

- I. Three primary views of the millennium are commonly taught in churches.
- A. The Millennium refers to the 1,000 years found in Revelation 20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.
    1. Millennialism holds that a literal 1,000 years will exist during which Satan is bound so he cannot deceive the nations, resurrected martyrs reign with Christ, and Christ will visibly reign over the whole world.
    2. This is also a literalist position.
  - B. Amillennialism “Amillennialists interpret the millennium ... as describing the present reign of the souls of deceased believers with Christ in heaven. They understand the binding of Satan ... as being in effect during the entire period between the first and second comings of Christ, though ending shortly before Christ’s return. They teach that Christ will return after this heavenly reign. Amillennialists believe we are presently living in the millennial kingdom, which is characterized by the simultaneous experiences of gospel victory and suffering for the gospel. This obviously indicates amillennialists interpret ‘one thousand’ figuratively. The gospel is victorious because Satan is bound, rendering him incapable of preventing the spread of the gospel; yet he is not utterly powerless from persecuting the Church. Just before the end, Satan will again be permitted to deceive the nations and persecution will increase dramatically. Christians are awaiting the visible, bodily return of Christ, which brings an end to all their suffering.” [Anthony Hoekema on The Gospel Coalition web site [TheGospelCoalition.org](http://TheGospelCoalition.org)]
  - C. Postmillennialism “Postmillennialism is an optimistic view of the future, and how the world will end. Postmillennials believe that the great commission - make disciples of all nations - is actually going to be fulfilled; that the nations will overwhelmingly turn to Jesus before He returns.” [[ligonier.org](http://ligonier.org)]
- II. Four primary views of the rapture are commonly taught in churches.
- A. All four of these views normally hold to a literal 1,000 years in Revelation 20.
  - B. The Pre-tribulational position teaches that Christ comes and snatches (rapture) His church prior to Daniel’s 70th week.
  - C. The partial rapture position teaches that “good” believers will be snatched up prior to Daniel’s 70th week, while “bad” believers are left behind to experience hardship.
  - D. The Mid-tribulational position teaches believers are taken up half way through Daniel’s 70th week.
  - E. The Post-tribulational position teaches believers are taken up at the end of Daniel’s 70th week when Christ returns to the earth in judgment.
  - F. The amillennial position does not normally hold to a rapture.
  - G. Those who are postmillennial do not hold to a rapture.
- III. Why do any of these issues matter?
- A. Some suggest that prophetic topics are tertiary or third tier problems and the Church should focus on reaching people with the gospel.
  - B. The New Testament writers treated prophecy as practical.
    1. It comforts about death (1 Thess. 4:13-17).
    2. It calms in persecution and false teaching (2 Thess. 1:5-7, 2:1-3).
    3. It encourages purification (1 Jh. 3:2-3).
    4. It teaches us to hold loosely to things of this life (1 Cor. 7:29-31).
    5. It encourages alertness (Rom. 13:11-14).
  - C. God said it. These studies will demonstrate that the premillennialism, pretribulation position reflects plainly what God has said in His Word.
  - D. It results from a consistent literal or plain reading of Scripture, as opposed to an allegorical reading.
  - E. It recognizes and honors God’s distinction between Israel and the Church.
    1. Each has different promises.
    2. Each has different rules or way of life.
    3. Each has distinct future promises.
  - F. Nearly all amillennial and postmillennial interpreters treat the Church as the new Israel, true Israel, or united to Israel.
  - G. Displacing the resurrection such as amill and postmill positions overturns The Faith of some believers (2 Tim. 2:17-18). It makes the “believer’s” future uncertain.

## IV. The Bible presents a literal one thousand years in Revelation 20.

A. The word millennium comes from the Latin *mille* - thousand and *annum* - year.

## 1. The expression thousand years occurs six times in Revelation 20.

- a) Satan is bound for a thousand years (20:2).
- b) Satan is locked away so he cannot deceive the nations for a thousand years (20:3).
- c) Resurrected people who had been killed for their refusal to worship the beast, they will reign with Christ for a thousand years (20:4).
- d) The rest of the dead do not live until the thousand years are completed (20:5).
- e) Those who share in the first resurrection will be priests of God and Christ and reign with Christ for a thousand years (20:6)
- f) Satan is released when the thousand years are completed and then deceives the nations again (20:7).

## 2. These six repeated expressions define a time of a thousands years encompassing two large matters.

- a) Satan is not allowed to deceive the nations.
- b) Some resurrected people reign with Christ.

## 3. Critics of this literal/normal reading of Revelation 20 claim that Revelation 20 is a hard chapter to understand in a hard book to understand. NEITHER IS TRUE!!

- a) It's true that this is the only text that reveals the exact number years.
- b) It is not true that no other texts refer to this length of time.

## B. Revelation is not a confusing or difficult book to understand.

## 1. Revelation has a three part outline (1:19).

- a) John had seen a vision of Christ (1).
- b) John would receive letters to the seven churches (2-3).
- c) John would receive visions of the "things that come after these things (4-22).

## 2. Let's survey Revelation 4-22, and consider some "confusing" images.

- a) 4-5 views a scene in heaven.

