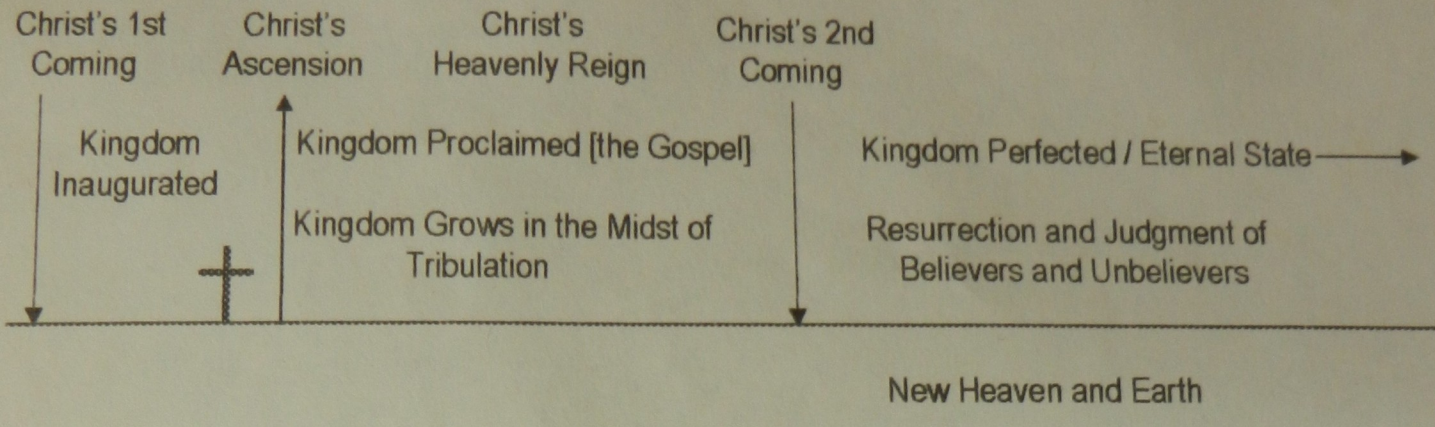
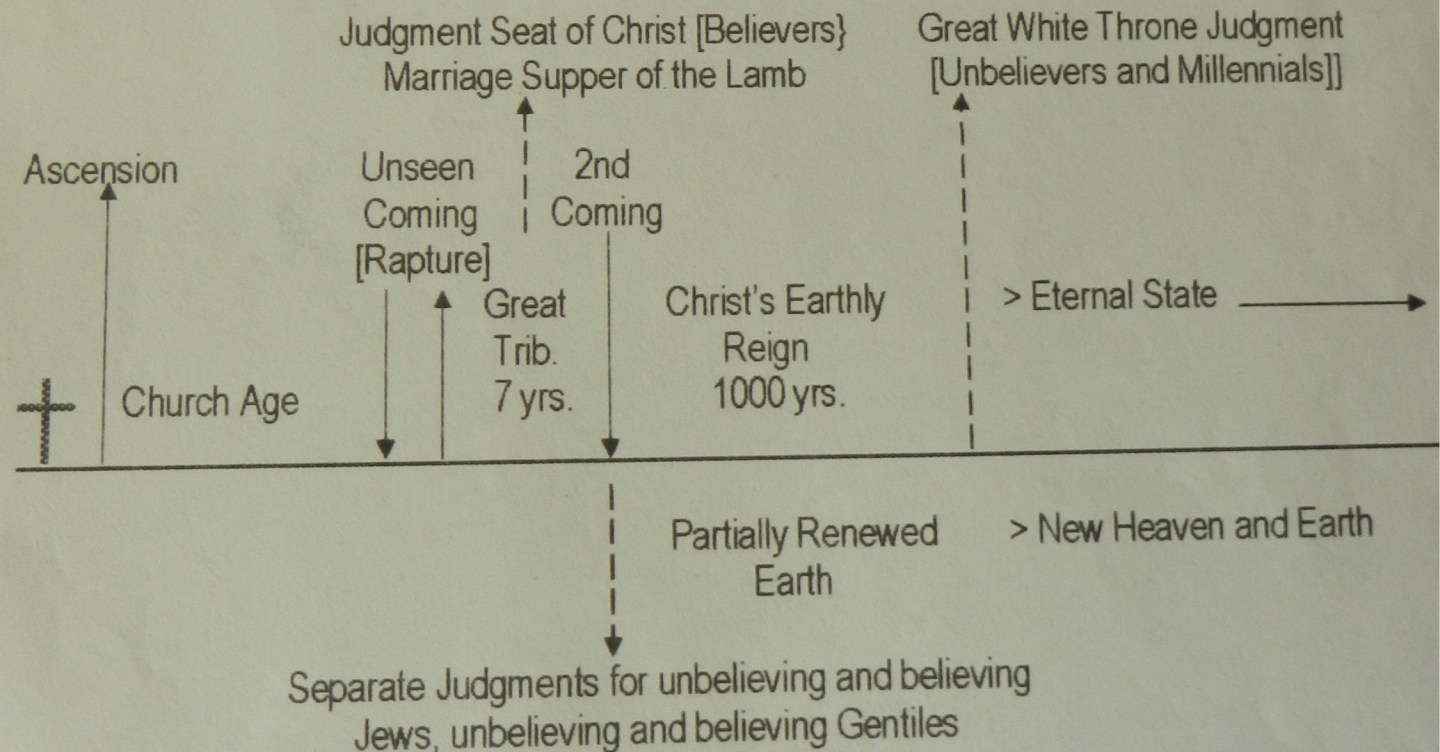


