

4.11 - Millennial Kingdom

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CONTENTS

- 4.11.1 - Views of the Millennium
- 4.11.2 - Allegorizing and Spiritualizing the Truth
- 4.11.3 - Why a Millennial Kingdom?
- 4.11.4 - Summary of the Millennial Kingdom
- 4.11.5 - Millennial Reign of Messiah
- 4.11.6 - Millennial Reign of the Saints
- 4.11.7 - Millennial Passages
- 4.11.8 - Who Populates the Millennial Kingdom?
- 4.11.9 - The Millennial Kingdom in the Early Church
- 4.11.10 - Additional Resources on the Millennial Kingdom

The phrase “Millennial Kingdom” refers to a future period when Jesus Christ reigns over an earthly kingdom for 1,000 years.

“The Millennium,” [is] from the Latin words “Mille” (1000) and “Annum” (year). It is to be regretted, however, that the word “Millennium” ever supplanted the Biblical word “Kingdom,” for it is this period that Christ taught His Disciples to pray for in the petition —“Thy Kingdom Come. . .” [Mat. 6:10].¹

The Millennial Kingdom on Earth

[2](#)

Most agree, when taken at face value, chapter 20 of the book of Revelation reveals there is to be a future earthly kingdom of 1,000 years duration following the Second Coming of Christ. Yet there is great disagreement as to whether this is *actually* what the passage describes. For a variety of reasons, many refuse to interpret passages in the book of Revelation literally using The **Golden Rule of Interpretation**. This is especially true concerning Revelation 20⁺ which is the focal point in the [NT](#) for differences between the three main eschatological systems of interpretation: [premillennialism](#), [postmillennialism](#), and [amillennialism](#).

4.11.1 - Views of the Millennium

Each of the three major views concerning the Millennium is summarized below. We believe the Scriptures, when interpreted normally according to the **Golden Rule of Interpretation**, teach [premillennialism](#)—that after Christ returns He establishes a literal, earthly kingdom lasting one thousand years and rules from the throne of David. After the thousand years, God creates a new heaven and a new earth which is the eternal state that most today would consider as “heaven.” Then, Christ’s throne and the Father’s throne (Rev. 3:21⁺) merge into a single throne, “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1⁺).

Views of the Return of Christ and the Millennium³

| View | Christ Returns | Characteristics | Interpretation |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Premillennialism | Before the 1,000 year kingdom. | Christ returns <i>before</i> establishing His literal kingdom on earth. He will reign with his saints in fulfillment of OT and NT prophecy. The reign on earth will last for 1,000 years. | Futurist |
| Postmillennialism | After a golden age on earth. | Christ will return <i>after</i> the 1,000 years which represent a golden age of unspecified duration. This age is ushered in by the triumph of the gospel as the world converts, in large part, to Christianity through the efforts of the church. | Idealist or Preterist |

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Amillennialism ⁴ | (No literal earthly kingdom.) | There is <i>no</i> literal reign of Christ over an earthly kingdom. Christ is <i>presently</i> reigning over a <i>spiritual kingdom</i> in either: (1) the hearts of men; (2) heaven, or (3) the church. The 1,000 years is a symbol representing an extended period of time. ⁵ Many amillennialists believe that the fullness of the kingdom has already arrived on earth and we are presently in the age between the first and second resurrections. “Generally speaking, this view holds that Christ will return in His second coming and immediately usher in the new heaven and the new earth with no intervening thousand-year reign. This view interprets many passages in the Old and New Testaments that refer to the millennial kingdom as being fulfilled in a nonliteral way, either in the present experience of the church on earth or the experience of the church in heaven.” ⁶ For example, Jerome: “The saints will in no wise have an earthly kingdom, but only a celestial one; thus must cease the fable of one thousand years.” ⁷ | Idealist or Preterist |
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4.11.2 - Allegorizing and Spiritualizing the Truth

One reason we spent considerable time discussing topics such as [Systems of Interpretation](#) before we began our verse-by-verse commentary was because of [the importance of interpretation](#) when reading the Scriptures. Although most believers read the same Bible text and agree that the Scriptures are God’s Word, views concerning the *meaning* of the text vary enormously. These variations in meaning attributed to the text are not the result of differences between different Bible texts, which are very minor, but are due to *differences in how the text is interpreted*. This is especially true for the book of Revelation and chapter 20. Although [premillennialists](#) read Revelation 20⁺ and the book of Revelation using *normal* interpretation, which recognizes figures of speech, [amillennialists](#) and [postmillennialists](#) generally do not. They tend to *spiritualize* or *allegorize* elements to fit their own ideas about what the text *should* mean:

The allegorizing trend was also advocated by A. A. Hodge, who writes, “The Old Testament prophecies, . . . which predict this [Davidic] kingdom, must refer to the present dispensation of grace [the church], and not to a futurereign of Christ on earth in person among men in the flesh. The spiritual interpretation of this difficult passage (Rev. 20:1-10⁺) is as follows: Christ has in reserve for his church a period of universal expansion and of pre-eminent spiritual prosperity. The New Testament is entirely silent on the subject of any such return [of the Jews to the land of their fathers]. . . . the literal interpretation of these [Old Testament] passages is inconsistent with what the New Testament plainly teaches as to the abolition of all distinctions between the Jew and Gentile.”⁸

Possibly the most extreme example of how far amillennialists will go in their twisting of the plain meaning of a passage is found in their interpretation of the binding of Satan in Revelation 20:1-3⁺. According to amillennialists, Satan was bound at the cross, but his “binding” is in such a way that *he can still deceive*. Although they play subtle word games in an attempt to mask the illogical implications of their teaching, the result is a denial of the plain reading of the text. The text says Satan is *bound, shut up, and sealed* in the *bottomless pit*, where *he cannot deceive the nations* for the duration of the thousand years. In contrast to the text, the amillennialist teaches that his binding is incomplete so he can still deceive while “bound.” This sort of binding is no binding at all. See our commentary on [Revelation 20:2](#). Ultimately, the disagreement between interpreters concerning whether Satan is currently bound and whether Scripture teaches a future [Millennial Kingdom](#) on earth reflects pervasive differences on foundational issues:

1. **Interpreting the OT** - How are OT promises to be understood? Must they be fulfilled as they were understood in the context of those who originally received them, using the normal meaning of language in their day? Premillennialists generally say, *yes*, but amillennialists and postmillennialists usually say either, *no* or, *it depends*. Walvoord observed: “A literal promise spiritualized is exegetical fraud.”⁹
2. **Kingdom Now** - Are all of God’s kingdom promises *already* active in the present age? Amillennialists and postmillennialists generally say, *yes*, whereas premillennialists say, *no*—there are major aspects of God’s kingdom which require a future literal reign on earth in the person of Jesus Christ. Amillennialists and postmillennialists will generally say that Christ is reigning from the Davidic throne in heaven *now*, whereas premillennialists say he is seated to the right hand of His Father’s throne and does not take up the Davidic throne until His literal return to earth (Mat. 25:31; Rev. 3:21⁺).¹⁰
3. **Who is Israel** - Amillennialists and most postmillennialists believe that the church is the “new Israel” and has inherited the OT promises originally given to the nation Israel. They minimize any distinctive role for the nation of Israel in the plan of God. Most Premillennialists believe that the church is a new spiritual creation which began on the Day of Pentecost and is separate and distinct from Israel. Also: that the OT promises given to national Israel still await a future literal fulfillment.

There are many other differences between these systems of interpretation, but these are among the most significant.

4.11.3 - Why a Millennial Kingdom?

Why must there be a future thousand-year kingdom on earth? Even in the absence of the book of Revelation, [premillennialists](#) would expect a future kingdom on earth because one is required in order for God to fulfill the many [OT](#) promises which require such a kingdom:

It is to be regretted, however, that the word “millennium” ever supplanted the Biblical word “kingdom.” For we are not dependent on the twentieth chapter of Revelation for our understanding of the kingdom age. It is mentioned and described so many times by the Hebrew prophets that the Bible would not make sense unless there is a literal kingdom. In fact, if there is no kingdom, God’s word cannot be trusted, and many of the promises of God to both Israel and the Gentile nations would go unfulfilled. That is impossible. . . . The kingdom is guaranteed if for no other reason than Jesus promised He would return and set it up and permit His twelve disciples to rule on thrones [Mat. 19:28; Luke 22:30] and as we shall see, so will His “saints.”^{[11](#)}

Due to the superficial knowledge of so many in our day . . . they have not recognized . . . in their study of the Scriptures . . . ‘the 1000 years’ of John are found in the Old Testament prophets, but still keep harping on the old and tuneless string that ‘the Millennium is found in *only one passage* of the Bible, and that in a very obscure book called the Apocalypse!’^{[12](#)}

None of the promises which God has given are more important than those which are the subject of unconditional formal agreements, called *covenants* which God made in the OT. A plain reading of each of the biblical covenants^{[13](#)} indicates there are elements of the covenants which remain unfulfilled. Since these covenants are *unconditional*, then it follows that they will be fulfilled else God’s word would be broken:

Another basis for the belief in a coming kingdom rests on the four unconditional, unfulfilled covenants [Abrahamic, Land, Davidic, New] God made with Israel. These covenants are unconditional and so rely solely on God for their fulfillment and not on Israel. They are also unfulfilled and since God is One who keeps His promises, they must be fulfilled in the future. They can only be fulfilled within the framework of a messianic age or a millennial kingdom.^{[14](#)}

Another reason there must be a [Millennial Kingdom](#) is because there are numerous passages, especially in the OT, which describe conditions which sound a lot like the eternal state,^{[15](#)} but contain elements which are incompatible with what we know about the eternal state. For example:

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. No more shall an infant from there *live but a few days*, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for **the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.** (Isa. 65:17-20) [emphasis added]

In the midst of describing a time of tremendous blessing and restoration, Isaiah mentions two facts which are incompatible with the eternal state: *death* and *sin* (cf. Rev. 21:4^{[+](#)}, 8^{[+](#)}; 22:15^{[+](#)}). It is obvious that this passage has never been fulfilled in history *past*. It most certainly doesn’t describe history *present*. And it cannot describe the *eternal state*. So what is an interpreter to do? There are basically two “solutions” to this predicament. Which solution one chooses determines if one winds up a premillennialist or not: (1) take the text at face value and assume there must be a time where conditions are as the text describes—the Millennial Kingdom on earth, or (2) spiritualize or allegorize the text to deny its literal meaning and interpret it as a vague description of general spiritual principles.

But to what part of the history of salvation are we to look for a place for the fulfillment of such prophecies as these of the state of peace prevailing in nature around the church, except in the millennium? A prophet was certainly no fanatic, so that we could say, these are beautiful dreams. . . . The prophet here promises a new age, in which the patriarchal measure of human life will return, in which death will no more break off the life that is just beginning to bloom, and in which the war of man with the animal world will be exchanged for peace without danger. And when is all this to occur? Certainly not in the blessed life beyond the grave, to which it would be both absurd and impossible to refer these promises, since they presuppose a continued mixture of sinners with the righteous, and merely a limitation of the power of death, not its utter destruction. But when then? This question ought to be answered by the anti-millennarians. They throw back the interpretation of prophecy to a stage, in which commentators were in the habit of lowering the concrete substance of the prophecies into mere doctrinal *loci communes* [generalities]. They take refuge behind the enigmatical character of the Apocalypse, without acknowledging that what the Apocalypse predicts under the definite form of the millennium is the substance of all prophecy, and that no interpretation of prophecy on sound principles is any longer possible from the standpoint of an orthodox antichiliasm, inasmuch as the antichiliasmists twist the word in the mouths of the prophets,

and through their perversion of Scripture shake the foundation of all doctrines, every one of which rests upon the simple interpretation of the words of revelation¹⁶

One of the purposes of the Millennial Kingdom is to demonstrate what life on the earth *would have been* had man not rebelled in the Garden of Eden, but instead had exercised his God-given dominion in righteousness. The restoration (Mat. 19:28; Acts 3:21) of the earth in preparation for the Millennial Kingdom will roll back conditions to be much like they were prior to the flood. Animals will be vegetarian and will no longer fear man. The earth will be highly productive and peace will extend throughout the globe. This is what would have been in the absence of man's rebellion. In the righteous rule of Jesus from Jerusalem, the Millennial Kingdom will be a time of great spiritual *and material* blessing, which was God's intention for the earth from the beginning. It forms a transition between present history, floundering in sin, and the eternal state of perfection.¹⁷ Those who oppose the idea of a literal earthly kingdom often claim that premillennialists hold to this unsophisticated (even crude) idea because they don't understand the spiritual blessings they *already* have and are unsatisfied with their lot. Some even claim that premillennialists are fleshly in their desire for material blessing:

An individual Christian may ask himself this question: "What more could the popular conception of the millennium give me that I already possess? I have a Saviour who is my Prophet, Priest, and King. God the Father is my covenant God. I have the forgiveness of sin. I have the promise of eternal life in heaven. I belong to the Church which is the Lamb's Bride. I have the Holy Spirit as my Teacher, Sanctifier, and Comforter. I have security against my greatest enemies: Death, Hell, and the Devil. I belong to the commonwealth of Israel and am not a stranger from the covenants of promise." What more does a Christian desire?¹⁸

Kik misrepresents the *motivation* behind premillennialism. It has nothing to do whatsoever with what premillennialists want or whether they are unsatisfied. The question is not about what *premillennialists want*, but what is it that *God wants* and, in particular, *what has God said He WILL do*? Premillennialists believe all that God has said and are not content to spiritualize away the plain meaning of the text in order to support the deluded notion that Satan is now bound and that the Church is ruling and reigning over the nations "to the ends of the earth" while the majority of the peoples on the earth haven't the slightest idea this is so! Another oft-heard criticism of a literal earthly kingdom is that such a belief is *carnal* and *fleshly*. In their pursuit of holiness, many have embraced the view that material things are *bad* and spiritual things are *good*. This idea is not from Scripture, but derives from the dualism of [gnosticism](#) which holds that the material realm is the seat of sin and the spiritual realm is the seat of pure things, lofty and high. But what does Scripture say? Who was it that created the material realm in the first place? God! What was God's assessment of the material realm? "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very good" (Gen. 1:31a). Neither material nor spiritual is inherently sinful. There are material things which are pure and there are spiritual things which are pure. There are material things which are sinful and there are spiritual things which are sinful (e.g., unclean spirits). The idea that a future time of *material* blessing is carnal is unsupportable from Scripture. It just so happens to be one aspect of a time of great blessing in *both the material and spiritual realms* which God has said He will bring on the earth. The problem for those who deny the future earthly kingdom is one of dealing with reality. No matter how triumphant one's theology, there comes a place when the rubber meets the road and practical reality impinges on faulty belief. The problem with those who deny premillennialism is that they confuse *lack of faith* with *faulty interpretation*. They blame the premillennialist for failing to realize the victory and dominion which the Church currently has because he lacks faith. However, the real problem is that the [amillennialist](#) or [postmillennialist](#) is deriving his theology from a faulty interpretation of the text. And in order to support that faulty view, he must continually deny the real facts on the ground. With each abortion, murder, war, or lie that occurs on the earth, the amillennialist—who believes Satan is *currently bound*—must go further and further out on a limb denying reality. The results are predictable: reality is increasingly denied by an incessant posturing of "victory" and "dominion" which is completely out-of-step with the real world. In its extreme forms, amillennial interpretation has more in common with Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science—which denies the reality of sickness and pain as a mirage of the mind—than with biblical Christianity. If Satan is bound, Amillennialists can only explain the reality of pain and sin and the horrid evidences of darkness all around us as a lack of faith or inadequate perspective on the part of the Church. For all the work has been done and all that remains is for the Church to realize what power she has and to take it up and overcome the sordid reality of darkness with "power theology." The idea that God prophesied that [Antichrist](#) will be *given* dominion over *faithful* saints during the Great Tribulation, as recorded by the books of Daniel and Revelation, is simply not permissible in their worldview. If Satan is bound and cannot touch believers, what Scripture records as faithful martyrs must in fact be untaught saints who lack faith! In the end, these spiritualized views do great damage. Not only do they twist the word of God so that it is made to serve up any desired result, but they damage the cause of Christ. The spiritualization of important passages calls into question the very foundation of the faith. Just where does spiritualization end and literal interpretation begin? If the resurrections of Revelation 20⁺ can be spiritualized, then why not our future physical resurrection or the resurrection of Jesus? If Satan is bound now, then perhaps we are also in the new heavens and the new earth? This is the slippery slope to full [preterism](#)—a heretical view. There is also the issue of our witness in the midst of a skeptical world. If we tell a nonbelieving observer of the nightly news that Satan is *bound*, how likely is he to trust our discernment? And if we can be so wrong about Satan, why should he trust what we have to say concerning *Jesus*? No, there are numerous reasons to expect a future Millennial Kingdom:

1. It is implied by God's desire to demonstrate righteous dominion.

2. OT promises, when normally interpreted, require it.
3. [NT](#) prophecies, when normally interpreted, describe it.
4. Scripture and our daily experience affirm that God's literal kingdom has not yet come on earth (Mat. 9:10).
5. Our daily experience affirms Satan is not bound.

4.11.4 - Summary of the Millennial Kingdom

It is not our purpose here to describe the Millennial Kingdom at great length. It is a large topic and the subject of scores of prophecies, especially in the [OT](#). (See [Additional Resources on the Millennial Kingdom](#).) The chart below provides a summary of the main characteristics of the [Millennial Kingdom](#). As is readily seen, it will be a time unlike any in history. It will also be unlike the conditions in the eternal state (Rev. 21⁺-22⁺).

