancellor there he's gone back he was a pastor for years now he's gone back and now he's the head honcho at Dallas big name writes many best-selling books not all about prophecy but of course whenever he talks about prophecy he is dispensationalist many

many influential people J. Vernon McGee was a professor at Dallas Ryrie was a professor at Dallas John Walvoord who's written many books on the subject was a professor at Dallas and was also chancellor of the school at one time many influential writers in fact you will find I mean I predict this I can't really say for sure from a scientific study of this but in my experience my instincts are that if you go to any bookstore as many commentaries and look at the credentials of the author of the commentary which are usually printed at the bottom of the back cover usually says where the guy studied and who he is and so forth I dare say that I don't care what commentary you get on what book of the Bible you get you look at the back and in in I believe at least seven times out of ten I'm saying this out of instinct rather than scientific jury but I've done this myself many times I'm just judging from from my own experience seven times out of ten the guy who wrote the commentary is either a professor at Dallas or took part of his graduate studies at Dallas Theological Seminary which means of course that the vast majority of literature not only on Bible prophecy but on the Bible itself that's out there today is written by people who have been strongly influenced by Dallas Theological Seminary which means strongly influenced by dispensationalism and now you've got John Walvoord you know as the editor of the Bible knowledge commentary set Bible knowledge you should say dispensational knowledge because that's what it is and there are rare exceptions like I said J.I. Packard John R.W. Stott F.F. Bruce interestingly was on millennial and many others but still it is the case that dispensationalism has entrenched itself as the major visible view of eschatology in America among evangelicals and since the biblical arguments for on millennialism are certainly as strong as the biblical arguments for pre-millennialism and I would certainly say stronger still of course that's what I mean I'm no longer unprejudiced I personally believe on millennialism is the biblical view so I believe the arguments for on millennialism in the Bible itself are stronger than the arguments for pre-millennialism but but let us just say on a more balanced basis the arguments let's say they're equal let's just say there's at least as good arguments for all millennialism as there are for pre-millennialism what then tips the scales in favor of pre-millennialism in the popular mind well in the popular mind the scales are tipped largely by the fact that no one has heard anything else but dispensationalism people who listen to radio buy the books on prophecy of the bookstores they've never heard anything but dispensationalism little do they know that had they lived before 1830 they would have never heard of that view and none of those views would have been available in print or on the radio of course there wasn't radio back then but the point is no one on the planet held dispensational views such as Darby's before 1830 and yet now virtually almost everyone does shows how widely this has spread and how successful it has been but you know apart from the popular Christian mind going to the scholarly Christian mind it seems that one of the strongest arguments remains for pre-millennialism the proposition that the earliest church fathers were pre-millennial and so I want to examine that proposition was the early church uniformly pre-millennial that's the question I said earlier some of the most important church fathers were clearly pre-millennial in the second century Papias, Polycarp, Justin

Martyr, Irenaeus no one can deny these are important witnesses of the early church but also no one can deny that these are not all the witnesses that exist there are many church fathers from the second who lived in the second century who are not on this list some of them never wrote anything some of them did write things and their writings haven't survived and some have written things and their writings did survive but they didn't talk about their eschatological views Clement of Rome would be a good example of that Clement you know he doesn't come out and he's very early he's in the first century the Didache and some of the other church documents from that same period do not say anything indicating what their eschatology is therefore for all we know some of these other men who lived who were not Papias, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, or Irenaeus some of these other men may not have been pre-millennial all we can really say is that of the few writers from that period whose works have survived and who wrote on this particular subject all of them and there were about four or five of them total were pre-millennial the question is were there any non pre-millennialists at the same time were there any influential men who have not left writings for us on this subject who were not pre-millennial in the first and second centuries well the answer is yes there were and the reason we know it is not because their writings have survived they haven't but because the pre-millennialists whose writings have survived have mentioned this look at what Justin Martyr said Justin Martyr is one of these very early pre-millennial writers and in a book or a dialogue he wrote with Tripo the Jew Justin Martyr made this comment he's talking about the hope of a future millennium the pre-millennial view that Justin Martyr holds he says I admitted to you formerly that I and many others are of this opinion that is the pre-millennial opinion and believe that such will take place as you assuredly are aware but on the other hand I signified to you that many who belong to the pure and pious faith and are true Christians think otherwise now if someone says the whole early church was uniformly pre-millennial they have to argue with one of the pre-millennials from that period Justin Martyr he said no my views on this are not uniformly held throughout the church he said there are many who think otherwise who what many heretics no many who are of the pure and pious faith and are true Christians who are these people we don't know they didn't write there or if they wrote their writings haven't survived we don't know who these were but Justin Martyr knew them he said I and many others hold this pre-millennial view but there are many who do not and these are true Christians these are of the pure and pious they think otherwise now what did they think if they weren't pre-millennial what were they well we we have we don't know because he doesn't say but we have to assume that if they weren't pre-millennial they were either all millennial or post millennial the fact is that Justin Martyr becomes an important witness to the fact that the early Christian Church even during the second century and first was not uniformly pre-millennial we only have a few men who wrote anything on the subject whose rights of whose writings have survived and they happen to have been pre-millennial but we're still only talking about a total of four or five guys total from that period there were many others who agreed with them and there were many others who did not agree with them says Justin Martyr and we have to assume then that in the early