## (1) It includes figurative things.

(2) 24 elders may be literal or may be representative of the Church in heaven.

(3) 7 lamps represent the Spirit in His seven works. NOTE: the book tells you what the symbol represents.

(4) 4 living beings/cherubs are present. These are real.

(5) A lamb looking like it has just been slain who is the Lion from the tribe of Judah is Jesus Christ (6:5-6).

(6) Note, before Christ rules, He is slain and has the right to break the seals.

## b) 6 reveals six seals that Jesus breaks.

(1) 6:1-8 reveal four conditions that will happen on earth in the first half of this Tribulation.

(a) Forced peace and conquest

(b) No peace but war

(c) Famine

(d) Death

(e) These strike the whole world not Jerusalem alone.

(2) 6:9-11 reveals believers killed for their testimony crying out for vengeance.

(3) 6:12-16 a great earthquake shakes the WHOLE world and mankind recognizes God's anger.

c) 7:1-8 12,000 from each tribe of Israel is sealed to be protected.

d) 8:2-9:21; 11:14-19 seven trumpets announce judgments in the last half of this Tribulation.

(1) A third of all vegetation is burned.

(2) A third of the seas become blood and a third of sea life is destroyed as well as ships.

(3) A third of all fresh water became poisonous.

(4) A third of the natural lights are darkened.

(5) Unusual beings come out of the abyss to torment unsealed people for five months and people are unable to die.

(6) Four angels are released and a massive army comes from the east

- and a third of all mankind are killed.
- (7) Christ returns and the world's kingdom become His kingdom.
- (8) PEOPLE DO NOT REPENT!!!
- e) Chapter 10 reveals seven thunder judgments that are not detailed.
- f) 11:1-13 reveal two witnesses that no one can oppose until their ministry is finished, then they are killed, resurrected, caught out of the world, and God sends an earthquake the splits the city in three sections.
- g) 12 reveals Christ's origin, the conflict with Satan, and Satan's defeat and anger toward Israel.
- h) 13 reveals Satan's two men and systems by which he will oppose God.
- i) 14:1-5 The 144,000 from Israel are triumphant.
- j) 14:6-20 God punishes those who worship the beast.
- k) 15:1-16:21 God's anger is finished in seven final bowl judgments.
  - (1) Sores on the beast worshippers
  - (2) All the sea becomes blood.
  - (3) All the fresh water becomes blood.
  - (4) Sun's heat intensifies and burns people.
  - (5) Intense darkness on the Beast's kingdom
  - (6) Euphrates dries up for the eastern armies that are gathered for war.
  - (7) A world-wide earthquake the splits Jerusalem followed by one hundred pound hail stones.
- l) 17-18 is the history and judgment of Babylon.
  - (1) 17:1 this Babylon is a mystery.
  - (2) 17:8 reveals a woman who controls the beast.
  - (3) 17:9 a location is identified
  - (4) 17:10 a series of kings
  - (5) 17:18 is a literal city
  - (6) 18:18-20 reveals this city has been a problem to apostles and prophets.
- m) 19 is the marriage feast of the Lamb.
  - (1) His bride is ready
  - (2) The Lamb comes to make war.
  - (3) The Beast and false prophet are throne into the Lake of fire.
- n) 20 is the 1,000 years in which Satan is bound.
- o) 21:1-9 reveals a glimpse of eternity.
- p) 21:9-22:17 reveals a glimpse of the millennial kingdom.

- V. The Bible presents this same period of time with different terminology. Though the word “thousand years” does not occur outside of Revelation 20, some Old Testament texts anticipated an extended period of time before eternity.
- A. Unrighteous spirits and rulers will be gathered, imprisoned, and AFTER MANY DAYS they will be punished (Isa. 24:22).
1. This matches Revelation 20 well.
  2. God punishes spirit beings (24:21).
  3. God punishes the kings of the earth (24:21).
  4. They (both groups) are gathered as a gathering.
  5. They (both groups) are gathered like prisoners in a pit (24:22). The pit is referred to as the abyss in Revelation 20.
  6. They are punished later, meaning their incarceration is for the many days followed by punishment which also matches Revelation 20.
- B. The saints of the Highest Ones receive a kingdom for a very long time (Aramaic “unto a long long.” Dan. 7:18, cp. 27).
- C. God promised that He would raise His people and place them in their land “forever” or “for an age” (Ezk. 37:25).
1. God resurrects Israel (37:11-14).
  2. God will reunite Judah and Israel as one nation not two (37:15-23).
  3. David will be their prince “forever” or “for an age” (37:25).
  4. God makes an “everlasting” covenant (37:26).
  5. God’s holy place will be with them “forever” (37:26-28).
  6. God causes the nations to know that He is the One who has done this for Israel (37:28). This means there is still a distinction between Israel and that nations.
  7. God gives us a detailed description of this temple and its ministries.
- D. God anticipated Israel’s rejection but also their return to God (Deut. 30).
1. This will be at a time when Israel has experienced all the blessings and curses (30:1).
  2. They will recall these blessings and curses (30:1).
- a) Literally, “You cause these (blessings and curses) to return to your heart among all the nations where the Lord has driven you.”
3. They return to the Lord (30:2).
  4. They obey Him (His voice) (30:2).
    - a) They obey all He commanded.
    - b) They obey with all their heart.
    - c) They obey with all their soul.  5. The Lord their God will reverse their captivity (30:3).
    - a) He will return (30:3). Many translates translate this verb “again.”
    - b) He will return indicates He has been away, an anticipation of the departure of His glory from His temple in Ezekiel’s days.
    - c) He will gather them from among the peoples (30:3-4).
    - d) He will bring them back TO THE LAND THEIR FATHERS POSSESSED (30:5).
    - e) They WILL POSSESS that land (30:5).
    - f) God will cleans their hearts so they love Him wholly (30:6).
    - g) God will give them all the blessings He promised them in the law (30:7-10).  6. This is a time after Israel’s captivity when God will restore them, and He will return to them, this is a reference to the second coming.
- E. God has promised us that we will reign with Him (2 Tim. 2:12).
1. “If we endure” is a first class condition that assumes the truth of the condition, therefore the second part is true.
  2. If God’s plan to give a kingdom to His people Israel distinct from the nations is allegorical or changed, then we have no guarantee that His promise to us is also true.