Imagine a world dominated by righteousness and goodness, a world where there is no injustice, where no court ever renders an unjust verdict, and where everyone is treated fairly. Imagine a world where what is true, right, and noble marks every aspect of life, including interpersonal relations, commerce, education, and government. Imagine a world where there is complete, total, enforced, and permanent peace, where joy abounds and good health prevails, so much so that people live for hundreds of years. Imagine a world where the curse is removed, where the environment is restored to the pristine purity of the Garden of Eden, where peace reigns even in the animal kingdom, so that "the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them" (Isa. 11:6). Imagine a world ruled by a perfect, glorious Ruler, who instantly and firmly deals with sin. Humanly speaking, that description may seem far-fetched, a utopian fantasy that could never be reality. Yet it accurately describes conditions during the future earthly kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁹

Character of the Millennial Kingdom

| Attribute | Description | Scriptures |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Duration | One thousand years. | Rev. 20:2-5 ⁺ |
| Theocratic Rule | God will rule in the person of Jesus Christ on the throne of David. King David reigns as a prince under Christ. See Millennial Reign of Messiah . | 2S. 7:16; Ps. 89:20-37; Isa. 24:23; Jer. 30:9; 33:15-17; Eze. 34:23-24; 37:24-25; 45:22; Dan. 7:13-14; Hos. 3:5; Luke 1:30-33. |
| Representative Rule | The twelve apostles will represent Christ ruling over the twelve tribes. Church-age and Tribulation saints will represent Christ ruling over the Gentiles. See Millennial Reign of the Saints . | Isa. 32:1; Dan. 7:17-18, 21-22, 27; Mat. 19:28; Luke 22:30; Rev. 3:21 ⁺ ; 5:10 ⁺ . |
| Universal Rule | Christ's rule will extend both spiritually <i>and</i> literally over the entire earth. | Ps. 2:6-9; 72:8; Dan. 2:44; 4:34; 7:14, 27; Mic. 4:1-2; Zec. 9:10 |
| Seat of Government | The earthly Jerusalem will be restored, blessed, and greatly expanded to serve as the seat of government and worship. See Jerusalem Married to God . ²⁰ | Isa. 62; Isa. 65:18-19; Eze. 48:15-19; Luke 21:24; Rev. 11:2 ⁺ . |
| Global Environment | The heavens and earth will be renewed to restore the creation to Eden-like conditions and repair the damage from man's long reign of abuse and the judgments of the Tribulation period. ²¹ | Isa. 65:17; ²² Mat. 19:28 |
| Populace | Resurrected and glorified saints will rule in the midst of Christ's "brothers" (the faithful Jewish remnant), and the "sheep" (faithful Gentiles) who survive the Tribulation and enter the kingdom to form its initial population. Children will be born to those who enter the kingdom in their natural bodies. | Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19; 65:20, 23; Mat. 25:31; Rev. 20:4 ⁺ |
| The Curse | Many aspects of the curse (Gen. 3:15-19) will be reversed. People will live to a great age, but death will still occur. ²³ As before the flood, animals will revert to vegetarianism and will no longer fear man. Living waters will flow from beneath the sanctuary of the Millennial Temple bringing life to the regions they water. | Isa. 11:6-9; 65:20, 25; Eze. 47:8-12; Zec. 8:4; 14:8; (cf. Rev. 21:1-2 ⁺) |

| | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Productivity | The earth will be fruitful and men will enjoy the fruit of their labors. 24 | Ps. 67:6-7; 72:16; Isa. 35:1; 55:13; 65:22; Joel 2:24-26; 3:18; Amos 9:13-14 |
| Mount Zion | The region of Mount Zion will be lifted up to form the Mountain of the Lord's House. 25 See Millennial Temple | Isa. 2:2; 56:7; Eze. 20:40; 40:2; Zec. 14:4, 10-11; Mic. 4:1 |
| Israel | Israel will finally inhabit the Promised Land <i>permanently</i> . She will serve as the focal point of the nations because Jesus will reign from Jerusalem. 26 | Gen. 13:15; 17:8; 1Chr. 17:9; Ps. 105:8-11; Isa. 60:21; Jer. 3:18; 7:7; 30:3; 31:8-9; Eze. 37:25; 39:25-29; Amos 9:11-15 |
| Peace | All implements of war will be destroyed in favor of implements of productivity. Nations will no longer go to war. Disagreements between nations will be judged by Christ from Jerusalem. | Ps. 72:3-7; Isa. 2:5; 9:7; Eze. 37:26; Mic. 4:3 |
| Worship | A temple will stand in Jerusalem and all the nations will go up to Jerusalem to the Feast of Tabernacles. Sacrificial offerings will be resumed. 27 | Isa. 2:3; 56:6-7; 66:20-23; Eze. 43:20, 26; 45:15, 17, 20; Jer. 33:18; Dan. 9:24; Joel 3:18; Hag. 2:7-9; Zec. 6:12-15; 8:20-23; 14:16-21; Mal. 3:3-4. See Millennial Sacrifices . |
| Demonic Realm | Satan will be bound in the abyss and demons will be imprisoned in the regions of Babylon, Edom, and possibly, the abyss. See commentary on Revelation 18:2 and Revelation 20:1 . | Isa. 34:8-17; Rev. 18:2 ⁺ ; 20:3 ⁺ |
| Language | The curse of Babel (Gen. 11:7), the introduction of varied languages, will be reversed. All the earth will have one language. | Zep. 3:8-12 28 |

4.11.5 - Millennial Reign of Messiah

The book of Revelation describes saints who are resurrected at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. They sit on thrones and judgment is committed to them. It is said that they reign with Christ for the full thousand years (Rev. 20:4⁺). If they reign *with* Christ during this period, then it follows that He must reign upon the promised throne of David during the [Millennial Kingdom](#). There are many passages which show this is true, only a few of which we've included below. As we've seen throughout our study of the book of Revelation, Psalm 2 is the bedrock [OT](#) promise around which the grand theme of Revelation develops: the physical placement of Christ over the nations.

I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. . . . Ask of Me, and I will give *You* the nations *for Your* inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. (Ps. 2:7-8)

Christ will be given the ends of the earth for His possession. If this is to be the case, how can it be true now? Most of the world hasn't the foggiest notion they are being broken by His scepter as potter's vessels, as [amillennialists](#) would have us believe (Ps. 2:9)! Isaiah tells us of a specific time when Messiah will reign from the throne of David:

Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isa. 9:7)

He also says that the reign will be in Jerusalem and that there will be elders (lesser rulers, see [Millennial Reign of the Saints](#)) who rule with Him.

Then the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed; for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders, gloriously. (Isa. 24:23)

Isaiah indicates that although He was despised, kings and princes will arise (in honor and worship) for Him:

Thus says the Lord, The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nation abhors, to the Servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship, because of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel; and He has chosen You." (Isa. 49:7)

Jeremiah tells us that in the time Christ reigns, there will be righteous judgment in the earth and that Israel will dwell safely during His reign:

“Behold, *the* days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this *is* His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” (Jer. 23:5-6)

How do we know this is yet future? First, the world cannot be characterized by righteous judgment. Second, Israel is not dwelling safely in her land.²⁹ Zechariah tells of a day when living waters will flow from Jerusalem, both to the east and to the west. In that day, the LORD will be King over all the earth:

And in that day it shall be *That* living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—“The LORD *is* one,” and His name one. (Zec. 14:8-9)

The extent of His rule is global and is *recognized to be so by all nations*. This is certainly not the case today. Micah mentions a time of physical healing during which dispersed Israel will no longer be outcast, but will be a strong nation. At that time, Messiah will begin His eternal rule:

I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcast a strong nation; so the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on, even forever. (Mic. 4:7)

In the [NT](#), Jesus promised his disciples that they would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel:

So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Mat. 19:28)

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end. (Luke 1:32-33)

Of particular interest, both Matthew and Luke record the *future* aspect of His rule. Jesus says this rule will be “in the regeneration,” [παλιγγενεσί](#) [paligenesia]—*again genesis*—when the earth is renovated following the destruction of the Tribulation in preparation for the Millennial Kingdom. This is not a spiritual regeneration, but refers to a physical reconstruction of the earth after His Second Coming. Additional evidence of the *future* reign of Jesus on His throne can be found in His teaching concerning the Sheep and Goat Judgment.

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, **then** He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. (Mat. 25:31-32) [emphasis added]

Notice carefully the chronology of what Jesus said: *When* the Son of Man comes in His glory . . . *then* He will sit on *His* throne. How much clearer could it be? Jesus’ reign on His own throne begins when He comes in His glory. This does not occur until the Second Coming, when He arrives with His holy angels. Until then, He is seated with His Father on a throne in heaven which is not the throne of David (Rev. 3:21⁺). When Paul wrote to Timothy, he explained that Christ would judge at His appearing which would coincide with His kingdom:

I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom. . . (2Ti. 4:1)

The book of Revelation indicates that Jesus’ earthly rule is *future*:

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. (Rev. 3:21⁺)

In the future, Christ will grant the overcomer to sit with Him on His throne, just like He was presently sitting with His Father on *His* throne. Jesus said these words after the crucifixion, resurrection, and several decades of the Church age had already passed. The certainty of a literal, future, earthly reign is the subject of the declaration at the sounding of the seventh trumpet:

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become *the* kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” (Rev. 11:15⁺)

This alludes to Psalm 2 (*our Lord and of His Christ*) and indicates that when Jesus rules as King, there will be no mistaking it! You will either be a broken potsherd or a humble servant. The countless authorities in our own day who reject Christ or don’t even know

about Him are not in the picture which Scripture paints for the ultimate *physical* dominion of our Lord during His Millennial Kingdom.