church period right after the Apostles died the church's situation was very much like our own there were some who believed in pre-millennialism some who didn't believe in pre-millennialism and it was simply not an agreed-upon point some took Revelation 21 way some took Revelation 20 another way no one can say honestly that the whole church took it one way Irenaeus who is also one of the early fathers who was a pre-millennialist in his writing against heresies book 5 chapter 31 paragraph 1 he said that there were some who are reckoned among the Orthodox who did not hold his pre-millennial views so both Justin Martyr and Irenaeus two of the strongest witnesses for pre-millennialism in that period actually said that there are many or some who are reckoned among the Orthodox some who are considered to be Orthodox Christians who were not pre-millennial you know John Walvoord in one of his books said that pre-millennialism along with doctrines like the deity of Christ and the virgin birth and the resurrection of Christ and the substitutionary atonement pre-millennialism is one of the essentials of the Christian faith well the early fathers didn't seem to think so they were pre-millennial but many of the people they knew were not and they did not consider that view to be an essential for Orthodoxy there were Orthodox pure pious true Christian people who were not pre-millennial and even these pre-millennialists acknowledged not only their presence in the church but also spoke respectfully of them they did not think them to be bad people or heretics or dangerous they simply disagreed now we have a really interesting document produced by Patrick Allen Boyd a modern dispensationalist himself and he was a master's degree student at Dallas Seminary which of course is for dispensationalist and he is a dispensationalist but he sat in his classes under Charles Ryrie when Ryrie was professor there and Ryrie taught his students that the dispensational system that Dallas Seminary teaches was the view of the early church fathers and Alan Patrick Boyd or excuse me Patrick Allen Boyd was one of the students who heard Ryrie say these things and he decided to write his master's thesis on this very point he actually intended to read all the church fathers of a given early period and excise from them all the statements they made giving away what their eschatology was and see whether it was true as dr. Ryrie said that they were dispensationalist and he wrote his thesis his thesis is called a dispensational premillennial analysis of the eschatology of the post-apostolic fathers until the death of Justin Martyr now the death of Justin Martyr was as early as 165 AD so he's talking about all the writings that have survived from the church from the time of the Apostles to the time that Justin Martyr died in the middle of the second century that's the very earliest fathers available the apostolic fathers until the death of Justin Martyr well what's he say he says in his thesis which was published by Dallas Theological Seminary in 1977 it's his master's thesis at that school pages 90 and 91 he Patrick Allen Boyd said this it is the conclusion of this thesis that dr.

Ryrie's statement that dispensationalism was the view of the early church fathers is historically invalid within the chronological framework of this free thesis the reasons for this conclusion are as follows one the writers writings surveyed did not generally adopt a

