

AN ANALYSIS OF
D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES' VIEW OF THE MILLENNIUM
IN ITS HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

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Introduction and Historical Background

A person's view of the future is arguably far more influential upon his whole outlook than his perspective on the past. With that in mind, it is remarkable that with the large amount of material written about such a key figure in 20th Century church history as D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, no analysis or assessment of the impact of his eschatology exists. A whole book could, and perhaps should be written on the subject, and a short paper is inevitably going to be inadequate in both its scope and detail. With that in mind, after setting the background to the subject, this paper will be limited to an assessment of Lloyd-Jones' view of the matter of the millennium.

No one can deny that Lloyd-Jones had a remarkable influence on the British evangelical scene. He rose to prominence in Britain in the first half of the 20th Century, moving from experiences of what can only be described as revival in his town South Wales, to the key London pulpit of Westminster Chapel, just prior to the outbreak of World War II. The tremendous flow of men through London during wartime, and Lloyd-Jones' own remarkable mid-week itinerating, meant that his influence on the British (and American) evangelical scene spread far and wide. Crucially, as Iain Murray traces, during the years that followed the war, Lloyd-Jones' influence spread into the universities of Britain, where a generation of Christian Union students grew to love his teaching. Scores of men flocked to his Westminster Fellowship meetings, where fledgling ministers cut their theological teeth under his tutelage.¹

¹ See Iain Murray's definitive two part biography: Iain H. Murray, *David Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The First Forty Years 1899 – 1939*. (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust.), 1982 and Iain H. Murray, *David Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith*. (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust.), 1990.

He was, it seems, used of God to rekindle an interest in Reformed Theology in the British evangelical scene, and is additionally widely regarded among conservative evangelicals as having stemmed the tide of ecumenism. In that regard, Iain Murray has traced Lloyd-Jones' painful split with John Stott and J. I. Packer which left a deep divide among evangelicals.² Packer subsequently left the country, but Stott remained and became the other 'big figure' in the British evangelicalism. Given Stott's views on conditional immortality and Annihilationism, repugnant to the historically more Fundamentalist oriented conservatives, British evangelicals were left with only one real leader. It is not so surprising then, that Lloyd-Jones should have had such a widespread influence, but it does make his eschatological views all the more significant. Did he also wield an influence on a generation of preachers in regard to their views of the future? It seems perhaps that he did just that.³

While it is impossible to establish the link without extensive research, it is worth noting that a striking change *has* apparently taken place in the eschatological views of the majority of British evangelicals. Lloyd-Jones notes in his studies on eschatology, that the most popular view in his time (he was preaching on these matters in the early 1950s) was Premillennialism.⁴ Professor David Bebbington of Stirling University in Scotland notes in 2007 that the majority

² See Iain H. Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided: A Record of Crucial Change Between the Years 1950-2000*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2000).

³ Other factors have no doubt influenced the change, such as the widespread interest in social engagement that accompanied the 'premillennial decay' as noted by professor David Bennington. David Bebbington, "Evangelicals and Eschatology in Britain," Unpublished paper presented at St. Andrews University, 30/04/2007. Interestingly Bebbington records that Postmillennialism saw a resurgence in Wales under Lloyd-Jones' influence, and records him as a great admirer of Jonathan Edwards. Whether this is inaccurate, or whether Lloyd-Jones changed his views from Postmillennialism to Amillennialism is not clear. All other references found, and Lloyd-Jones' own writings clearly identify him as an Amillennialist, although he appears to avoid the title.

⁴ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "The Church and the Last Things," In *Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2003), 203.

view amongst conservative evangelicals in Britain today is Amillennialism.⁵ There are a few notable exceptions in the Postmillennial camp,⁶ and while a number of Charismatics are Premillennial, Conservative evangelical Premillennialists are almost unknown.

