

## **The Kingdom of God – Wrap Up**

### **May 28, 2014**

#### **True or False Quiz**

1. The Universal Kingdom of God has always existed and will always exist.
  2. Satan and evil exists outside the universal kingdom of God.
  3. The term Mediatorial means God is ruling directly over a given realm.
  4. God made Adam to be both good and great, morally upright and one who would exercise dominion over God's creation.
  5. The Mediatorial Kingdom is always ruled by a human representative of God and this representative may be on earth or in heaven.
  6. The OT prophets promised a future kingdom on earth for Israel ruled by a son of David that would bring peace, prosperity, blessing, long life, moral uprightness and a world-wide knowledge of God.
  7. Jesus came offering Israel the very same kingdom as promised in their Scriptures but when they rejected it, He then offered a spiritual kingdom in its place.
  8. The Kingdom of God and the Church is the same thing.
  9. Because the Church is the Kingdom of God upon earth today, we should seek to change our culture through social programs, politics and community projects.
  10. The mandate of the Church is to love our neighbor as ourselves and serve the lost of this world by providing them food, clothing, shelter, clean water, job training and pet care.
  11. Israel as a nation rejected Jesus' offer of the Kingdom and this brought judgment upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70 at the hands of the Romans.
  12. Once the nation rejected Christ offer as shown in the unpardonable sin of their religious leaders, there was a major shift in Jesus teaching method and in what He began to tell His disciples about His future.
  13. Peter made yet another offer of the Kingdom to Israel after the ascension that still required their national repentance.
  14. The "already/not yet" language of George Ladd laid the erroneous foundation for the belief that the kingdom has been inaugurated now in a spiritual sense and will be here in a material form when Jesus returns.
  15. The Bible never says how long the reign of Christ will be.
  16. The Lord Jesus could return at any moment for His bride, the Church, and snatch us away to meet Him in the air.
  17. To enter the Kingdom of God one must keep the Ten Commandments and seek to live by the kingdom principles contained in the Sermon on the Mount.
  18. There will be no sin or death in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.
  19. There will be sin and death in the Universal, Eternal Kingdom of Christ.
  20. In the eternal state of the new heavens and the new earth, there will be two thrones, the throne of God the Father dwelling with man and the throne of Christ, the Son of David, ruling over the new creation.
- Bonus: The kingdom of heaven, kingdom of God and kingdom of Christ are 3 different kingdoms.

## **What is the Church's Relationship to the Kingdom?**

Helpful edited summary from Dr. Michael Vlach, prof. at TMS

- I. The church is not the kingdom of God on earth, but is related to God's kingdom plan.
- II. The OT predicted that Gentiles would be blessed as a result of the coming of God's King and the establishment of God's kingdom. But the OT did not predict the church in which Jews and Gentiles become "one new man." This mystery revealed in NT era. See esp. Eph. 2-3.
- III. As people are saved (born again/born from above) they become sons and heirs of the coming kingdom that will be established with Jesus' second coming.
- IV. As sons and heirs of the coming kingdom, Christians are to exhibit the righteous characteristics required for all who will enter God's kingdom. See Sermon on the Mt.
- V. The spiritual blessings (not physical) of the New Covenant, which are part of God's kingdom plan, are poured out on all who believe in Jesus, meaning all members of the church. This is a partial fulfillment of the New Covenant with Israel.
- VI. The church can preach about the kingdom of God to unbelievers in these ways:
  - A. It can tell unbelievers that being born again is the only way to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3).
  - B. It can tell unbelievers to repent because the King is coming.
  - C. It can tell unbelievers that they can experience some spiritual blessings of the kingdom such as forgiveness of sins and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. (The physical blessings of the New Covenant, though, are future.)
- VII. The church should not tell people the following:
  - A. The kingdom of God is only a spiritual reality. FACT: The kingdom of God is both physical and spiritual. The full manifestation of the kingdom of God will take place on a regenerated and restored earth (see Matt. 19:28; Acts 3:19-21)
  - B. The kingdom of God is advancing in a postmillennial sense. FACT: Not true.

**Helpful Overview of the People of God in Redemptive History**  
**By Michael Vlach**

1. **Genesis 1–11:** Emphasis on global matters—Creation, Fall, Global Flood, Babel and start of nations and languages. (church not revealed)
2. **Genesis 12—Malachi:** Emphasis on nation Israel as channel and means for future blessings to the nations of the world/all the families of the earth. (church not revealed although Gentile salvation and participation in Israel’s covenants promised. Israel was to be a light to the nations/Gentiles)
3. **Matthew—Acts 7:** Emphasis on Israel & Jesus Christ who will restore the nation Israel and bring blessings to the Gentiles. The message of salvation and the kingdom is proclaimed primarily to the people of Israel. (The church is only mentioned twice in the Gospels, both in a futuristic context)
4. **Acts 8 –Revelation 3:** Emphasis on the church and Gentile salvation, not Israel, now in a state of temporary & partial hardening until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in (109 references to the church from Acts through Revelation 3; the church is commissioned to make disciples of all nations).
5. **Revelation 4–22:** Emphasis on Israel and the nations with the church participating in ruling the nations/reigning with Christ forever. (The term “church” not mentioned until closing words of Revelation in 22:16). Nations are referred to three times in the Eternal State.