4.11.6 - Millennial Reign of the Saints

As we saw above, Revelation 20:4⁺ mentions resurrected saints who rule and reign with Christ. Many other passages, both in the [OT](#) and [NT](#), indicate the saints will co-rule with their Lord. Isaiah indicates a coming righteous reign where princes will rule with Messiah:

Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule with justice. (Isa. 32:1)³⁰

Daniel received detailed revelation concerning the timing and reality of the rule of the saints. It does not occur until after [the Beast](#) is destroyed, just as the book of Revelation records (Rev. 19:20⁺). We know from Revelation 19⁺ that the [Beast](#) is destroyed *at the Second Coming of Christ*, therefore the reign of the saints has not yet come:

Those great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings *which* arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. (Dan. 7:17-18)

I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. (Dan. 7:21-22)

Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. (Dan. 7:27)

Prior to their co-rule with Christ, they will undergo tribulation at the hands of the Beast (Rev. 13:7⁺, 15⁺; 15:2⁺; 20:4⁺). They are not just given a vague spiritual kingdom subject to ridicule by unbelievers who cannot tell it even exists. No! The kingdom and dominion is *both* spiritual and literal and there will be no question on the part of anyone concerning its reality when it arrives! In the gospels, Jesus indicated that faithful servants would be given authority over cities (Luke 19:17-19). Numerous times James and John sought the position of being on the left and right of Jesus—positions of shared rulership (Mat. 20:20 cf. Mark 10:37). In the book of Revelation, Jesus said that overcomers would sit with Him on His throne, even as He then sat on His father's throne:

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. (Rev. 3:21⁺)

This particular verse is very important because it shows the high degree of authority believers will have with Jesus. It also indicates that in approximately A.D. 95, when Jesus spoke these words, *He was not on His own throne!* This is a very important point to understand: the throne He will be taking is the throne of David (Mat. 25:31) and it is on *earth*. Although we have been made kings and priests (or a kingdom, priests to God—see commentary on [Revelation 5:10](#)), our reign is future and initially upon the *earth*:

And have made us kings and priests to our God; and **weshall reign** on the **earth**. (Rev. 5:10⁺) [emphasis added]

One of the criticisms that has been leveled against the [premillennial](#) understanding of the [Millennial Kingdom](#) is that it only lasts 1,000 years, whereas Scripture is replete with passages indicating Christ's kingdom will be eternal.

The amillennialist sees a conflict here and insists that the eternality of Christ's kingdom does not permit any place for a thousand year reign on earth. Calvin's reason for rejecting the premillennial view as his concept that the thousand year reign nullified the eternal reign of Christ. Did the premillennialist limit the reign of Christ to a thousand years, his contention that "their fiction is too puerile to require or deserve refutation" would be true. However such is not the case. An important Scripture bearing on the discussion is 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.³¹

The solution to this problem is found in recognizing the transition which Paul records in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28. Christ rules in the millennium until the Great White Throne Judgment, when death itself is finally vanquished (Rev. 20:14⁺ cf. Rev. 21:4⁺). Then, He places His kingdom under the Father. Yet His rule continues into the eternal state, where there is a new heavens and a new earth (Rev. 21:1⁺) and where the saints will continue to co-rule with Him for eternity (Rev. 22:5⁺).

[1Cor. 15:24, 28] does not mean the end of our Lord's regal activity, but rather that from here onward in the unity of the Godhead He reigns with the Father as the eternal Son. There are no longer two thrones: one His Messianic throne and the other the Father's throne, as our Lord indicated in Revelation 3:21⁺. In the final Kingdom there is but one throne, and it is "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:3⁺).³²

4.11.6.1 - Judgment by the Saints

Not only will the saints reign with Christ, they will also judge with Him (Rev. 20:4+). It is important to realize that even though the saints will perform judgment, this will not be the dominant activity during the Millennial Kingdom, at least not in the sense of meting out punishments.³³

Note that the term “judge” is used in a broader sense in Scripture than in our common parlance; it is often equivalent to ruler or king. This has an important bearing upon our conception of Christ returning to judge the earth at the Second Advent. The judgeship of Christ is not limited to passing sentence, but constitutes his reign as king over the earth.³⁴

The Psalmist records that all the saints will have the honor of judging rebellious nations. The judgment will be in accord with God’s written word. In their rule with Christ, they will have positions of great authority. They will be over the kings and nobles, leaders among the nations still in their natural bodies:

Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment—This honor have all His saints. Praise the Lord! (Ps. 149:6-9)

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? (1 Cor. 6:2-3).

When Paul was advising the Corinthians to judge matters among themselves, he reminded them that the saints will judge the world as well as angels. Paul wrote this during the current Church-age, after the crucifixion and resurrection. Surely it strains the imagination too far to adopt the view that this judging capability is already present and that we are judging angels! No, it pertains to a future time: the [Millennial Kingdom](#) and beyond. It appears that judgment within the Millennial Kingdom will be divided, at its highest levels, between a line of Gentile authority and a line of Jewish authority. Several passages mention judgment of the Jewish tribes during this time:

Where the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, to the Testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord. Thrones are set there for judgment, the thrones of the house of David. (Ps. 122:4-5)³⁵

So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Mat. 19:28)

“But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Luke 22:28-30)

It appears that Jewish saints—the resurrected apostles—will judge over the twelve tribes, the nation of Israel. At that time, all [ten tribes](#) will be present and accounted for. See [Ten Tribes Lost?](#)

4.11.7 - Millennial Passages

Since it is often said that the [premillennial](#) view of a literal, earthly Millennial Kingdom rests upon what is held to be an obscure foundation in Revelation 20+, we offer the following evidence which demonstrates otherwise. This is by no means a comprehensive collection of the many passages in Scripture which describe the millennium. These are among the most obvious and important passages, although we are sure others could be included. Anyone with an open mind and a sound interpretive foundation for how to read the text can see for themselves that the doctrine of the [Millennial Kingdom](#) is hardly obscure or wanting for evidence. We have emphasized portions of passages which illustrate specific incompatibilities with the eternal state. There is neither death, sin, [Temple](#) (the “LORD’s house”), or sea in the eternal state (Isa. 60:20; Rev. 21:1+, 4+, 22+, 23+, 25+; 22:5+).³⁶ There is no rebellion or need to judge in eternity. Passages which indicate a time of tremendous blessing, but which include these elements, must be interpreted in one of two ways: (1) as describing the current reality of believers in terms which are flowery rhetoric with little bearing on reality, or (2) as describing a golden age to come which cannot be the eternal state, but when great blessing will flow forth on the earth. It is our belief they are literal descriptions of the Millennial Kingdom on earth.

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the kingdom is the LORD’S, and He rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship; all those who go down to the dust shall bow before Him, **Even he who cannot keep himself alive.** (Ps 22:27-29) [emphasis added]

Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For **You shall judge** the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth. Selah let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. *Then* the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him. (Ps 67:4-7) [emphasis added]

Give the king Your judgments, O God, And Your righteousness to the king's Son. **He will judge** Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with justice. The mountains will bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, **And will break in pieces the oppressor.** They shall fear You as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, like showers *that* water the earth. In His days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and **His enemies will lick the dust.** The kings of Tarshish and of the isles will bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him. For He will deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and *him* who has no helper. He will spare the poor and needy, and will save the souls of the needy. He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; and **precious shall be their blood in His sight.** And He shall live; and the gold of Sheba will be given to Him; prayer also will be made for Him continually, *and* daily He shall be praised. There will be an abundance of grain in the earth, on the top of the mountains; its fruit shall wave like Lebanon; and *those* of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun. And *men* shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things! And blessed *be* His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled *with* His glory. Amen and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended. (Ps 72:1-20) [emphasis added]

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days *That* the mountain of the **LORD'S house** Shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the **house of the God of Jacob;** He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. **He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people;** they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the LORD. (Isa. 2:2-5) [emphasis added]

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight *is* in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but **with righteousness He shall judge** the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; **He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.** Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The **nursing child** shall play by the cobra's hole, and the **weaned child** shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious. (Isa. 11:1-10) [emphasis added]

Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.' Thus says the Lord, The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nation abhors, to the Servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship, because of the Lord who is faithful, The Holy One of Israel; and He has chosen You." (Isa. 49:6-7)

In the following passage from Isaiah, the prophet is given a vision which begins with elements of the millennium (sea, altar, [Temple](#), ships, disobedience), but then appears to extend beyond to describe the eternal state (sun or moon not needed for light):

Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be nursed at *your* side. Then you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy; because the abundance of the **sea** shall be turned to you, the wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you. The multitude of camels shall cover your *land*, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together to you, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall ascend with acceptance on **My altar**, and I will glorify the **house of My glory.** Who *are* these *who* fly like a cloud, and like doves to their roosts? Surely the coastlands shall wait for Me; and the **ships of Tarshish will come** first, to bring your sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them, to the name of the LORD your God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because He has glorified you. The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in My wrath I struck you, but in My favor I have had mercy on you. Therefore your gates shall be open continually; they

shall not be shut day or **night**, that *men* may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles, and their kings in procession. For **the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish, and those nations shall be utterly ruined**. The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the pine, and the box tree together, to beautify the place of **My sanctuary**; and I will make the place of My feet glorious. Also the sons of those who afflicted you shall come bowing to you, and all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet; and they shall call you The City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, so that no one went through *you*, I will make you an eternal excellence, a joy of many generations. You shall drink the milk of the Gentiles, and milk the breast of kings; you shall know that I, the LORD, *am* your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. Instead of bronze I will bring gold, instead of iron I will bring silver, instead of wood, bronze, and instead of stones, iron. I will also make your officers peace, and your magistrates righteousness. Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; but you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise. The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; but the LORD will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory. Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended. Also your people *shall all be* righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. I, the LORD, will hasten it in its time. (Isa. 60:1-22) [emphasis added]

“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. **No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.** They shall build houses and inhabit *them*; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, *so shall be* the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they *shall be* the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust *shall be* the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” says the LORD. (Isa. 65:17-25) [emphasis added]

“I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: *to* Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, *to* the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,” says the LORD, “as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the **house of the LORD**. And I will also take some of them for priests *and* Levites,” says the LORD. “For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the LORD, “So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass *That* from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD. “And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.” (Isa. 66:19-24) [emphasis added]

Then say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. David My servant *shall be* king over them, and they shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children’s children, forever; and My servant David *shall be* their prince forever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My [tabernacle](#) also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.” ’ (Eze. 37:21-28)

Then he brought me back to the door of the **temple**; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the **temple** toward the east, for the front of the **temple** faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the **temple**, south of the altar. He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side. And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my* ankles. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my* knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water *came up*

to my waist. Again he measured one thousand, *and it was* a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen *this*?" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river. When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, *were* very many trees on one side and the other. Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters **the sea**. *When it reaches the sea*, its waters are healed. And it shall be *that* every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. It shall be *that* fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be *places* for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of **the Great Sea**, exceedingly many. But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all *kinds of* trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine." (Eze. 47:1-12) [emphasis added]

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days. (Ho 3:4-5)

"Therefore wait for Me," says the LORD, "Until the day I rise up for plunder; My determination *is* to gather the nations to My assembly of kingdoms, to pour on them My indignation, all my fierce anger; all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy. For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, The daughter of My dispersed ones, shall bring My offering. In that day you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds in which you transgress against Me; for then I will take away from your midst those who rejoice in your pride, and you shall no longer be haughty in My holy mountain. I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD." (Zep. 3:8-12)

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days *That* the mountain of the **LORD'S house** Shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to **the house of the God of Jacob**; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. **He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off**; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make *them* afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. For all people walk each in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever. "In that day," says the LORD, "I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast and those whom I have afflicted; I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcast a strong nation; so the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on, even forever. And you, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, even the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem." Now why do you cry aloud? *Isa. there* no king in your midst? Has your counselor perished? For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor. Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in birth pangs. For now you shall go forth from the city, you shall dwell in the field, and to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered; there the LORD will redeem you from the hand of your enemies. Now also many nations have gathered against you, who say, "Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion." But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, nor do they understand His counsel; for He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor. "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hooves bronze; you shall beat in pieces many peoples; I will consecrate their gain to the LORD, and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth." (Mic. 4:1-13) [emphasis added]

Thus says the LORD: 'I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the Mountain of the LORD of hosts, the Holy Mountain.' Thus says the LORD of hosts: '**Old men and old women** shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, **Each one with his staff in his hand because of great age**. The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.' (Zec. 8:3-5) [emphasis added]

And in that day it shall be *That* living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward **the eastern sea** And half of them toward **the western sea**; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—"The LORD *is* one," and His name one. All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin's Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and *from* the Tower of Hananeel to the king's winepresses. *The people* shall dwell in it; and no longer shall there be utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. . . . And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be *that* **whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague**

with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. In that day "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" shall be *engraved* on the bells of the horses. The pots in **the LORD'S house** shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in **the house of the LORD of hosts** (Zec. 14:8-11, 16-21) [emphasis added]

"For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; in every place incense *shall be* offered to My name, and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the nations," says the LORD of hosts. (Mal. 1:11)

So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, **judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**" (Mat. 19:28) [emphasis added]

"But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones **judging the twelve tribes** of Israel." (Luke 22:28-30) [emphasis added]

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped 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. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4-6⁺)

4.11.8 - Who Populates the Millennial Kingdom?

Source: Bruce Hurt, MD

An aspect of the Millennial Kingdom which some initially find surprising is the continuance of birth and death:

No more shall an infant from there *live but a few* days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner *being* one hundred years old shall be accursed. (Isa. 65:20)

This fact poses a substantial problem for those who believe in a [posttribulational rapture](#). The problem is as follows. If the Rapture takes place at the Second Coming of Christ, then *all* the righteous are taken at His return. Since the Rapture involves the translation of the living saints, all who participate in the Rapture receive their glorified bodies. If this is so, at the Second Coming of Christ there are only two types of people: believers who have glorified bodies and unbelievers who remain in their natural bodies. Since all the ungodly are purged at the Second Coming, the only ones remaining to enter the [Millennial Kingdom](#) would be saints in their glorified bodies. Resurrected saints do not reproduce: "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven" (Mark 12:25). The question then becomes, who is it that enters the Millennial Kingdom to produce the children which Scripture records will be born?

[The posttribulation position holds that] at the end of the Tribulation all living believers will be raptured, given resurrection bodies, and return immediately to earth in the single event of the rapture and second coming. This would seem to eliminate all redeemed, unresurrected people from the earth at that point in time so that there would be no one left to populate the millennial kingdom. If the wicked survivors are either killed or consigned to Hades at the end of the Tribulation, then there will be no one left in an unresurrected body to enter the Millennium.^{[37](#)}

It is obviously impossible to incorporate a translation of all saints at the end of the tribulation and the beginning of the millennium as it would result in all saints receiving a spiritual body, leaving none to populate the earth in the millennium.^{[38](#)}

There is the additional problem of how to explain the Sheep and Goat Judgment (Mat. 25:31-46) which makes no mention of a resurrection. It is a judgment of the living nations at the time of Christ's return (Mat. 25:31). If all the people of faith rise in the Rapture at the *end* of the Tribulation and then return with Christ to earth, who are "my brethren" and the "sheep," both of which find entry into God's kingdom?

Furthermore, an adjustment has to be made in the time of the judgment of the sheep and goats in Mat. 25:31-46 if the posttrib picture is correct. The reason is simple: If the rapture occurs after the Tribulation, then all the sheep (redeemed) will have been removed from the earth; thus, there would be no sheep to be part of that judgment if it occurs at the second coming, which is a

single event with the rapture [in the posttribulational view].³⁹

These are weighty arguments against the notion that the Rapture occurs at the Second Coming of Christ—that they are one and the same even. See [Rapture](#).

4.11.9 - The Millennial Kingdom in the Early Church

Some have tried to malign [premillennialism](#) by suggesting that it is a relatively novel development of recent times—that it is not a view which finds support among the early Church. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, in the earliest church, prior to the time of Augustine and Roman Catholicism, premillennialism was the dominant view of the Church. While we do not determine the truth of doctrine from the views of Church Fathers, it can be helpful to study their views to see how different areas of doctrine developed or what caused them to die away or change. In the case of belief in a literal, earthly kingdom, it is particularly interesting to see that the *earliest* Fathers for which we have record—even those who were only a generation or two away from our beloved John whose book we are studying—held to the same basic view premillennialists espouse. They interpreted God's promises *literally* and understood a coming kingdom of God on earth which did not correspond with the Church age. The premillennial view was the first view of the Church:

The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age is the prominent chiliasm, or millenarianism, that is the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years, before the general resurrection and judgment. It was indeed not the doctrine of the church embodied in any creed or form of devotion, but a widely current opinion of distinguished teachers, such as Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Methodius, and Lactantius; while Caius, Origen, Dionysius the Great, Eusebius (as afterwards Jerome and Augustine) opposed it. . . . It distinguishes, moreover, two resurrections, one before and another after the millennium, and makes the millennial reign of Christ only a prelude to his eternal reign in heaven, from which it is separated by a short interregnum of Satan. The millennium is expected to come not as the legitimate result of a historical process but as a sudden supernatural revelation. The advocates of this theory appeal to the certain promises of the Lord, but particularly to the hieroglyphic passage of the Apocalypse, which teaches a millennial reign of Christ upon this earth after the first resurrection and before the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. In connection with this the general expectation prevailed that the return of the Lord was near, though uncertain and unascertainable as to its day and hour, so that believers may be always ready for it. This hope, through the whole age of persecution, was a copious fountain of encouragement and comfort under the pains of that martyrdom which sowed in blood the seed of a bountiful harvest for the church.⁴⁰