In beginning his criticism of Premillennialism, Lloyd-Jones claimed that “Nothing, to me, is more lamentable than that people should only know one view.”⁷ Clearly from the record of his sermons, he was far from ignorant himself. Iain Murray has noted that, “He thought highly of Mr Grier's little book the Momentous Event... and also Hendriksen, More than Conquerors. He had some familiarity with Philip Mauro (who influenced Campbell -Morgan's view of prophecy), and may have read Pink against Dispensationalism, though Pink wrote in 1930s on that subject and I don't think Lloyd-Jones was reading him then.”⁸ Indeed, Lloyd-Jones recommended W. J. Grier's ‘little book’ to his congregation as a good place to start, as a balance to reading ‘the Schofield notes,’⁹ though it must be added that at the outset of any eschatological study, he urged his hearers always to test what they read by Scripture.¹⁰

It is worth recording here that Lloyd-Jones' only book dealing with Eschatology¹¹ came from the lectures he delivered on Friday evenings at Westminster. He did not set out to write

⁵ David Bebbington, *Evangelicals and Eschatology in Britain*, 2007.

⁶ Such as Iain Murray himself, and Errol Hulse, another prominent British evangelical, and editor of *Reformation Today*, a British Reformed Baptist journal.

⁷ Lloyd-Jones, *The Church and the Last Things*, 205.

⁸ Iain H. Murray, e-mail message to author, July 1, 2009.

⁹ Lloyd-Jones, *The Church and the Last Things*, 88.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ *The Church and Last Things* was originally published separately as the third volume in a series based on these Friday night lectures. The original recordings are extant, and copies can be obtained from the Martyn Lloyd-Jones Recording Trust, 5 Caxton House, Wellesley Road, Ashford, Kent. TN24 8ET U.K. www.mlj.org.uk The

books, and consequently there are no footnotes or references to the authors that have influenced him. Clearly he was interacting with Scofield's notes, and his experience of Dispensational Premillennialism was not a happy one. His attitude to the subject of eschatology, and the atmosphere in which he felt he was operating can be easily ascertained from this extended quote from a sermon only a few years prior to his eschatological series:

In standing fast in the faith, if we are not animated by the spirit of love, we may not always differentiate as we should between faith in its essence and certain peculiar interpretations and expositions of our own. Here is a theme which might very easily occupy our minds on many occasions. There is nothing so tragic, I sometimes think, in certain circles as the way in which men fail to differentiate between that which is of the essence of the faith and certain other matters about which there can be no certainty. You cannot, I am told, be a member of the World Fundamentalist Association unless you believe in the "pre-millennial" return of our Lord and if you happen to be a "post-millenarian" you cannot be a Christian! If you are an "a-millenarian" you are just unspeakable. There you have an illustration of the importance of differentiating between the essence of the faith and the interpretation of a particular matter about which there has always been a difference of opinion. There is the same difference of opinion as to when the rapture of the saints is to take place. Men separate from each other about matters of that nature, where there is no certainty, and where there can be no certainty, though the return of the Lord is certain. Who can decide who is right, whether those who hold the pre-millennial, or those who hold the post-millennial view? I could mention great names on both sides, equally expert theologians. Surely these are matters where there can be a legitimate difference of opinion. Let us bear in mind the adage: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." "Stand fast in the faith." Yes, but in a spirit of love."¹²

The Theological Background to His Views of the Millennium

His View of Israel and the Church

In his view of Israel and the Church, Lloyd-Jones represents an unusual brand of Amillennialism. Many of his statements about the Church could be taken as implying that he was

forcefulness of Lloyd-Jones rejection of opposing views is more discernable in the audio recordings, and given the late publication of this material, perhaps gives a more accurate representation of his impact on his hearers.