## **Review Eschatology 101 – definitions, The Cripplegate blog, by Jesse Johnson**

Here are some basic definitions of terms to help you make sense of different views on eschatology:

**Eschatology:** the study of future prophesied events associated with the Second Coming of Jesus, the kingdom, and eternity. Literally it is the study of the “end times,” but much of the study focuses on the rapture and the tribulation, two events that happen at least 1,000 years before the “end times.” Hence, my definition is better than the dictionary’s.

**Millennium:** A 1,000 year period where Jesus reigns over the earth. This period sees the restoration of Israel, and the fulfillment of the promises and prophecies given to Israel in the OT. Satan is bound, and the earth is inhabited by both resurrected believers as well as people who were born during the kingdom. It is described all over the book of Isaiah, but especially in Isa 24, 51, 54, 60, 65-66. It is also detailed in Ezekiel 37-48, Daniel 7, Zechariah 8, and Revelation 19-20.

**Second Coming:** A term that refers to the events that take place around the return of Jesus to earth. These events include the rapture, the tribulation, the anti-Christ, the abomination described in Daniel 9 and 2 Thess 2, and the physical return of Jesus to earth.

**Post-millennialism:** The belief that the Second Coming occurs after the millennium. This is held by Douglas Wilson, R. C. Sproul, and Tim Keller.

**Pre-millennialism:** The belief that the Second Coming occurs before the millennium. This is held by John MacArthur, John Piper, D. A. Carson, and Wayne Grudem.

**Amillennialism:** The belief that that millennium is not an actual time period, but rather that scripture’s descriptions of that time period should be interpreted as being fulfilled in this age, and often spiritually. In other words, there is no millennium, and the kingdom of God on earth is now. This view is held by Michael Horton (and almost every Presbyterian you have ever met), Mark Dever, and J. I. Packer.

**The Tribulation:** The final period of this age, before the kingdom. It is a period marked by the wrath of the anti-Christ poured out in the world, as well as by the wrath of God seen through the breaking of the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls described in Revelation. Daniel 9 describes it as a period lasting seven years. Jesus describes it as a time of “great suffering unlike anything that has happened from the beginning of the world” ([Matthew 24:21](#)).

**The Anti-Christ:** The religious world leader who is opposed to the gospel, while claiming to be here in Christ's name. Through history, the Pope has been seen to hold this title, while leaving room for a final anti-Christ to come during the tribulation, and lead the final assault on Israel (2 Thess 2:8, 1 John 2:18).

**The abomination of desolation:** The time described in Daniel 9 where the anti-Christ reveals himself in the middle of the seven-year tribulation. Daniel refers to this event as coming on "the wing of abominations" with the point of making the temple "desolate" (Daniel 9:27). Jesus takes that phrase and shortens it to "the abomination of desolation" (Matthew 24:15).

**The Rapture:** The physical removal of the church from the earth. When Jesus comes in the clouds with the souls of believers who have already died, and they are reunited with their bodies in the air, while Christians who are still alive are physically "caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess 4:17). This event closes out the church age, and is described in John 14:3, 1 Corinthians 15:51-53, 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 .

There are three main views about the timing of the rapture. But remember that all three of these views only make sense inside of premillennialism. In other words, the timing of the rapture is a debate that doesn't really make sense to post-millennialists or amillennialists.

**Post-tribulational:** The belief that the rapture happens after the tribulation. The church is raptured, and then returns to the earth immediately to reign with the Lord in the kingdom. This is held by Piper and Douglas Moo.

**Pre-wrath:** The view that the rapture happens sometime during the second half of tribulation; This view stresses that the first part of the tribulation is the anti-Christ's wrath on the world, while the second part is God's wrath. It is the later that the church is saved from. This view is held by James MacDonald.

**Pre-tribulational:** The view that the rapture will occur before the seven-year tribulation. The church is removed from the earth for seven years, then returns with the Lord at the end of the tribulation. This view is held by MacArthur, as well as the Apostle Paul :).