- VI. The time and nature of the thousand years are found in several Old Testament texts.
- A. We build our understanding of the kingdom from the Old Testament texts and allow New Testament references to add details, such as the exact length of time being one thousand years.
1. In these texts, we will see what was not true during ISRAEL'S TIME, is not true NOW, and is not characteristic of eternity.
  2. Some key aspects of eternity distinguish it from Israel's past and the present (Rev. 21:3-5).
    - a) God's tabernacle is among men (21:3).
    - b) God dwells among men (21:3).
    - c) Mankind will be His people (21:3).
    - d) God will be the God of all (21:3).
    - e) God wipes away all tears (21:4).
    - f) Death will no longer exist (21:4).
    - g) Mourning, crying, and pain will no longer exist (21:4).
    - h) He makes all things new (21:5).
- B. Psalm 72 anticipates a time that the king will be honored as never before.
1. This psalm is by David **for** Solomon, and addresses Solomon but looks to a king beyond Solomon.
  2. Solomon's reign was not from sea to sea but Christ's will be (72:8).
  3. Solomon's reign was not to the ends of the earth, but Christ's will be (72:8).
  4. All kings did not fall before Solomon, but they will fall before Christ (72:11).
  5. All nations did not serve Solomon, but they will serve Christ (72:11).
  6. The earth did not become supernaturally and agriculturally productive in Solomon's time (72:16).
  7. The King's name will be FOREVER (72:17).
  8. The whole earth will be filled with His glory (72:19). This is not Solomon.
  9. Some situations at that time are not eternal situations.
    - a) He acts for those who are needy and oppressed (72:12-13). This is contrary to a lack of mourning, crying, and pain.
    - b) He rescues these people from oppression and violence (72:14). These are not eternal qualities. Oppression and violence are unrighteous qualities.
- C. Isaiah 2:1-4 anticipates a time when all nations will seek God in the nation of Israel.
1. This happens in the "last days" (2:2).
  2. The center of God's government on earth will be over all other governments (2:2).
    - a) Mountain is both literal as the location of Jerusalem.
    - b) Mountain is figurative of God's government and the governments of other nations, as hills are smaller governments.
  3. All nations flow as a river to Jerusalem (2:2).
  4. Many people groups will come to Jerusalem because they recognize that God is with Israel (2:3).
    - a) They approach to be taught God's ways by God (2:3). This is not happening now.
    - b) They approach so they can walk in His ways (2:3). They want to do what He tells them.
  5. God's revelation will go out from Jerusalem, both His Law and His Word (2:3).
  6. Some situations at that time are not true today nor in eternity.
    - a) He will judge between nations (2:4).
    - b) He will decide matters for people (2:4).
    - c) The people will change their war implements into agricultural implements (2:4).
    - d) The people will not learn war anymore (2:4).
- D. Micah 4:1-7 is a parallel to Isaiah 2.
1. 4:1-3 parallels Isaiah 2.
  2. The remainder of this section gives qualities not true today nor eternity.
    - a) People will sit at ease in the shade of their vineyards and fig trees (4:4).
    - b) People will not be made afraid by others (4:4).
    - c) His people will walk in the name of the LORD God into ages (4:5).
    - d) The LORD will gather those who have been lame, outcasts, humbled and make a remnant and a strong nation from them (4:6-7).
    - e) The LORD will reign over them (4:7).
- E. Isaiah 11:1-9 tells of Israel's Anointed King.
1. He comes from the family of Jesse (David's father) (11:1).