¹² Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Christian in an Age of Terror: Sermons in a Time of War*, Edited by Dr. Michael Eaton, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2008), 264.

a Supersessionist, viewing the Church as having replaced Israel as the people of God. Clearly he saw no future eternal national distinction between Jews and Gentiles in God's program, and points this out as one of his chief objections to Premillennialism, since in his view it reintroduces just such permanent a distinction "for all eternity" between Jew and Gentile.¹³

It seems however, that he also held to a future ingathering of Jews on a national scale. Expounding Romans 11:26 in the spring of 1965, some years after his series of lectures on Eschatology, Lloyd-Jones discounted Calvin's view that 'all Israel' meant all the redeemed of all time.¹⁴ Instead he argued for a national scale inclusion of the Jews into the church at a future time:

The Jews regarded as a whole, as a nation of people, are still from the standpoint of the gospel, looked at from the standpoint of the church and the preaching of the gospel, regarded as enemies; they are in this condition of blindness and hardness of heart still; but they are still beloved because of the fathers. God's promises to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob still hold and will ultimately be shown to hold. And if they are not shown to hold, well then the Apostle's argument collapses.¹⁵ Look at these great and rich promises to these people in the Old Testament; can you say that they have been fulfilled hitherto in the Christian church? You cannot. The bulk of this people is outside the church. The Apostle says God is going to make it manifest and known to the whole world that they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. They are still His people, they are the natural branches of the olive tree and they will be brought back again."¹⁶

Similarly, commenting earlier on the same passage in the series of eschatological lectures, Lloyd-Jones argues that throughout Romans 9, 10 and 11:

¹³ Lloyd-Jones, *The Church and the Last Things*, 207.

¹⁴ D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: An Exposition of Chapter 11 To God's Glory*, (Carlisle, PN: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1998), 201.

¹⁵ Lloyd-Jones takes the view that Romans 11 is part of a large apologetic answer to the natural question about the security of election, following the wonderful assurances of chapter 8, raised by the fact of the apparent rejection of the Jews *en masse*. The answer, which he views as a kind of theodicy, begins in chapter 9 and stretches through chapter 11. See D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: An Exposition of Chapter 9 God's Sovereign Purpose*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1991), 6.

¹⁶ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans 11*, 202.

... we find that the term 'Israel' is used very frequently and every single time it refers not to the Church but to Jewish people. So if I were to believe that 'all Israel' here means the Church, I would have to say that the Apostle suddenly changed the meaning of the term without telling us. I cannot believe that the great apostle would do such a thing, and that seems to me a sufficient ground in and of itself for saying that 'all Israel' here cannot mean 'the Church'.¹⁷

Lloyd Jones has elsewhere peremptorily dismissed the concept of a total salvation of every single Jew, and so here he seems very clearly to be taking the 'collective' view, meaning that the Jewish people as a whole nation, will be saved, but not necessarily every single member.¹⁸ This is supported by other statements he makes such as when further expounding Romans 11:26, he summarizes by stating that, "The Apostle then is saying that the future restoration of Israel as a nation is certain. He puts it in the form of a prophetic announcement of a great mystery in the ultimate plan of God, something entirely outside the realm of human understanding, something no one would ever have thought of."¹⁹

This however creates a problem in understanding Lloyd-Jones' view of the future of Israel. Here he views an ingathering of the whole nation of Jews, minus some miscreants! As I noted above, these comments were made as a result of his exposition of Romans 11 in 1965. Earlier however, in his eschatological series in the early to mid 1950s, he took a somewhat different view of the future of the Jews. It is worth noting the difference, and observing that the

¹⁷ Lloyd-Jones, *The Church and the Last Things*, 105-6.

¹⁸ For a helpful brief overview and explanation of the four main views on *pas Israel*, see Michael A. Grisanti, "The Progress of God's Program for Jews and Gentiles as Pictured in Romans Eleven: A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of Central Baptist Theological Seminary." May 1986. Available in the Master's Seminary Library.

¹⁹ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans 11*, 194. Grisanti points out that this climactic revelation of a mystery is further evidence for the collective view, and against the restrictive view which regards 'all Israel' as meaning all the elect from Israel of all time. Where is the climax or mystery in saying that all the elect of Israel will be saved? Grisanti, *Progress of God's Program*, 94-5.

earlier study was a theological one, while the later study of Romans 11 was a verse-by-verse exposition.