The most explicit reference in Scripture to the thousand-year millennial reign of Christ is found in Revelation 20⁺. It is a significant fact that the early adherents of premillennialism (or chiliasm, as it was first called), either had direct contact with John, the longest living apostle, or with his most famous disciple Polycarp. . . . Papias (ca. 60-130), one of the earliest premillennialists, has been called by some the “father of millenarianism.” Irenaeus affirmed that Papias was “the hearer of John, and a companion of Polycarp.” Papias furnished the earliest extra-biblical witness to the millennial doctrine taught by the Apocalypse.⁴¹

The premillennial fathers of the ante-Nicene age included church leaders who were contemporary with and in some cases instructed by the apostles and those who were in turn their disciples. . . . In this group are: Clement (fl. ca. 90-100), bishop of Rome; Papias (ca. 60-ca. 130/155), bishop of Hierapolis; Polycarp (ca. 70-155/160), bishop of Smyrna; and Ignatius (d. ca. 98/117), bishop of Antioch. . . . Premillennialists of the second century included the apologist Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165); the polemicists Irenaeus (ca. 120-ca. 202), bishop of Lyons, and his disciple Hippolytus (d. ca. 236), presbyter and teacher in Rome; and from the African school, Tertullian (150-225), apologist, moralist, and theologian.⁴²

Dr. Whitby (*Treatise on Tradition*) gives us the following often-quoted statement: “The doctrine of the Millennium, or the reign of the saints on earth for a thousand years, is now rejected by all Roman Catholics, and by the greatest part of Protestants; and yet it passed among *the best Christians, for two hundred and fifty years, for a tradition apostolical*; and, as such, is delivered by *many* Fathers of the second and third century, who speak of it as the tradition of *our Lord and His apostles*, and of *all the ancients* who lived before them; who tell us *the very words* in which it was delivered, *the Scriptures* which were then so interpreted; and say *that it was held by all Christians that were exactly orthodox*. It was received not only in the Eastern parts of the Church, by Papias (in Phrygia), Justin (in Palestine), but by Irenaeus (in Gaul), Nepos (in Egypt), Apollinaris, Methodius (in the West and South), Cyprian, Victorinus (in Germany), by Tertullian (in Africa), Lactantius (in Italy), and Severus, and by the Council of Nice” (about A.D. 323).⁴³

George E. Ladd (*Crucial Questions About The Kingdom of God* [Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1952] 23) forcefully concludes, “With one exception [Caius] there is no Church Father before Origen who opposed the millenarian interpretation, and there is no one before Augustine whose extant writings offer a different interpretation of Rev. 20:1-15⁺ than that of a future earthly kingdom consonant with the natural interpretation of language.”⁴⁴

All three of these fathers of the Western church, Cyprian, Hippolytus, and Victorinus, subscribed to the millenarian doctrine.⁴⁵

Among those who can be cited [in support of chiliasm in the third century] are Cyprian (200-258), Commodian (200-270), Nepos (230-280), Coracion (230-280), Victorinus (240-303), Methodius (250-311), and Lactantius (240-330).⁴⁶

Alas, the solid foundation of literal interpretation was about to suffer a devastating setback in the wedding of Church and state. With [The Rise of Allegorical Interpretation](#) and the accommodation of Christianity by the state, belief in a literal kingdom on earth faded into the long night of unsound interpretation which was to last over a thousand years—all the way to the Reformation. The worldly success of the Church as it came into power did not jibe with an expectation of future Tribulation or the need to await the physical presence of the King to inaugurate the kingdom. The idea arose that the ‘rod of iron’ which was to be Messiah’s rule (Rev. 2:27⁺; 19:15⁺; 20:4⁺) was to be found in the rule of the Church in this present age. Two powerful forces, allegorical interpretation and the state Church, combined to produce a steady decline in the ranks of literal interpreters:

The papacy is a false anticipation of the kingdom during the Church-historical period. “When Christianity became a worldly power under Constantine, the hope of the future was weakened by the joy over present success” [Bengel]. Becoming a harlot, the Church ceased to be a bride going to meet her Bridegroom; thus millennial hopes disappeared.⁴⁷

With the rising popularity of the allegorical method, belief in a literal millennial reign of Christ reached a crossroads in the middle of the third century. The Egyptian bishop Coracion, Neops’s successor, buckled under pressure from Alexandria and abandoned the premillennialism of his mentor . . . And Hippolytus, the pupil of Irenaeus, wavered in his stance as well. . . . By the time the literal method of interpretation reached its apex in the school at Antioch, premillennialism was virtually dead. Even though literalism naturally leads to a belief in premillennialism and the Antiochene school emphasized that interpretive approach to Scripture, the doctrine was not resurrected or advanced by Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350-428), Chrysostom (354-407), or Theodoret (386-458), the school’s three most prominent teachers.⁴⁸

In summary, millenarianism remained a normative doctrine during the first four centuries of the Christian era. It was not overthrown until Augustine brought together the concepts of the Church and the kingdom of Christ in such a way as to almost equivocate the two. However, two important factors had already set the stage for the transformation of the eschatological hope of a messianic kingdom into an ecclesiastical theocracy. Since the time of Justin, the prospect of an earthly messianic kingdom had become an altogether **Christian hope**, to the exclusion of **ethnic Israel’s** eschatological hope. The other factor was the widespread use made of **allegorical interpretation** of Scripture. [emphasis added]⁴⁹

It was only in the era of the Reformation (A.D. 1500s), when the darkness of allegorical interpretation began to be shaken off, that the dawn began in a return to a literal understanding of the Scriptures. Even then, sound interpretation was mainly applied to areas of doctrine other than eschatology. The study of “last things” had to wait several hundred more years before the same consistency of interpretation was extended to the study of prophecy. Below, we offer a sampling of the testimony of the early Church concerning a belief in a literal, earthly [Millennial Kingdom](#) to come. Their writings clearly establish the expectation of a Kingdom on earth at Christ’s return as the earliest view of the Church and one which we would do well to embrace since it reflects a plain reading of the text.

The Millennial Voice of the Early Church

| Father | Date (A.D.) | Millennial View |
|------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Barnabas | 1st cent. | “Among the Apostolic Fathers Barnabas is the first and the only one who expressly teaches a pre-millennial reign of Christ on earth. He considers the Mosaic history of the creation a type of six ages of labor for the world, each lasting a thousand years, and of a millennium of rest; since with God ‘one day is as a thousand years.’ The millennial Sabbath on earth will be followed by an eighth and eternal day in a new world, of which the Lord’s Day (called by Barnabas ‘the eighth day’) is the type.” ⁵⁰ While the seventh millennial day theory is not taught in Scripture, it is significant that the basic understanding of this early writing is that of a literal thousand-year reign on earth at the end of the age. ⁵¹ |
| Hippolytus | c.170- c.236 ⁵² | “In common with Justin and Irenaeus, Hippolytus entertains millenarian hopes, which he grounds on Rev. 20 ⁺ .” ⁵³ |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Irenaeus | c.130- c.200 ⁵⁴ | <p>"Irenaeus wrote the following concerning the blessings of the future Kingdom of God foretold in the Scriptures: 'The predicted blessing, therefore, belongs unquestionably to the times of the kingdom, when the righteous shall bear rule upon their rising from the dead; when also the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with an abundance of all kinds of food, from the dew of heaven, and from the fertility of the earth: as the elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, related that they had heard from him how the Lord used to teach in regard to these times.' "⁵⁵ "Irenaeus stated in even stronger terms than Justin that the premillennial doctrine was 'traditional orthodoxy.' He spoke of 'certain orthodox person' whose opinions were 'derived from heretical sources,' and asserted that 'they are both ignorant of God's dispensations, and of the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the [earthly] kingdom.' "⁵⁶ "Irenaeus, on the strength of tradition from St. John and his disciples, taught that after the destruction of the Roman empire, and the brief raging of antichrist (lasting three and a half years or 1260 days), Christ will visibly appear, will bind Satan, will reign at the rebuilt city of Jerusalem with the little band of faithful confessors and the host of risen martyrs over the nations of the earth, and will celebrate the millennial sabbath of preparation for the eternal glory of heaven; then, after a temporary liberation of Satan, follows the final victory, the general resurrection, the judgment of the world, and the consummation in the new heavens and the new earth."⁵⁷</p> |
| Jerome | 331- 420 ⁵⁸ | <p>Jerome was opposed to a literal, earthly kingdom: "The saints will in no wise have an earthly kingdom, but only a celestial one; thus must cease the fable of one thousand years."⁵⁹ Even so, Jerome admitted the premillennial view was held by many: "The evidence in favor of the general perpetuation of the doctrine is strengthened by the concessions of those who were among the first and most bitter opposers. Thus e.g. Jerome (<i>Com. on Jes.</i>, 19:10), says: 'that he durst <i>not condemn the (Millennial) doctrine, because many ecclesiastical persons and martyrs affirm the same.</i>' "⁶⁰</p> |
| Justin Martyr | c.100- 165 ⁶¹ | <p>"But I and whoever are at all points right-minded Christians know that there will be a resurrection of the dead a thousand years in Jerusalem which will then be built, adorned, enlarged as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and the others declare. And further, a certain man among us by the name of John predicted by revelation that was made to him that those who believe in our Christ would spend a thousand years in Jerusalem and thereafter the general of us. . . the eternal resurrection and judgement of all men would likewise take place."⁶²</p> |
| Lactantius | 240- c.320 ⁶³ | <p>"Lactantius wrote. . . 'At the end of the six thousandth year, all evil be abolished from the earth, and that justice reign for a thousand years, and that there be tranquility and rest from the labors which the world is now enduring for so long. . . When He shall have destroyed injustice and made the great judgment and restored to life those who were just from the beginning, He will stay among men for a thousand years and will rule them with a just dominion. . . Then those who will be living in bodies will not die, but will generate an infinite multitude during those same thousand years, . . . Those who will be raised from the dead will be in charge of the living as judges. . . . At this same time, also, the prince of demons who is the contriver of all evils [sic] will be found in chains, and he will be in custody for the thousand years.' "⁶⁴</p> |
| Papias | c.60- c.130 ⁶⁵ | <p>"[Papias] has recorded other accounts as having come to him from unwritten tradition, certain strange parables of the Lord and teachings of his and some other statements of a more mythical character. . . . Among other things he says that there will be a period of a thousand years after the resurrection of the dead when the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this earth. These ideas, I suppose, he got through a misunderstanding of the apostolic accounts, not realizing that the things recorded in figurative language were spoken by them mystically—Eusebius, <i>Church History</i> 3:39."⁶⁶</p> |
| Tertullian | c.160- c.220 ⁶⁷ | <p>"In a work which he wrote before his association with Montanism, Tertullian stated, 'But we do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years.' Then he wrote 'After its thousand years are over. . .there will ensue the destruction of the world and the conflagration of all things at the judgments.' "⁶⁸ "Tertullian was an enthusiastic Chiliast, and pointed not only to the Apocalypse, but also to the predictions of the Montanist prophets. But the Montanists substituted Pepuza in Phrygia for Jerusalem, as the centre of Christ's reign, and ran into fanatical excesses, which brought chiliasm into discredit, and resulted in its condemnation by several synods in Asia Minor."⁶⁹</p> |