2. He is anointed because the Spirit rests on Him (11:2).
    - a) The Spirit enables Him in His human nature to be wise and understanding.
    - b) The Spirit enables Him in His human nature to have counsel and power.
    - c) The Spirit enables Him in His human nature to have knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
  3. He delights in showing respect for the LORD (11:3).
  4. He won't judge by sight or hearing (11:3).
  5. He will judge in righteousness for the poor (11:4). This is contrasted to their day in which leaders took advantage of the poor.
  6. He will make decisions for the humbled, also contrasted to their day.
  7. He will strike the earth with a word that He speaks (11:4). He needs no army for as He created with a word, He can speak a word and punish the world.
  8. He will slay the wicked with the breath of His lips (11:4). See 7. notes.
  9. He will wear righteousness and faithfulness like a belt (11:5).
  10. Animal life will be changed from violence to peace and safety (11:6-8).
  11. Neither man nor animals will hurt in His government (11:9).
  12. The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, like waters cover the sea-TOTALLY (11:9). Most people do not know the Lord today.
- F. Isaiah 24:21-23 reveals an extended time in which wicked people are imprisoned but later will be released to be judged.
1. 24:1-20 refers to Daniel's 70th week. God judges the land and the people (cp 24:4).
  2. God will afterwards punish certain individuals (24:21-22).
    - a) God will punish spirit beings (24:21).
    - b) God will punish earthly rulers (24:21).
    - c) God will gather both into a PIT (24:22).
    - d) God will confine them in a dungeon (24:22).
    - e) God will punish them after MANY DAYS (24:22).
    - f) This agrees with Revelation 19-20 in that Christ slays the human rulers, so they must be raised later to be punished, and the spirit beings are confined where Satan is confined in the abyss (pit), to also be punished later.
  3. The moon and sun will not shine while Christ reigns as King (24:23). If He is reigning today, they should not be shining. This agrees with the last half of Revelation 21 where the Father and Son are the sun and moon.
- G. Isa. 65:17-25 connects the kingdom with God's creation but involves situations that are not characteristic of eternity.
1. This text presents a challenge by the reference to new heavens and new earth. We must recognize that God is speaking about both the coming kingdom and eternity mixed together, a common action among Old Testament prophets.
  2. God creates new heavens and a new earth (65:17).
    - a) "Create" is a participle and indicates what God is about to do. The NET Bible has "I am ready to create" and the HCSB "I will create."
  3. The former things (troubles 65:16) are not remembered when He creates.
  4. Israel is called to rejoice in what God creates (2x 65:18).
  5. People will live out their days (65:20).
  6. Youth will die at one hundred years.
  7. The sinner will die at a VERY old age (65:20).
  8. Israel will engage in the normal events of life and enjoy their work rather than having another take it (65:21-23).
  9. God will answer before they pray (65:24).
  10. Animals will live at peace rather than hurt in God's mountain.
  11. Most of these things are not true for eternity, because there will be no death in eternity.
  12. Will there be "prayer" in eternity? Will people have needs that they need to ask God for help?
- H. Zechariah 8:4-5 tells of the kingdom and involves situations that are not eternal qualities.
1. Jehovah (Christ) RETURNS to Zion (8:3).
  2. He dwells in Jerusalem (8:3).
  3. Old people sit in its streets (8:4).
  4. Children play in its streets (8:5).

5. These are not eternal qualities: a return and people of different ages.
- I. Zechariah 14:9-21 tells of the kingdom and involves situations that are not eternal.
  1. Jehovah (Christ) places His physical feet on the Mount of Olives and it splits from east to west (14:4).
  2. Jehovah (Christ) COMES and all the saints come with Him (14:5).
  3. A river of living (fresh) water will flow from Jerusalem (Ezekiel says it flows from the temple) to the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean sea and it will flow year round not just in winter (14:8).
  4. Jehovah is King over all the earth (14:9).
    - a) He will be ONE.
    - b) His name will be ONE.
    - c) There will no longer be multiple gods.
  5. The geography around Jerusalem will be changed and inhabited (14:10).
  6. 14:12-15 refer back to the tribulation part of the day of the Lord.
  7. All survivors from the nations who came against Jerusalem will come yearly to Jerusalem to worship the King, and keep the feast of tents (14:16).
  8. All survivors who do not come will suffer drought which will force them to come to Jerusalem where the wealth of nations is being stored (14:17-19).
  9. Everything, even common items in Jerusalem and Judah will be holiness to the Jehovah (14:20-21).
  10. Note the things that are not true now or in eternity, Jehovah returning, changed geography (eternity it is a new heavens and earth), nations coming to worship God in Jerusalem, a plagues of drought, common items being holy.
- J. Joel 2:18-29 tells us about God's care for Israel in the kingdom.
  1. God changes Israel so they are no more a reproach among the nations (2:19).
  2. God removes Israel's enemies (2:20).
  3. God causes Israel's agriculture to be successful (2:21-26).
  4. God pours out His Spirit on all people (2:28-29). They will prophesy, dream, and see visions.
- K. Jeremiah 31:27-37 tell of spiritual benefits for Israel in that kingdom.
  1. God will build up the nation of Israel (31:27-28).
  2. God will make a new covenant with Israel and Judah by putting and writing His Law in their hearts (31:33).
  3. Everyone will know Jehovah (31:34).
  4. Israel will not cease to be a nation (31:35-37).