In these earlier theological studies, answering the question, “does ‘all Israel’ mean Israel as a nation?” Lloyd-Jones begins by observing that *some* proponents of a future salvation of the Jews see a future distinction between Israel and the Church in terms of the *way* of salvation, yet he does not address that issue except to contradict it.²⁰ He then argues from the use of Joel’s prophesy in Acts 2:16, and the use of Amos 9:11 in Acts 15, that Old Testament prophesies are fulfilled in the New Testament by the Church. These are prophesies which, “If you were to read the prophesy... you would come to the conclusion (if you were left to yourself) that the prophet was undoubtedly referring to something that was going to happen to the Jewish nation.”²¹

Despite this frank admission of the plain, contextually-based meaning of the Old Testament prophesies, he believes that since (in his view) James saw Amos 9:11 as being ‘fulfilled,’ that “with this key we must proceed and consider the other prophesies and we can interpret them in exactly the same way.”²²

Pointing out the ramifications of a literal interpretation of Ezekiel’s prophesies in chapters 37-38, he objects to the concept of a river flowing “up over mountains – impossible if you take it literally!”²³ The concept of millennial sacrifices again proves too much to bear, even with a memorial interpretation, and he asks his hearers, “But can you really believe such a

²⁰ It is worth noting that he recognizes that the mainline view was clearly *not* that of those who see a different method of salvation for Jews and Gentiles in the future, one by law and the other by grace. Many British evangelicals seem to still believe that dispensationalists all hold to this extreme position.

²¹ Lloyd-Jones, *The Church and the Last Things*, 108.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 109.

thing?”²⁴ Thus, following a line of reasoning which could be termed ‘guilt by association,’ he dismisses the possibility of “Israel as a nation,” and goes on to state that “It is a simple fact that our Lord never spoke about the restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land. Never.”²⁵ Quoting Matthew 8:11-12, he argues that the Lord promised that the ‘children of the kingdom would be cast out’ – but never that they would be re-gathered.²⁶

Finally, Lloyd-Jones’ argument then turns to consider who is meant by ‘all Israel’ in 11:26. Since 11:16 speaks of the root and branches *both* being holy, he concludes that “It seems to me, therefore, that there is no special place for the Jews as a nation; it is impossible.”²⁷ Instead of a national view of ‘all Israel,’ he thus argues for a *spiritual* view of all Israel. Using Romans 9:6 he claims that ‘not all Israel are of Israel’ means that Paul only has the elect remnant in mind here.²⁸ Likewise from Galatians 3:7-9, 14 and 29 he takes the concept of the remnant to prove that, “The conclusion of this interpretation of the words ‘all Israel shall be saved’ is that they mean the total of all believing Jews in all ages and generations, all whom God has foreseen shall infallibly be saved.”²⁹

The difficulty with all this³⁰ is that it is a clear contradiction of his *later* opinion, based on his verse-by-verse exegesis of Romans 11. The quote from that work which was noted above

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 110.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid. 113.

³⁰ This view is elsewhere described as the ‘restrictive’ view, see Grisanti, *Progression of God’s Program*, 94-5. It is beyond the scope of this paper, but should be mentioned that his major arguments have been answered

bears repeating here: “The Apostle then is saying that the *future restoration of Israel as a nation is certain*.”³¹ Obviously this conflict needs to be resolved, but this has for the moment served to set the context well enough for Lloyd-Jones’ views of the Church and Israel.