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Victorinus | died c.304 ⁷⁰ | "Victorinus held firmly by the chiliastic interpretation of Rev. 20 ⁺ ." ⁷¹ "After Tertullian, and independently of Montanism, chiliasm was taught by Commodian towards the close of the third century, Lactantius, and Victorinus of Petau, at the beginning of the fourth." ⁷² |
|------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

4.11.10 - Additional Resources on the Millennial Kingdom

For those who are interested in studying the Millennial Kingdom in greater depth, we recommend the following resources:

- Lewis S. Chafer, *Major Bible Themes*, 350-359.⁷³
- Lewis S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 4:167-179.⁷⁴
- Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth*, 92-96.⁷⁵
- Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation*, 180-191.⁷⁶
- J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 427-546.⁷⁷
- George H. N. Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*.⁷⁸
- Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 508-511.⁷⁹
- John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*.⁸⁰
- Matthew Waymeyer, *Revelation 20⁺ and the Millennial Debate*.⁸¹
- Nathaniel West, *The Thousand Years in both Testaments*.⁸²

See [The Arrival of God's Kingdom](#). See [Millennial Temple](#). See commentary on [Revelation 20](#).

Notes

¹Clarence Larkin, [Dispensational Truth](#) (Glenside, PA: Rev. Clarence Larkin Estate, 1918, 1920), 92.

²Copyright © 2003 Ariel Ministries (www.ariel.org), P.O. Box 792507, San Antonio, TX 78279-2507. This image appears by [special permission](#) and may not be duplicated for use in derivative works. [Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), rev ed (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 2].

³For an excellent introductory overview of these views and their variations, see [John F. Walvoord, [The Revelation of Jesus Christ](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), 282-290].

⁴"Amillennialism today is divided into two camps. (1) The first . . . holds essentially to the Augustinian amillennialism, . . . This of course is also the view of the Roman Church. It finds the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises concerning a kingdom and kingdom blessings in Christ's reign from the Father's throne over the church, which is on earth. (2) The second . . . attacked the Augustinian position that the kingdom is earthly and viewed the kingdom as God's reign over the saints which are in heaven, thus making it a heavenly kingdom."—J. Dwight Pentecost, [Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 387.

⁵W. A. Criswell and Paige Patterson, eds., [The Holy Bible: Baptist Study Edition](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991), 1825.

⁶Lewis Sperry Chafer, [Major Bible Themes](#), rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), 352.

⁷Robert E. Lerner, "The Medieval Return to the Thousand-Year Sabbath," in Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn, eds., *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, 38-50, cited by [Thomas Ice and Timothy J. Demy, [The Return](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 58].

⁸Mal Couch, [Classical Evangelical Hermeneutics](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications), 12-13.

⁹John F. Walvoord, [The Millennial Kingdom](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), 200.

¹⁰"A theology which sees the church fulfilling the OT kingdom promises of Israel continually raises the question of how much the church should invade the realm of Caesar's government."—Robert L. Saucy, "[Israel and the Church: A Case for Discontinuity](#)," in John S. Feinberg, ed., [Continuity And Discontinuity](#) (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988), 259.

¹¹Larkin, [Dispensational Truth](#), 92.

¹²Nathaniel West, [*The Thousand Years in both Testaments*](#) (Fincastle, VA: Scripture Truth Book Co., n.d.), 79.

¹³We use the phrase *biblical covenant* to denote an agreement which Scripture itself calls a “covenant” rather than various imagined covenants which are imposed upon the text by the minds of creative theologians.

¹⁴Tim LaHaye, [“A Literal Millennium as Taught in Scripture, Part 2.”](#) in [*Pre-Trib Perspectives*](#), vol. 8 no. 8 (Dallas, TX: Pre-Trib Research Center, November/December 2003), 2.

¹⁵Many think of the eternal state as *heaven*, but it is both “heaven and earth” (Rev. 21:1⁺).

¹⁶Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, [*Commentary on the Old Testament*](#) (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 7:624.

¹⁷“In the Premillennial view the coming Kingdom becomes the consummating link between history and the eternal order, thus guarding the Church from either illusion or despair as regards the present life.”—Alva J. McClain, [*The Greatness Of The Kingdom*](#) (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), xii.

¹⁸J. Marcellus Kik, [*Revelation Twenty: An Exposition*](#) (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1955), 30.

¹⁹John MacArthur, [*Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 20:1.

²⁰“In Holy Scripture there are two Jerusalems: the one is on earth in the land of Palestine; the other is ‘above’ in heaven (Gal. 4:25-26; Heb. 12:22). Now the Old Testament prophets speak of a city which, in the coming Kingdom, shall be reclaimed from Gentile power, rebuilt, restored to the historic nation of Israel, and made the religious center of the world. This Jerusalem cannot be the ‘heavenly Jerusalem,’ for that city is impeccably holy, the eternal dwelling of the true God, and has never been defiled or marred by human sin and rebellion. Any such notion is to the highest degree impossible and absurd. All predictions of a restored and rebuilt Jerusalem must therefore refer to the historical city of David on earth.”—McClain, [*The Greatness Of The Kingdom*](#), 244.

²¹“In Matthew 19:28 Jesus declared that ‘th regeneration’ would take place ‘when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory.’ His terminology is significant. It indicates that when Christ, as the Son of man (as a human, a kinsman of mankind) rules the earth, there will be a return to the original state that existed when the earth was born, which is recorded in Genesis and involved mankind’s tenant possession or administration of the earth as God’s representative. Christ taught that He will begin to exercise that rule when He returns in glory with His holy angels (Mat. 25:31). . . . Peter declared that ‘the times of refreshing’ and ‘the times of the restitution of all things’ will come when God sends Christ back to be personally present on the earth. . . . F. F. Bruce wrote that ‘the restitution’ to which Peter referred in Acts 3:21 ‘appears to be identical with’ ‘the regeneration’ to which Jesus referred in Matthew 19:28, and that the restoration involved will include ‘a renovation of all nature.’ ”—Renald E. Showers, [*Maranatha, Our Lord Come*](#) (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995), 86-87.

²²This passage in Isaiah either describes the *regeneration* of the heavens and earth (cf. Mat. 19:28) since it precedes the description of the millennium which follows, or Isaiah saw the final heavens and earth and the millennium (Rev. 21:1⁺), but the order of their presentation in this passage is reversed.

²³Some believe that only unbelievers will die during the Millennial Kingdom: “Death in the millennium will be for unbelievers only. This is why the Bible does not speak of a resurrection of millennial saints, and why the resurrection of the tribulation saints is said to complete the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6⁺).” —Tim LaHaye, [“A Literal Millennium as Taught in Scripture, Part 4.”](#) in [*Pre-Trib Perspectives*](#), vol. 8 no. 10 (Dallas, TX: Pre-Trib Research Center, February 2004), 2.