VII. The Sermon on the mount adds details on the nature of this part of the Kingdom.

- A. John the Baptist and Jesus both proclaimed that the kingdom from the heavens was near (Mt. 3:2; 4:12).
  1. The kingdom is about God's rule from the heavens (Dan. 4:26).
  2. The Sermon on the Mount is one example of Jesus' message about the kingdom.
- B. Jesus promised happiness for those who would enter the kingdom (Mt. 5:3-10).
  1. Jesus was speaking to crowds of Jews, some who believed and many who did not. They all were coming to Him to hear about this kingdom, but they did not all know the who could enter and what life in that kingdom would be like.
  2. The poor in spirit inherit the kingdom not the self-assured (cp 9:13; Lk. 18:9).
    - a) In Isaiah 61:1 "the poor" are the "afflicted" the "pressed down."
    - b) Enter the narrow gate and don't be self-assured (7:13-27).
  3. Those mourning, over unrighteousness, so ask and knock (7:7-12).
  4. The gentle/tame inherit the earth as opposed to the arrogant.
    - a) Take the beam from your eye (7:1-6).
    - b) Jesus called people to learn from Him about gentleness and humility (Mt. 11:28-29).
  5. Those who really want righteousness will be filled, not the self-righteous (6:16-34).
  6. The merciful will receive mercy, as opposed to the merciless (6:1-15). God desires mercy (Mt. 12:7).
  7. The pure in heart will see God, as opposed to those with mixed motives. The pure in heart are those who have their treasure in heaven (5:21-48).
  8. The peacemakers will be called God's sons, as opposed to the contentious (5:11-20).
  9. Those persecuted for righteousness will have the kingdom, as opposed to those who persecute.
- C. Israel is the salt and light of the earth (5:13). They are to "flavor" or give positive influence in and for the land.
- D. Jesus promised a stricter law in the kingdom (Mt. 5:17ff).

1. Not just murder but anger and harsh insults will be judged (5:21-26). We are not in danger of the judgment.
2. Not just adultery but lusting after a woman will be punishable (5:27-30).
  - a) We are not in danger of gehenna fire.
  - b) We are not to behave like this but are still secure (1 Cor. 1:8; 5:1-3; 6:15-18).
3. Divorce will be unacceptable except for adultery (5:31-32).
4. Making oaths is evil (5:33-37).
5. Exacting vengeance is evil (5:38-42). We too are not to exact revenge (Rm. 12:18-21).
6. They will need to love their enemies as well as their fellow Israelis (5:43-48).
7. They are forgiven if they forgive others (6:14-15). Our forgiveness does not rest on our forgiving others. We are to deal graciously with others as God has dealt graciously with us (Col. 3:13). Being kind and compassionate with others is connected with showing grace to ourselves (Eph. 4:32).

VIII. Jesus taught more about the kingdom.

- A. Jesus promised that people from east and west would recline (sit in for a meal) with Israel's fathers in the kingdom from the heavens, while the sons, the ones who were supposed to inherit the kingdom will be thrown into outer darkness in tremendous grief and suffering (Mt. 8:11-12).
- B. Jesus promised His disciples that they would sit on twelve thrones ruling over the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt. 19:28). This has not happened yet. This happens in "the regeneration/renewal" which has not happened yet. The earth is still under the curse (Rev. 22:3; Rom. 8:18-22).
- C. Jesus promised Jerusalem that they would not see Him again until "you" (Jerusalem) say "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." (Mt. 23:37-39).
- D. Jesus' words do not describe the past, today, or eternity, but life in the millennium and how Israel must live prior to entering that kingdom, i.e in the Tribulation that precedes the kingdom.



- IX. The Sermon on the Mount was to Israel about their kingdom (cont.).
- A. Jesus spoke to both believing and unbelieving Israelis.
  - B. Jesus promised blessings to those Israelis who wanted what God wanted for them.
  - C. Jesus called unbelieving Israelis to look for the kingdom instead of the material perks of the kingdom.
    - 1. Jesus called them to consider their trust in their possessions and property (Mt. 6:19-21).
      - a) They were to store up treasure in heaven (Mt. 6:19-21).
      - b) They were to give to the poor as treasure in heaven (Mt. 19:21).
      - c) They were to follow Him (Mt. 19:21).
        - (1) This was literal following.
        - (2) They were to go with Him wherever He went.
    - 2. Jesus called them to not seek for earthly needs because the nations do that (Lk. 12:32-33).
    - 3. Jesus called them to sell their possessions and give mercy gifts (Lk. 12:34-35). Mercy gifts would be gifts for the poor.
    - 4. Jesus charged them to seek God's kingdom (Mt. 6:33). This was seeking the place where there is salvation.
  - D. Jesus called them to enter by the narrow Gate (Mt. 7:13:14; 21-23).
    - 1. The narrow gate is hard to enter (Lk. 13:22-30).
    - 2. It is hard to enter because people justify themselves (Lk. 10:25-29; 16:14-15).
    - 3. It is hard to enter because most people trust in themselves that they are righteous (Lk. 18:9-11).
    - 4. It is hard to enter because people are self-righteous and act superior to others (Lk. 16:13-14).
    - 5. It is hard to enter for people who have riches (Lk. 18:18-24). They could not part with their riches to do God's will and follow Jesus.