consistently applied literal interpretation to they did not generally distinguish between the in Israel three there is no evidence that they generally held to a dispensational view of revealed history for although Papias and Justin Martyr did believe in a millennial kingdom the thousand years is the only basic similarity with the modern system in fact they and dispensational premillennialism radically differ on the basis of the millennium five they had no concept of imminency or of a pre tribulation or rapture of the church six in general their eschatological chronology is not synonymous with that of the modern system indeed this thesis would conclude that the eschatological beliefs of the period studied would be generally inimical which means contrary to those of the modern system which is dispensationalism then he says in parentheses perhaps seminal all millennialism and not nascent dispensational premillennialism ought to be seen as the eschatology of the period unquote now this is interesting because he says even though there was a belief in a thousand-year millennium on the part of some of these writers nonetheless most of the views about things like Israel about literal interpretation about the rapture and these kinds of things which are distinctives of dispensationalism these things were absent entirely from the early church fathers these originated with Darby in 1830 but Darby I today would like you to think that Darby's views were simply a regathering and regaining and rediscovery of the views that the early church fathers felt not so Darby was an innovator of new views that had never been taught before in church history the thousand years is the only thing they had in common with the premillennialists of that period and he says really you know you don't find full-blown dispensationalism and you don't find full-blown all millennialism and not surprisingly probably theological systems were still evolving still developing in those early days people trying to decide well what is the right thing but most of the views of the early fathers of the period were of an all millennial sort he said he said perhaps seminal all millennialism and not dispensational premillennialism ought to be seen as the eschatology of the period now you might say well what's the point of quoting this unknown guy Patrick Alan Boyd who is he has he written a study Bible has he written commentaries is he a pastor of one of the largest churches in the world no has anyone ever heard of him is his name a household word no what's the point of quoting him then well the point of quoting him is simply this he is a dispensationalist and he did his master's level studies at Dallas Theological Seminary on this very question reading carefully and analyzing the writings of the very men that dispensationalists say were the basis for their premillennialism in fact in a footnote in his thesis Boyd writes this he says the writer of this thesis is a dispensational premillennialist and he does not consider this thesis to be a disproof of that system going on he says he originally undertook the thesis to bolster the system by patristic research patristic means study of the Church Fathers but the evidence of the original sources simply disallowed this unquote so the writer says I wrote this as a dispensationalist I am still a dispensationalist I don't think that what I've written disproves dispensationalism but I thought I was going to be able to help bolster dispensationalism by writing this thesis but it turned out the evidence did not allow me to do that in other words we have here a very interesting testimony from a

graduate studies student within the dispensational school examining this very question what did the earliest Church Fathers believe well some of them did believe in a thousand year millennium some didn't even the ones who did though did not believe most of the things that modern dispensationalism assumes even about the Millennium the only thing they had in common was that they believed the Millennium would be a thousand years but you see they didn't believe as modern dispensationalists do that the Millennium will be a restoration of the Jewish order with a rebuilding of the Jewish temple and the restoration of the Levitical priesthood and of Jewish animal sacrifice and so forth that's what the dispensationalism system says will happen in the Millennium the early premillennialist didn't believe any such thing as that they didn't believe in a pre-trib rapture they didn't believe in a seven-year tribulation they didn't believe any of those dispensational things that originated in 1830 Daniel Whitby who of course I said earlier is one of the originators of the post millennial system he made this statement he says the doctrine of the Millennium was not the general doctrine of the primitive church from the times of the Apostles to the Nicene Council for then it could have made no schism in the church as Dionysius of Alexandria saith it did in other words Dionysius of Alexandria in speaking of pre-millennialism said it caused a division in the church well how could it cause division if everyone believed it apparently what Whitby's pointing out is if Dionysius of Alexandria said that pre-millennialism caused a schism in the church or division in the church there must have been a lot of people in the church who didn't believe it or else there'd be no such division so he's talking about the first three actual centuries okay in the early fourth century or I should say just the fourth century this was before Augustine you know some people think Augustine originated on millennialism well this is this is before Augustine Epiphanius wrote a book on heresies in which he said there is indeed a millennium mentioned by st. John but most and those pious men look upon these words true indeed but to be taken in a spiritual sense so at least by the time of Epiphanius which was before the time of Augustine the majority of Christians saw the millennium in a spiritual sense the same way that all millennialists today do he agreed that of course John mentioned a thousand years no one would deny that the question is how do you understand it most pious men he said look upon these words as true but to be taken in a spiritual sense not literal Eusebius the great church historian in 325 AD in his book ecclesiastical history was talking about Pappius see Pappius is the earliest known pre-millennialist in the church who was not a heretic Pappius is a very early witness for pre-millennialism and Eusebius the church historian believed that men like Justin Martyr and Polycarp and Irenaeus got their pre-millennialism from Pappius and of Pappius Eusebius said Pappius gives also other accounts which he says came to him through unwritten traditions certain strange parables and teachings of the Savior and of some other more mythical things among these he says that there will be a period of some thousand years after the resurrection of the dead when the kingdom of Christ will be set up in a material form on this earth I suppose he got these ideas through misunderstanding of the apostolic accounts not perceiving that the things said by them were spoken mystically in figures for he appears to have been a very limited