His Perspective on Prophecy

In regard to the important issue of the timing of prophesy, Lloyd-Jones rejected the preterist view, seeing it as originating with the Jesuit Alcazar in 1614.³² He likewise dismissed the futurist view, denying that church fathers were ever really futurists, and considering that view to have been the product of another Jesuit, Ribera, in 1603, and popularized only since the 1830s by J.N Darby and more recently by the Scofield Bible notes.³³ Next, having shown the historicist view to have been disproved by history, highlighting its proponents’ many failed attempts to identify historical characters with the various beasts of Revelation, Lloyd-Jones finally puts forward his own view. The spiritual-historicist view he propounds as the concept that the book is primarily designed to *signify* things which will take place throughout the coming church age, and that entirely by means of symbols.³⁴

Lloyd-Jones emphasizes that the purpose of the book is to be a blessing and a comfort to those who read it,³⁵ and that it was thus intended to have direct application to the church at all

(satisfactorily for this author) by later writers, such as Craig Blaising, see Craig A. Blaising, “A Premillennial Response to Robert B. Strimple, In *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, edited by Darrell L. Bock, 143-154. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999).

³¹ Lloyd-Jones, *Romans 11*, 194. Emphasis mine.

³² Lloyd-Jones, *The Church and the Last Things*, 145.

³³ *Ibid.*, 145-6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 164.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

stages in history, not simply in a future time.³⁶ The blessing and comfort therefore comes by virtue of understanding the pictures which are portraits of the experiences that the church will be subjected to, *throughout the church age*. Thus the many vivid scenes painted for the reader are like parables, “meant to convey some great truth... but in a symbolic manner.”³⁷

Lloyd-Jones’ Amillennial Views Considered

As noted above, Lloyd-Jones made passionate pleas for his people to consider all three views of the Millennium, and to appraise each of them carefully for themselves. Nevertheless, as a master rhetorician, he did not simply present his own view for his people to evaluate in a vacuum, or worse—with their preexisting ideas. Instead, he dealt initially with the two main rivals, Premillennialism and Postmillennialism, and developed his own perspective last of all. Remarkably, this final presentation occupies only a few pages in his (posthumously) printed work. Admittedly, he did repeatedly point to his own views and argue somewhat for them throughout his study, but his main effort appears to have been to disprove the alternatives.³⁸

Lloyd-Jones calls his perspective, a “*spiritual interpretation*,”³⁹ and appears to avoid the title Amillennialism. He acknowledges that this view focuses on the ‘symbolism’ and the ‘spiritual aspect’ of the book, and of chapter 20.⁴⁰ It is noteworthy that the sevenfold division of

³⁶ Ibid., 165.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ As appears to be the case with some modern proponents of Amillennialism such as Robert B. Strimple, leaving this author with the impression that it is indeed primarily a position constructed in rejection of the Premillennial view. See for a modern example Robert B. Strimple, “Amillennialism.” In *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, edited by Darrell L. Bock, 81–129. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999).

³⁹ Lloyd-Jones, *The Church and the Last Things*, 218.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 166

Revelation set out by William B. Hendriksen in *More than Conquerors* is followed exactly by Lloyd-Jones.⁴¹ This scheme, which involves the belief that John was given successive visions that recapitulate human history with different perspectives or emphases, becomes vital to Lloyd-Jones' view. He laments the fact that Premillennialists and Postmillennialists alike miss their way, since they fail to see, as he does, a break between chapters 19 and 20 of Revelation.⁴²

Claiming that chapter 19 “takes us right up to the very end,”⁴³ he sees chapter 20 as beginning with the first coming of Christ, and then presenting an overview of the whole Christian era, culminating with the final judgment. This, he claims, is justified because Revelation 20-22 provides another of these recapitulations, chapter 20 focusing this time on how the Lord will finally deal with the Devil himself.⁴⁴ This present age then, is the Millennium, and the ‘thousand year’ period is, “a symbolical figure to indicate the perfect length of time... between the first and second comings.”⁴⁵ It “suggests a period of completeness, a whole period. It suggests a long period, yes, but above all a complete period – ten cubed.”⁴⁶ Furthermore, drawing from 1 Corinthians 15:25, Psalm 110:1, and Philippians 2:9–11, he sees Christ as thus reigning now in heaven, and Christians as also now spiritually reigning with him.⁴⁷ Satan is also *presently* ‘bound’ in a spiritual sense, in that he is restrained from deceiving the nations

⁴¹ Compare Lloyd-Jones, *The Church and the Last Things*, 173 with W. Hendricksen, *More Than Conquerors: An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), 28.