- X. Understanding ages affects our view of a literal millennial portion of the kingdom.
- A. Amillennialists see **two ages**: the present age and the age to come (Mt. 12:32).
1. The present age is man's time on earth.
  2. The coming age is eternity.
  3. This reading does not allow for a millennial kingdom.
    - a) Any text that describes something different than our present experience is read into eternity, the coming age.
- B. An age is an era in which God reveals something about Himself to His creation.
1. God reveals His grace to us by His kindness to us and this is related to an age (Eph. 2:7).
  2. Many dispensationalists do not appreciate this because they understand an age as parallel terminology for a dispensation.
    - a) Many refer to the dispensation of the grace from God as the church age (Eph. 3:2). The Bible does not use "age" in this manner.
    - b) The present age is called "evil" as it contrasts Satan's people to God's people with eternal life and the work of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 1:4).
    - c) In the present age we have eternal life (Mk. 10:30; 1 Jh. 5:11-12).
    - d) In this present age, when we live out eternal life it contrasts to this evil age.
  3. Bible translations refer to the words "ages" and "ages of ages" as equivalent to our English "forever" or "forever and ever." This is not helpful, and does not do justice to the point of an age. They translate some texts as "age," why not these.
- C. The Bible tells us of more than two ages.
1. God's present way of life for believers was hidden from the ages (Eph. 3:9). This means more than one age existed before our present age. (cp Col. 1:26)
  2. God will receive glory into **the AGES from the AGES** (Gal. 1:5). This anticipates multiple coming ages, not just one. (cp Eph. 3:21; Php. 4:20; 1 Tim. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 4:11).
    - a) In 1883, John Eadie wrote, "This language borrowed from the changes and succession of time, is employed to picture out eternity. It is a period of successive generations filling up the age, which again is an age of ages-or made up of a series of ages-a period composed of many periods; and through the cycles of such a period of periods, glory is to be ascribed to God." [*Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977, p. 264].
3. Jesus will not change both today and **into the ages** (Heb. 13:8).
- D. So why are there multiple ages in the future?
1. God has much more to reveal about Himself to us and He does not do it all in one massive unveiling.
  2. God is going to receive glory, or something about His reputation will be seen by means of the Church and by means of Christ into multiple ages in the future (Eph. 3:21).
    - a) We will be granted to sit with Christ.
    - b) We have been united with Christ as the Head of the New Creation, the One New Man, so that we will have a status that will really show something about what God can do with a people group.
    - c) We will be this distinct "family" of God in the heavenly places while Israel is His family on earth (Eph. 3:15).
    - d) We will not be part of Abraham's family Israel who inherits a world (Rom. 4:13).
      - (1) We are descendants of Abraham by a common kind of faith.
      - (2) We are not Abraham's descendants as part of Israel.
    - e) We also must recognize that God has plans (not clearly explained in Scripture) for those righteous people prior to Abraham's time.
      - (1) Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek are these types of people.
      - (2) These people will be on the New Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22-23).

- XI. How does the Kingdom from the heavens differ from the Kingdom of God?
- A. Matthew uses the expression “the kingdom of [from the] heaven[2] 32 times.
    1. Matthew presents Jesus Christ as king and “the kingdom from the heavens” is the kingdom in which He will rule.
    2. Mark, Luke, and John never use the expression “the kingdom from the heavens.”
    3. Matthew used references to “the kingdom” with other descriptions (Mt 4:23; 8:12; 9:35; 13:19, 38, 41; 16:28; 20:21; 24:14; 25:34).
  - B. Some suggest that kingdom from the heavens means the same thing as the kingdom of God.
    1. One teacher claimed that Matthew used “kingdom of heaven,” substituting “heaven” for “God” so as not to offend the Jews who refused to speak the name of God. This argument has been repeated many times.
    2. Matthew uses the expression “the kingdom of God” 4 times. 12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43
      - a) Mark uses this expression 14 times.
      - b) Luke uses this expression 32 times.
      - c) John uses it twice.
    3. Matthew used the name/title “God” 55 times, while Mark uses it 51 times, Luke 123 times, and John 82. Matthew has the lowest count per thousand, but he still used the title “God.” (e.g. 5:8, 9, 34; 9:8).
    4. Matthew was not afraid of the title God nor even the expression “kingdom of God.”
  - C. The kingdom from the heavens is about the earthly kingdom God had promised Israel.
    1. Jesus gave the constitution of His kingdom in the sermon on the mount, requiring a righteousness greater than their religious leaders.
    2. Jesus promised His disciples that they would sit on twelve thrones judging Israel’s twelve tribes when He would sit on His throne (Mt. 19:28).
    3. Jesus promised them that they would eat and drink with Him at His “king’s” table in “My kingdom.” (Lk. 22:28-30).
  - D. The kingdom of God is entered by a birth from above and a birth from the Spirit (Jh. 3:3, 5).
  - E. The Kingdom of God is where people receive eternal life and it is hard for the rich to enter, because they trust in their wealth more than God (see previous notes) (Mt. 19:23-26, 29).
  - F. The kingdom from the heavens is the physical kingdom on earth in which the heavens rule over the earth. Daniel spoke of this, “that the heavens rule” (Dan. 4:26).
  - G. The kingdom of God is the sphere of salvation.
  - H. The two kingdoms overlap at the beginning of the Millennium because only believers enter the Millennium.
    1. Living believers from Israel and Gentiles enter the kingdom.
    2. Living believers from both groups will be the only initial residents in the kingdoms and so the two will involve the same group of humans at the outset.
    3. Living believers from Israel and Gentiles marry and have children. Remember Zechariah’s references to “old people” and “children.” (Zech 8:4-5).
    4. The children born during the millennium must also believe for salvation just as we, just as Abraham, just as David, just as all in history.
    5. As history progresses, these two kingdoms will diverge because not everyone in the kingdom from the heavens will believe and so they will not all be in the kingdom of God.