understanding as one can see from his discourses though so many of the church fathers after him adopted a like opinion urging in their own support the antiquity of the man unquote what he's saying is that Pappius was not a very astute theologian but he took John literally about the thousand years not being a man of great understanding and because he was early on later people followed him and urged for the fact that he by the fact that he was such an old witness they said that that means he must have been right well maybe he was maybe he wasn't but what we can certainly see is this regardless of course what any church fathers believe about anything the determination of the millennial question must be determined on the basis of Scripture because very early in the second century we have people teaching infant baptism as well and that's not taught in Scripture if you believe in it fine but you can't get it from Scripture and there are many other that began to arise early in the church veneration of the Saints and of Mary and things like that began to come up in the second and third centuries and very early on things that the Bible does not support it doesn't take very long for a church to go into heresy the Galatian Christians went into heresy just after Paul left and he was still alive he had to write the letter to Galatians to them the Corinthians began to have questions about the very doctrine of the resurrection one of the basic tenets of Christian while Paul was still alive he had to write and correct them in first Corinthians 15 I mean very early on within the same generation of a church's founding it can go off into error serious error therefore when we talk about early witnesses 50 years after the Apostles a generation later I say well they believe such and such was the right interpretation that doesn't mean that they got it from the Apostles or that they haven't corrupted what the Apostles meant every Christian and I think has to go to the scriptures themselves and find out what it teaches on any given subject and we can look at what the church father said for I find it interesting telling you I like to read what the church father said because sometimes they see some scriptures more clearly than I did and sometimes it appears that they don't you know at times you can see where their prejudices lie but it's interesting to see how the church felt about things at different times all we can say is we do not know of any time in history when the whole church was premillennial notwithstanding the dispensationist claims that the church was uniformly premillennial in the first and second centuries that is simply not apparently true based on what Justin modern Irenaeus and others have said there were of course premillennialists then but they were not alone in their views and there were others who held contrary views who were reckoned among the Orthodox now one thing that we know is and this is a basic issue with the dispensationalist is that the early fathers did not keep Israel and the church separate like the dispensationalist do and say we must Alan Patrick Boyd I got his name's wrong Patrick Alan Boyd sorry the dispensational premillennial analysis of eschatology of the post-apostolic fathers which we quoted from earlier at length in his thesis he pointed out Papias who is of course a premillennialist applied much of the Old Testament to the church now the dispensationist says nothing in the Old Testament applies to the church the church was a mystery that the Old Testament writers knew nothing about only came to light in the New Testament therefore all Old Testament

promises all Old Testament prophecies are pertained to Israel not the church they say Papias who was one of the earliest premillennial that we know of applied much of the Old Testament to the church Justin Martyr another early premillennial claims that the church is the true Israelitic race thereby blurring the distinction between Israel and the church now this is what Boyd points out in his thesis that as he studied these writings he did not find in them the commitment that the dispensationalist today have of keeping Israel in the church separate in other words those early premillennialists thought about this major issue the same way all millennialists today think about it that's what he's pointing out you know I don't want to resort to guilt by association I but there are some historians and that would include Alan Patrick Boyd who believe that premillennialism was first found in the writings of heretics WGT shed significant Christian theologian of the 19th century wrote a book called a history of Christian doctrine and in volume 2 pages 390 and 391 he said millennialism appears first in the system of the Judaic Gnostic Serentis now Serentis is a well known Gnostic heretic of the late first century there are stories about John having conflicts with Serentis in fact there's a story that's come from the church fathers how that John went into a public bathhouse in Ephesus as in Asia people don't have baths in their homes so they still do this in many Asian countries today and he went into the public bathhouse with his disciples and when he found out that Serentis was in there he fled from the bathhouse and told his disciples never quick leave this place before the before God causes it to cave in for the heretic Serentis is in here Serentis was a Gnostic heretic and according to WGT shed in his history of Christian doctrine says millennialism appears first in the system of the Judaic Judaic Gnostic Serentis actually even Alan Patrick Boyd the dispensations who wrote that master's thesis of Dallas he said Serentis is the earliest Chileist which means millennialist apparently the earliest one is even before Pappius the earliest record of people believing in the millennium a future millennium was in the writings of Serentis or of his followers came from him Philip Schaap a very well respected church historian who wrote many volumes on church history in his book a religious encyclopedia or dictionary of biblical historical doctrinal and practical theology written in 1883 in volume three pages fifteen hundred fourteen and fifteen hundred fifteen big book he said the ultimate root of millennialism or millenarianism is the popular notion of the Messiah current among the Jews it is found in Serentis and he quotes Eusebius for that or cites Eusebius for that it's found in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs which is an apocalyptic work of the intertestamental period before it was not a Christian work but a Jewish work he gives evidence of that and amongst the Ebionites and he quotes sites Jerome on that fact the Ebionites were a Christian heresy but he says the idea of a future millennium comes out of Jewish ideas and it's found in the writings of Serentis the heretic and the Ebionites who are also considered heretical and a Jewish work called the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs now these several different sources indicate that Serentis the Gnostic heretic may have been the first to try to introduce pre-millennialism into the Christian Church now I say I don't want to resort to guilt by association because obviously I'm not saying that modern pre-millennialists share the theological commitments of Serentis the heretic I was in a