⁴² Lloyd-Jones, *The Church and the Last Things*, 218.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 218.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 219, 225.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 224–5.

(Gentiles⁴⁸) during this age, as he did previously.⁴⁹ The first resurrection he claims must thus also refer to regeneration,⁵⁰ and the second resurrection to the one-and-only resurrection that will occur at Christ's second coming.⁵¹

It is important to note that Lloyd-Jones' series of studies that includes his treatment of eschatology was not a *detailed* exposition of Revelation, and did not follow his usual verse-by-verse expository method.⁵² Instead, he dealt more with the broad details, and appeals to his hearers to be more concerned with the same, since the book itself is painted with a broad brush.⁵³ This perhaps explains the fact that some verses have not been fully treated in his overview of the meaning of Revelation 20. It is unfortunate however, for bases his case on the interpretation of some details in that chapter, and does not spare detailed and strident criticism of opposing views. His failure to address some of the other details of Revelation 20 sadly leaves important questions about his view unanswered, and inevitably seriously weakens his position.

⁴⁸ Lloyd-Jones claims that "all expositors are agreed that in prophesy the term 'the nations' stands for the gentiles in contradistinction to the Jews." *Ibid.*, 222.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 219-223.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 207-8.

⁵² In the view of this author, if he had followed his normal expository method with Revelation chapter 20, rather than allowing himself the luxury of skipping the detailed exposition of certain verses such as verse 4, he could not have continued to promote the view he did. Notably, in contradistinction to most Amillennialists, when Lloyd-Jones expounded Romans 11, his rigorous expository method drove him to accept a national-scale future ingathering of the Jews.

⁵³ Thus Lloyd-Jones makes a case that since the whole book is given in symbolical form, we are given pictures. "It does not use a mechanical, literal exactness but gives us exact knowledge in a symbolical manner. We are given principles without being given detailed, particular knowledge." Lloyd-Jones, *The Church and the Last Things*, 166. Note however that Lloyd-Jones does not hesitate to appeal to the details of these symbolical pictures as proof of his points. See his argument in regard to the present state of the dead (71), and his own argument that the scene of Revelation 20 must be in heaven (211-212, 223).

For example, he appears to claim that the whole scene in Revelation 20 takes place in heaven. Proof for this view is given from the fact that John saw the *souls* of men in verse 4, not resurrected men themselves,⁵⁴ and the fact that he saw *thrones*, which Lloyd-Jones claims are always elsewhere in the book *only* seen in heaven, not on earth.⁵⁵ Notably however, although he quotes it, he seems to overlook the fact that in verse 1, John specifically says that he saw an angel coming ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, translated as ‘*down from heaven*,’ which would seem to be a fairly straightforward introduction to a scene on earth, and would require an entire scene change between verses 3 and 4 to view the events of verse 4-6 as taking place in heaven. Yet Lloyd-Jones does not outline any reasons for such a change of scene, and leaves the reader with the impression that he believes the whole scene is in heaven, despite “*down from*” in verse 1.

Also notable in a list of overlooked details, is the identity of these souls mentioned in verse 4. This section has elsewhere been called the *crux interpretum*⁵⁶ of the millennial debate, and clearly deserves the most careful exegesis. Crucially, Lloyd-Jones does not address the issue of the *martyrdom* of these disembodied souls. They are introduced as those who had been beheaded, having refused to worship the beast, or receive his mark. Passing by this detail, Lloyd-Jones moves on to the fact that they *came to life*, later interpreted by John as the ‘first resurrection,’ and associates this with *regeneration*. Thus, he argues, believers are spiritually resurrected now, and reigning now, as per verse 4, with Christ during this present-age

⁵⁴ Lloyd-Jones, *The Church and the Last Things*, 212, 223.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 211, 212.