- XII. Christians need to distinguish what God has promised them or we tend to live by the wrong principles.
- A. We do not have the Law written in our hearts (Jer. 31:31-34).
  - B. We are not under Law as a way of life (Rom. 6:14).
    1. That includes the Mosaic Law (Rom. 7:5-6).
    2. That includes the Sermon on the Mount which is stricter law (Mt. 5:21-48). We looked at this (see page 8).
  - C. We are not called on to sell everything and come follow Jesus (Mt. 19:21).
  - D. We do not have to become like a child to enter the kingdom from the heavens (Mt. 18:3).
- XIII. Understanding the Kingdom affects New Testament believers who are part of the body of Christ.
- A. Christ promises that we will sit with Him on His throne (Rev. 3:21).
    1. He is not presently sitting on His throne.
    2. He is sitting on the Father's throne (Heb. 1:3).
    3. We sit with Christ in the heavens (Eph. 2:5-6).
  - B. Christ promises that we will reign with Christ.
    1. He will give us authority over the nations (Rev. 2:26).
    2. He will give us to rule (to shepherd) the nations (2:27).
    3. He will give us a scepter of iron to shatter them (presumably if they do not obey the kingdom law, e.g. Zech. 14) (2:27).
    4. He will give to us to reign, we who are patient (2 Tim. 2:12). He does not designate the degree of patience required, but that all believers endure hardships, especially as we proclaim the good news.
  - C. God promises that we will judge the world and angels (1 Cor. 6:2-3).
    1. This encourages us to help believers judge between disputes.
    2. This encourages us to let the matter go and be the one wronged.
  - D. The promises in Revelation are to encourage believers today about our future, that better things are coming.
    - E. The promise in 2 Timothy 2 is to encourage believers who are facing those who teach that we can lose our salvation, or receive a lesser future salvation.
    - F. The promise in 1 Corinthians 6, is to encourage believers that they can deal with disputes between believers.
- XIV. Understanding the Kingdom keeps us from confusing our future with the future of other people.
- A. The body of Christ is never called Israel nor are those in it called Jews.
  - B. Gentiles who joined to Israel in the Old Testament times were not Israelis but "strangers" or "sojourners," people who lived among a different group of people.
    1. Abraham referred to himself as a stranger in the land of Canaan among the sons of Heth (Gen. 23:4).
    2. If a stranger wished to observe the Passover with the Jews their males had to be circumcised (Ex. 12:48; Nu. 9:14).
    3. If a stranger (sojourner) chose to live among Israel, they had to observe the same Law God gave to Israel (Nu. 15:29).
    4. A stranger is distinguished from a native or one who rises from his own soil.
    5. A stranger [*ger*] who lives as a stranger [*gur*] among Israel was to obey the Law of Israel and be treated as the native of the land, but were not Israel (Lev. 19:34; 24:22).
    6. Some strangers journeyed with Israel to the land (Jos. 8:33).
    7. Believers today are not part of Israel, neither are we strangers, but citizens of heavens and part of God's family/ household (Php. 3:20; Eph. 2:19).
  - C. Some teach that the body of Christ is Israel or spiritual Israel.
    1. They point to Gentiles who do not have the Law but do law things, his uncircumcised state is logically counted for circumcision (Rom. 2:14, 26).
      - a) They claim that a Jew is not a Jew outwardly because of circumcision but must be one inwardly (2:28-29).
      - b) Paul does not say that a Gentile becomes a true Jew, but that a true Jew is a Jew both physically and with a changed heart.