## **Final Review and Evaluation of Systems of Interpretation:**

### **Classic Amillennialism (aka supercessionism or replacement theology)**

- Most influential proponent was Augustine and his writing, *The City of God*
- Allegorized or spiritualized promises to Israel and transferred them to the Church, the “new Israel”
- Held a Spiritual kingdom view, with church = kingdom
- Led to theological anti-Semitism
- Blindly followed by most Reformers, like Luther and Calvin
- Adopted by Roman Catholic Church & most main-line denominations
- interprets large portions of prophecy using a broad, general interpretation vs line by line and word by word
- often involves the position of interpretation of the book of Revelation called preterism
  - There are four approaches in church history to interpret Revelation
    - Preterist – all of it happened during John’s lifetime
    - Historicist – it laid out history from the 1<sup>st</sup> century fwd; led to the view adopted by Reformers that Rome was Babylon and the Pope the Antichrist
    - Idealist or Spiritualist – Rev. is poetical, symbolical and spiritual in nature; everything is spiritualized; timeless truths about the battle between good and evil; nothing is identified as a future event
    - Futurist – prophecy of yet future events surrounding 2<sup>nd</sup> coming and beyond
- John 18:36 is favorite proof text of Amillennialism
- As early as 2<sup>nd</sup> century, anti-Semitism began to creep into the predominantly Gentile church. This grew over the centuries, helped along by such notable church fathers as Jerome, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Augustine, and later Luther, Calvin, other Reformers and most Puritans.
- some movement recently to re-evaluate a future for national, ethnic Israel (in large part because of the Holocaust and May 14, 1948), yet highly reluctant to ascribe territory to Israel as a nation or to allow a divine right to the land now

### **Dispensationalism (refer back to Blair’s class on 2/12/14 on web site; using Vlach’s material at [Theologicalstudies.org](http://Theologicalstudies.org)):**

From Charles Ryrie, three essentials to Dispensationalism:

- 1) a distinction between Israel and the Church;
- 2) literal hermeneutics throughout;
- 3) the glory of God as the sole underlying purpose of God in the world.

- **Classic (ca. 1850 – 1940’s):** Darby, Scofield, Chafer  
7 or 8 dispensations of God’s dealing with mankind, placing man under some condition, with each ending in man’s failure. Weakness: categories too hard and fast, didn’t recognize the overlapping of dispensations.
- **Revised or Modified (ca. 1950 – 1985):** John Walvoord, Dwight Pentecost, Charles Ryrie, Charles Feinberg, Alva McClain

Two distinct peoples of God in redemptive history: Israel and the Church, with different dispensational roles and responsibilities for each but means of salvation the same – by grace alone thru faith alone in Messiah alone.

Distinction between Israel and the Church continues throughout eternity, with Church and Israel existing together during the M.K. and Eternal Kingdom.

Only one New Covenant, made with Israel, with believing Gentiles even now experiencing the spiritual blessings as wild olive branches grafted in.

- **Progressive (1986 – Present):** Craig Blaising, Darrell Bock, Robert Saucy  
The Abrahamic, Davidic and New Covenants are being progressively fulfilled today AND will have final fulfillment in the M.K.

Developed out of George Eldon Ladd’s “already/not yet” approach and desire to dialogue with Covenantal Amillennialism.

Already: Unlike Classic or Modified, PD sees an “already” aspect to the Davidic kingdom of Christ, believing Christ reigns now from David’s throne in heaven, a reign inaugurated at His first coming with a complete fulfillment still to come. In this sense the kingdom promised by the OT prophets is already here.

Not Yet: Like Classic or Modified, they still see a future identity and function for ethnic Israel in the MK. The future earthly, political, physical kingdom promised by OT prophets is “not yet” and won’t be until Christ returns.

## **Problems and Concerns with Progressive Dispensationalism, by Renald Showers:**

- I. The Throne of David cannot be equated with the Throne of God in Heaven.
  - Throne of David is always on earth, never in heaven.
  - God's throne is in heaven; it is never called David's throne.
  - David's throne is always referred to as "his" throne, belonging to David.
  - Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father now, not on David's throne.
  - God's throne is forever and universal; no need to est. David's throne forever if they are the same throne.
  - Rev. 3:21 draws a clear distinction between the two thrones
  - Luke 1:32-33 the throne of David is given by the Father and is clearly distinct from His own throne in heaven
  
- II. NO OT revelation of the future kingdom indicated it would consist in two forms, one spiritual and one political, est. at two different points in time.
  
- III. Several passages indicate that no form of the future kingdom will be established before the second coming of Christ:
  - a. Isa. 9:6-7
  - b. Dan. 2:31-35, 44 (no coexistence of future Kingdom of God and Gentile world dominion)
  - c. Dan. 7:9-27
  - d. Mat. 13:36-43 – unsaved tares have not yet been removed, therefore no kingdom of God is present in any form
  - e. Luke 19:12-27, not est. on earth in any form until the Nobleman returns
  - f. Mat. 19:28 and Luke 22:28-30; no regeneration of nature or ruling by the 12 has yet to happen, meaning the Son of Man is not currently sitting on 'the throne of His glory' and therefore the kingdom is not yet established in any sense.
  - g. Mat. 24-25 shows the kingdom isn't established until Christ returns in glory
  - h. Zech 14 and Acts 3:19-21 indicate that the kingdom isn't established until Israel repents in mass, which will happen with the surviving remnant at the return of Christ.