⁵⁶ Craig A. Blaising, “Premillennialism.” In *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, edited by Darrell L. Bock, 157–227. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 221.

Millennium. Proof is given by linking this concept with the New Testament teaching of regeneration which is indeed couched in terms of resurrection.

Clearly however, the picture we have is of the souls of those who have violently *lost* their lives, and are here being given back life. They have been beheaded for their stand, and an actual resurrection is the only natural understanding of this term here. As Blaising observes,⁵⁷ the same word, ἐζήσαν *they came to life*, used here in the plural, is used of Christ's resurrection in Revelation 2:8 (ἐζήσεν) in the singular, and of the apparent resurrection of the beast in Revelation 13:14 (ἐζήσεν). In both cases, the reference is to one who has (or appears to have) died, being raised to life. By contrast with this straightforward understanding, to follow the logic of Lloyd-Jones' view here would require the interpreter to link the martyrdom that is described with the believer's pre-existing state of spiritual death or to dying-to-self. That, however, would surely be to stretch the text beyond what is reasonable, and thus provides an impossible problem for this his position.

Another detail which Lloyd-Jones nowhere mentions, is that the recapitulation view he espouses, requiring as it does a dramatic break in the flow of the text between chapter 19 and 20, has nothing in the text itself upon which to base such a division. This alleged dramatic scene-change, taking the reader back from the end of the ages in chapter 19, to the beginning of the Christian era in chapter 20, is purely based upon the interpreter's understanding of the content of the chapter, combined with an application of a concept of recapitulation. It must be asked however, before deciding that the scene introduced in 20:1 is concurrent with Christ's first advent, whether there are textual features which allow or preclude such a shift in time.

⁵⁷ Craig A. Blaising, *Premillennialism*, 223.

It is the answer to such an enquiry that has driven many exegetes to adopt either a Postmillennial or a Premillennial position. Revelation 20:1 opens with the words *Καὶ εἶδον*, *And (or Then) I saw*. A brief survey of the Greek text however, shows that exactly the same phrase introduces 19:11, and then also 19:17 and 19:19. Subsequently, the same phrase is used to introduce 20:4, 11, 12 and finally 21:1. To accept Lloyd-Jones' view, the interpreter has to accept that the repeated use of this phrase through chapter 19 into chapter 21 gives no indication of any chronological sequence. Moreover it requires that in fact, the phrase would not even naturally lead the reader in the direction of thinking of chronological progression, since if it did, it would be a careless choice of phrase with which to introduce a section that steps *back* in time more than 2000 years.

This is a crucial detail, because of which generations of interpreters have been persuaded away from the Amillennial view, and it is a shame that Lloyd-Jones did not raise it with his hearers. As Robert L. Thomas notes:

The case favoring chronological sequence in the fulfillment of these scenes is very strong. Progression from Christ's return to the invitation to the birds of prey (in 19:17) and from that invitation to the defeat of the beast (in 19:19) is obvious. So is the progression from the binding of Satan (in 20:1) to the Millennium and final defeat of Satan and from that final defeat to the new heaven and the new earth with all this entails. The interpretation allowing for chronological arrangement of these scenes is one-sidedly strong.⁵⁸

Evidently then, *Καὶ εἶδον* does indeed represent a chronological progression *within* both chapter 19 and 20, and so the burden of proof must lie with those who claim something other than a straightforward chronological progression *between* chapter 19 and chapter 20,⁵⁹ given the

⁵⁸ Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 381.