²⁴“Some allege that the Millennial Kingdom cannot be a spiritual one if it is earthly. But ‘earthly’ and ‘spiritual’ are not necessarily mutually exclusive. If the two concepts were incompatible, Christians today could not be expected to live spiritual lives in earthly bodies. During the millennium, God will join the spiritual and the earthly in a full display of His glory on this earth. The earthly kingdom will manifest the highest standards of spirituality.”—Charles C. Ryrie, [*Basic Theology*](#) (Wheaton, IL: SP Publications, 1986), 510.

²⁵“The area of the present Temple Compound is not large enough to hold the Temple described by Ezekiel and will require some major geographical changes. That is why the new Mountain of Jehovah’s House will be necessary.”—Fruchtenbaum, [*The Footsteps of Messiah*](#), 457.

²⁶“The whole Bible, even the New Testament, is written by Jews. If revelation is to recommence in the millennial kingdom, converted Israel must stand at the head of humanity. In a religious point of view, Jews and Gentiles stand on an equal footing as both alike needing mercy; but as regards God’s instrumentalities for bringing about His kingdom on earth, Israel is His chosen people for

executing His plans.”—A. R. Fausset, [“The Revelation of St. John the Divine,”](#) in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, [A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments](#) (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 20:6.

²⁷But not for salvific purposes. See [Millennial Sacrifices](#).

²⁸“Here not only giving the millennial nations ‘cleansed’ or ‘purified’ lips, as regenerated peoples, but apparently also in the sense that ‘lip’ signifies ‘language’ (Gen. 11:1, 6-7, 9), and possibly indicating that the Hebrew language will be the one universal language of the Kingdom age (Zec. 14:9). That would be not all that surprising, since Israel will be the chief nation in that economy (Deu. 28:13) and Jerusalem in that day will be the religious and governmental capital of the millennial earth (Isa. 2:2-3; Zec. 8:20-23). Moreover, it is all the more probable since the judgment of the nations at the second advent will eventuate in the destruction of the satanic world system . . . That system had its beginning in ancient Babylon with its pride, idolatry, and rebellion (Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1-6). The gift of a pure speech will remove the curse of Babel, and it will anticipate the great millennial outpouring of the Spirit (Joel 2:28-32), of which Pentecost (Acts 2:1-11) was an illustration.”—Merrill F. Unger, [Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament](#) (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Zep. 3:9.

²⁹How does the amillennialist get around these logical contradictions to believe He reigns as described here *now*? It’s simple really. In biblical interpretation, you can make two wrongs *appear* to be right. Just redefine *Israel* to mean *Church*—which dwells safely in her Saviour’s promises—and you are well on your way to “making it work out.” This is perhaps the most serious danger of amillennialism: in the pursuit of its desired interpretation, it ignores the law of logical non-contradiction and simply contorts contrary evidence into supportive evidence.

³⁰“The princes who shall rule in justice prefigure those who will rule and reign with Christ in the coming Kingdom (Luke 22:30; 2Ti. 2:12; Rev. 2:26-27⁺; 3:21⁺).”—Ibid., Isa. 32:1.

³¹Pentecost, [Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology](#), 491-492.

³²McClain, [The Greatness Of The Kingdom](#), 513.

³³See [George H. N. Peters, [The Theocratic Kingdom](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1978, 1884), 2:352-361]

³⁴Jerome Smith, [The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), Acts 24:10.

³⁵“The plural ‘thrones’ (seats) has in view the bench of judges whose authority derives from the king (cf. Isa. 32:1). In the millennial Kingdom these seats will be occupied by co-rulers of the Messiah (Mat. 19:28).”—Unger, [Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament](#), Ps. 22:5.

³⁶It may be that there is no *sun*, *moon*, or *birth* in the eternal state, but see commentary on [Revelation 21:23](#) and [Revelation 22:2](#).

³⁷Charles C. Ryrie, [Come Quickly, Lord Jesus](#) (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1996), 87-88.

³⁸Walvoord, [The Millennial Kingdom](#), 243.

³⁹Ryrie, [Come Quickly, Lord Jesus](#), 89.

⁴⁰Philip Schaff and David Schley Schaff, [History of the Christian Church](#) (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997, 1916), 2.XII.158.

⁴¹Larry V. Crutchfield, [“Revelation in the New Testament,”](#) in Mal Couch, ed., [A Bible Handbook to Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 24.

⁴²Larry V. Crutchfield, [“Millennial Views of the Church Fathers,”](#) in Mal Couch, ed., [Dictionary of Premillennial Theology](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 256.

⁴³Peters, [The Theocratic Kingdom](#), 1:482-483.

⁴⁴James F. Stitzinger, [“The Rapture in Twenty Centuries of Biblical Interpretation,”](#) in Richard L. Mayhue, ed., [The Master’s Seminary Journal](#), vol. 13 no. 2 (Sun Valley, CA: The Master’s Seminary, Fall 2002), 153n19.

⁴⁵Mal Couch, ed., [A Bible Handbook to Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 27.

⁴⁶Walvoord, [The Millennial Kingdom](#), 123.

⁴⁷Fausset, [*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*](#), Rev. 20:5.

⁴⁸Crutchfield, [*Millennial Views of the Church Fathers*](#), 258.

⁴⁹Ronald E. Diprose, [*Israel and the Church: The Origin and Effects of Replacement Theology*](#) (Rome, Italy: Istituto Biblico Evangelico Italiano, 2000), 159.

⁵⁰Schaff, [*History of the Christian Church*](#), 2.XII.158.

⁵¹"The tradition was based on : (1) the six days of creation followed by a seventh day of rest (Gen. 2); (2) the Sabbath rest concept found in Hebrews (see Heb. 3:11; 4:1, 3, 5, 8-9, 11); and (3) the belief that in biblical chronology a day could represent a thousand years (2Pe. 3:8; Ps. 90:4). Many of the fathers understood these passages to teach by analogy and in prophetic symbolism that the world would endure for a period of six thousand years (represented by six days of Creation) and would then experience a seventh day of rest (represented by seventh day of rest following Creation). . . . While the year-day tradition was held by Jews and others before the church age, the Epistle of Barnabas (composed ca. A.D. 70/117-138) marked the beginning of the year-day tradition in Christian literature."—Larry V. Crutchfield, "[Millennial Year-Day Tradition.](#)" in Mal Couch, ed., [*Dictionary of Premillennial Theology*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 265.

⁵²Robert C. Walton, [*Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986).

⁵³Henry Barclay Swete, [*The Apocalypse of St. John*](#) (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998, 1906), cciv.

⁵⁴John D. Woodbridge, ed., [*Great Leaders of the Christian Church*](#) (Chicago, IL: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), 43.

⁵⁵Renald E. Showers, [*There Really Is a Difference! A Comparison of Covenant and Dispensational Theology*](#) (Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1990), 122.

⁵⁶Couch, [*A Bible Handbook to Revelation*](#), 24.

⁵⁷Schaff, [*History of the Christian Church*](#), 2.XII.158.

⁵⁸[Woodbridge, [*Great Leaders of the Christian Church*](#), 77]. The opposition of Jerome correlates to his relatively later date in history, when allegorical interpretation was gaining dominance.

⁵⁹Jerome in Robert E. Lerner, "The Medieval Return to the Thousand-Year Sabbath," in Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn, eds., [*The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*](#), pp. 38-50, cited in [Ice, [*The Return*](#), 58].

⁶⁰Peters, [*The Theocratic Kingdom*](#), 1:484.

⁶¹Walton, [*Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*](#).

⁶²Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., [*Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I*](#) (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 1.LXXX.239.

⁶³Michael Levy, ed., [*Britannica 2012 Deluxe Edition CDROM*](#), s.v. "Lactantius."

⁶⁴Showers, [*There Really Is a Difference! A Comparison of Covenant and Dispensational Theology*](#), 124-126.

⁶⁵Walton, [*Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*](#).

⁶⁶J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, [*The Apostolic Fathers*](#), 2nd ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 315.

⁶⁷Walton, [*Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*](#).

⁶⁸Showers, [*There Really Is a Difference! A Comparison of Covenant and Dispensational Theology*](#), 124.

⁶⁹Schaff, [*History of the Christian Church*](#), 2.XII.158.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 1.XII.83.

⁷¹Swete, [*The Apocalypse of St. John*](#), ccv.

⁷²Schaff, [*History of the Christian Church*](#), 2.XII.148.

⁷³Chafer, [*Major Bible Themes*](#), 350-359.

⁷⁴Lewis Sperry Chafer, [*Systematic Theology*](#) (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1976), 4:167-179.

⁷⁵Larkin, [*Dispensational Truth*](#), 92-96.

⁷⁶Clarence Larkin, [*The Book of Revelation*](#) (Glenside, PA: Rev. Clarence Larkin Estate, 1919), 180-191.

⁷⁷Pentecost, [*Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*](#), 427-546.

⁷⁸Peters, [*The Theocratic Kingdom*](#).

⁷⁹Ryrie, [*Basic Theology*](#), 508-511.

⁸⁰Walvoord, [*The Millennial Kingdom*](#).

⁸¹Matthew Waymeyer, [*Revelation 20 and the Millennial Debate*](#) (The Woodlands, TX: Kress Christian Publications, 2001, 2004).

⁸²West, [*The Thousand Years in both Testaments*](#).

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