- c) Jews and Gentiles are both under sin (2:9), but remain two distinct groups.
- 2. Some point to Romans 9:6-8 and attempt to say that Gentiles are the children of promise and the true Israel, not the Israel in flesh.
  - a) Not every Israeli is a child simply because they are a descendant of Abraham.
    - (1) God chose for Abraham's promised descendants to come through Isaac.
    - (2) Paul used this situation to illustrate that just because one is a Jew doesn't mean they get God's promises.
  - b) The "children of promise" are not Gentiles but real descendants of Abraham who believe God's promise (4:13-16).
- 3. Some claim that the cultivated olive tree is Israel, and believing Gentiles have been grafted into Israel (Rom. 11:16-24).
  - a) Nowhere does Paul or Scripture say that Israel is the cultivated olive tree.
  - b) Rather, Paul compares the cultivated olive tree as the place where God works. Indeed, He focused on Israel from the time of Abraham until the ascension of Christ.
  - c) So, unbelieving Israelis have been removed from the place of God's work (11:19).
  - d) God has grafted in Gentiles (11:17).
  - e) Gentiles must "continue in His kindness" or they will be removed (11:22).
    - (1) Is this loss of salvation? NO!
    - (2) This is Gentiles losing the opportunity to be where God is working. From Abraham to the cross, God let the Gentiles go their own way (Acts 14:16-17). God can do this again.
    - (3) In the future, God will return to a work primarily, but not exclusively with Israel.
    - (4) When God seals 144,000 Israelis (12,000 from each tribe) during Daniel's 70th week, it results in a multitude of people from every nation, tribe and tongue being saved (Rev. 7:9-10).
- D. God has promised this kingdom to Israel through their Anointed King Jesus Christ.
  - 1. Nowhere do we find the apostles teaching us that we will inherit the land, that we will receive the right to rule over a city, or five cities, or that Christ will be our king, etc,
- E. God has promised us to sit with Christ on His throne and share in His rule (Rev. 3:21). We will share sitting with Christ.

## XV. Scripture describes life in the millennium.

## A. The Kingdom will have a government.

1. Christ the Son will be installed as King over all the nations (Ps. 2).
  - a) He is installed as King on/over God's government (2:6).
  - b) He receives the nations as His inheritance (2:8).
  - c) He will break and shatter them (2:9).
    - (1) He humbles them as the absolute ruler.
    - (2) All kings and judges are called to treat Him with respect (2:10-12).
  - d) He will sit on David's throne (Isa. 9:7).
    - (1) His government will be expansive, have peace, and will not end.
  - e) He will shepherd in God's strength (Mic. 5:3-4). rehearse
  - f) He will sit on the throne and be priest (Zech. 6:12-13).
2. Christ shares His reign with His Church (2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:27; 3:21; 1 Cor. 6:2; 4:8).
3. David (resurrected) will reign over Israel (Ezk. 37:22-24).
4. Martyrs from the Tribulation who are resurrected will reign over the nations (non-Jews) (Rev. 20:3-4).
5. The twelve disciples will judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt. 19:28).
6. Jews who live faithfully as Christ's slaves will reign over individual cities (Lk. 19:11-19).

## B. The Kingdom will have citizens.

1. Righteous people will gather to recline and eat in fellowship with those who have gone before such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Mt. 8:11).
2. The citizens of the kingdom will be those who survive the Tribulation and their resulting children.
  - a) Those Gentiles who "escape" or survive God's judgment will bring the Jews back to Jerusalem and God will take some for priests (Isa. 66:18-21).
  - b) The parables of the slaves and virgins are about the Jews who will enter the kingdom (Mt. 25:1-30).
    - (1) The ready virgins enter the wedding (25:10).
    - (2) The responsible slaves "enter the joy of the Lord" (25:21, 23).

c) The sheep are believing Gentiles who inherit the kingdom (25:34).

3. Resurrected Israel will bring them into their land (Ezk. 37:11-14, 21-23).

## C. The Kingdom will have conditions not experienced since sin entered the world.

1. Believers will be changed (Ezk. 36).
  - a) God will remove their stony (unresponsive) heart (36:26).
  - b) God will give them a heart of flesh (responsive) (36:26).
  - c) God will put His Spirit in them (36:27).
  - d) God will cause them to walk in His statutes (36:27).
  - e) God will cause them to guard and do His judgments (36:27).
  - f) They will dwell in their land (36:28).
2. People who are believers will have the Law written in their hearts (Jer. 31).
3. All people will know the Lord (Jer 31).
4. People will have access to the leaves of the tree of life for healing (Rev. 21-22).
5. Agriculture will produce abundantly released from the curse (Ezk. 36:29-30).
  - a) The land will become productive as never before (Joel 3:18).
  - b) The agriculture will grow at a fast rate (Amos 9:13).
  - c) The nations would bring their agricultural wealth to Israel and Israel would eat it (Isa. 60:11; 61:6).
6. God will cause them to dwell in and rebuild their cities (36:33-36).

## D. The Kingdom will have worship at a real temple (Ezk. 40-48).

1. God will establish a new very large temple complex and temple for the 1,000 years of the kingdom (Ezk. 40-42).
  - a) Some take this passage as figurative.
  - b) God dedicates 1,500 words (in Hebrew) for the exact measurements of the temple, a strong argument that God intends the reader to take it literally.
2. God's glory will come to this new temple (Ezk. 41:1-9). It will be God's throne among Israel. His glory left in (11:22-25).
3. God will establish a sacrificial system, not for salvation (it never was) but that the people might be heard (Ezk. 43:18-27).