⁵⁹ So Mounce, cited by Robert Thomas in Robert L. Thomas, *Exegetical Digest of Revelation 15 - 22*. (1993), 239.

exact same phrase provides the transition. The only proof that Lloyd-Jones presents however is the scheme of recapitulation that he espouses. While a degree of recapitulation of some of the visions of Revelation is accepted by some Premillennialists,⁶⁰ to identify 20:1 as introducing a recapitulation would require a major structural break in the flow of the text. Blaising is surely correct when he states that “the key point... is that *kai eidon* does not signify a major structural break.”⁶¹

In Conclusion, one or more crucial questions remain to be asked. Even if it were to be granted, as Lloyd-Jones advocates, that the whole book is to be taken symbolically, and the main thing is to get the overall impression given, how is the interpreter to *reliably* get the picture from these symbols? Surely, even if the symbolical approach is taken, the *details* of the symbols must be consistently interpreted so as to accurately get the message! It does not appear to be a safe method of interpretation to take *some* details of a picture, and then interpret it, while neglecting those details that do not fit one’s scheme.⁶² It is regrettable that Lloyd-Jones, surely not by design, has fallen into this trap. The question however, still remains, that if Revelation 20 does

⁶⁰ See Craig A. Blaising, “Premillennialism.” In *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, edited by Darrell L. Bock, 157–227. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 211. Blaising seems to accept recapitulation of the vision of the acquisition of power by the beast in chapter 13, in 17:11-18.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 215.

⁶² Lloyd-Jones notes this principle himself when he complains that Premillennialists accept that the chain in verse 1 is symbolical, but then take a literal view of the rest of the details. “It is not the way of true interpretation to pick and choose to suit the convenience of a theory.” Lloyd-Jones, *The Church and the Last Things*, 211. It should be noted however that modern Premillennialists recognize that while the chain may not be *physical*, it must nevertheless represent some kind of actual restraint in a particular location. Paul N. Benware has demonstrated that to take the chain to be merely symbolical of certain restrictions placed upon Satan during the Gospel age, requires the interpreter to ignore the following statement about Satan being confined to the *abyss*. The demons possessing Legion in Luke 8:31 feared being sent to the Abyss. Paul N. Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy: A Comprehensive Approach*. (Chicago: Moody Publishers. 1995), 129-30. This view requires the demons to be speaking with the same symbolic language for restraint that John uses here, or for John to be using *the abyss* also to refer to mere restraint.

not allow for this *spiritual interpretation*, at least not by Lloyd-Jones' scheme, then what *does* it mean? Evidently, another scheme of interpretation must be applied if the answer to that question is to be secured.

Finally, it is remarkable to observe once more the difference in Lloyd-Jones' two views regarding Israel. He approached the same subject, first *theologically*, following as best he could, the analogy of scripture to ensure a consistent interpretation with his theological system, and reacting it seems to the theological alternatives that were before him. Then he approached it again, but this time driven by the text of Romans, and largely confined within it.⁶³ Under these circumstances, he found it impossible to deny a future national restoration of Israel. Had he only known some of the many rigorously Biblical answers to his objections that have been formulated in recent years, and if he had not been reacting so strongly against the extremes of Premillennialists of a bygone era, perhaps his view would have changed further still.

As a footnote to Lloyd-Jones' story, it is noteworthy that Iain Murrays comments about Dispensationalism in his biographical sketch of John MacArthur contain essentially the same objections that Lloyd-Jones espoused.⁶⁴ If indeed a generation of men has been influenced by this giant of the faith, then a generation growing up needs perhaps to face the reality that the argument has moved on. Many questions on millennial and Dispensational issues remain, but it would be a shame for British evangelicals to ignore the biblical arguments of the last 50 years.

⁶³ Note the large difference in the numbers of cross references in the two treatments of the same issue. The Romans 11 exposition contains significantly less.

⁶⁴ Murray, Iain H. "John MacArthur: A Sketch of an Evangelical Leader." In *Truth Endures: Commemorating Forty Years of Unleashing God's Truth One Verse at a Time 1969-2009*, by John MacArthur, 7-69. (Panorama City, CA: Grace To You, 2009), 66-69.

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