debate locally here with the dispensationalists a few years back we have the debates on videotape in fact it was seriously five debates one one day we debated the Millennium one day we debated Israel one day we did it the Rapture one day we debated the Tribulation I forget what else we debated but the point is that we had five I think was five debates with the same dispensational teacher here in town and when he was attacking all millennialism he said well all millennialism is the view of the Roman Catholic Church therefore if you want to be all millennial you can be in company with the Roman Catholics and I've heard others do this it seems so the strangest way of arguing a case I might as well say the doctrine of the Trinity is the view of the Roman Catholic Church therefore if you want to believe in the Trinity you can be in company with the Roman Catholics or I could say the doctrine of the virgin birth within the deity of Christ that's that's the view of the Roman Catholic Church so what that tells you nothing the Roman Catholics aren't wrong about everything this particular man was a former Roman Catholic himself and he had studied for the Roman Catholic priesthood and just before being ordained he had left and become an evangelical dispensationalist but he you know because of his background of Catholic Church he read he jettisoned all his Catholic theology in favor of a Protestant evangelical theology which as he was first exposed to it was dispensationalism and that's what he came to believe but he associated it with the Catholic Church true it is true the Roman Catholic Church has historically been all millennial but so was origin who was not a Roman Catholic so as Epiphanius and Eusebius who were not what we call Roman Catholics I mean this was before there was what we'd call the Roman Catholic Church in the path to seeing all that heresy I mean there were many people who were on millennial before there was a Roman Catholic Church as we think of it today furthermore just because the Roman Catholics believe it does not make it part of their heresy Martin Luther certainly rejected much of Roman Catholicism but he believed in all millennialism Luther and Calvin and all the Reformers were all millennial and many Protestants still are if we want to go by guilt by association I could say well the Jehovah's Witnesses are premillennial and they are by the way they believe in premillennial well if you want to be a premillennialist you can just link up with the Jehovah's Witnesses well that'd be ridiculous to say that and it says ridiculous to say well if you're gonna be all millennial you might as well join up with the Catholics why why bother why not just go with the Bible the premillennialist that premillennialism is true not because of any sympathy he has with the Jehovah's Witnesses who also believe that and the all-millennialist believes all millennial is true not because of necessarily being sympathetic to the Roman Catholic Church but because of what he believes the Bible says the ultimate issue is not who teaches what who taught what when the ultimate issue although these other things are interesting and worthy of consideration the ultimate issue is what does the Bible teach what do the best methods of biblical interpretation lead us to believe about these things and it is on the basis of those considerations that I personally have changed from being a dispensationalist for many years to being now an all-millennialist for many years and I don't know what the future holds but at this present stage of my journey I I see the view as the more biblical view

that's all I can say I've taken a high view of Scripture and a high view of the writings of the Apostles and what Jesus said even a higher view of them than of the Old Testament writers simply since the New Testament writers had more light and therefore we interpret the old by use of the new and in doing so we become all-millennialist that is what that is a path many have taken I told someone yesterday I've known many many dispensationalists who have since become all-millennialist I've not yet met an all-millennialist an informed one who became a dispensationalist there might be some out there I just haven't met them but I have met many dispensationalists who've made the journey out of dispensationalism into a more they think biblical view and that happened to turn out to be all-millennialism by label it's a shame that has to be a label but that's what you call the view I think we'll close with that and when we come back next time we're going to talk about the rapture of the church pre-trip mid-trip post-trip what is it well we'll find out isn't that fun