## AMILLENNIALISM – CHRIST'S HEAVENLY REIGN



## DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM



### Judgment of Believers, 6 pgs C. Radman

1. Every person will be judged for what he has done.  
*Rev.22:12 – I am coming ... to repay everyone for what he has done.*
2. What man has done is categorized as either good or evil.

**2 Cor.5:9-11, 20** – We make it our aim to please [the Lord] because ... we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others ... We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

### **Amazing Grace, verse 2**

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed.

### **The Judgment Seat of Christ is not just for and about believers**

(a) Compare all with everyone in **Rev.22:12**. See also **Rom.14:10-11** – we will all stand before the judgment seat of God ... every knee shall bow to me.

(b) Paul, having been given the ministry of reconciliation i.e. the message of the gospel (**2 Cor.5:18-19**), ends this passage by appealing to unbelievers to be reconciled to God (**5:20**).

(c) There is no difference between the judgment seat of God and the judgment seat of Christ. (**Jn.5:22** – *The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son.*)

3. How do we define what is good or evil? **Rom.2:6-8** – He will render to each one according to his work. The good work of the Believer is to persist in seeking after glory, honor, and immortality. How do we do that? This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent (Jn.6:29) Their reward will be eternal life, glory, honor and peace. The evil work of the Unbeliever is being self-seeking, not obeying the truth (a metaphor for **unbelief**), and obeying unrighteousness (continuing in sin). Their judgment will be wrath, fury, tribulation, and distress.

4. Each person is accountable to God alone. Therefore we should be God-pleasers, not people-pleasers (**Eph.6:6**). **Rom.14:12** says ... each of us will give an account of himself to God. **The context of this passage is an admonition to stop criticizing fellow believers**, who are God's servants. When you stand before the judgment seat, you won't be able to blame someone else, or compare yourself to others. I don't believe this passage means you will have to explain everything you've done.

5. Although we will stand before the Judge, the believer does not come under judgment or punishment. The overall picture of judgment for the believer is positive.

**Jn.5:24** – *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*

**Rom.8:1** – There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

**Rev.11:18** – ... the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and the saints, and those who fear your name ... and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.

6. But not all of what we do produces praise and reward.

Each one's work will be revealed by fire (1 Cor.3:12-15). The works that survive are those done with right motives [**Gospel motivations + faith**]. **Heb.11** summarizes the lives of saints who preceded us by

what they did in faith, and in **1 Thess.2:19-20** Paul reveals that the apostles have been laboring to produce fruit in others (*For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy*). Then each will receive his commendation from God who will *expose the motives of men's hearts* (**1 Cor.4:5**).

7. There are hints that there might be degrees of reward. However, the crowns and rewards mentioned in Scripture are for all believers: righteousness, life, glory, an inheritance.

### Problems with the Dispensational Premillennial Model

The term **millennium** comes from **Rev.20**, which speaks of a 1000 years during which Christ reigns. Remember that Revelation is a highly symbolic book. All the expectations of the character of the Dispensational millennium are found in OT prophecies. **The NT is silent** on a semi-renewed earth before the new heavens and earth. The following points are elements which seem contradictory to NT teaching.

(1) Many get a second chance to be saved after the Rapture. Some of the NT is irrelevant and no longer true for those left behind. Example: They'll know Christ will be returning in 7 years.

(2) The Millennium requires unglorified people to repopulate the earth. Why aren't those saved during the Tribulation made like Christ when they see him and are judged at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming?

(3) Can unglorified people live in the presence of Christ and his glorified people? Christ had to empty himself in order to come to earth (**Phil.2:7**). At the ascension he received back the glory he had previously (**Jn.17:5**). Jesus prayed for his own to be with him to see his glory (**Jn17:24**). When Jesus comes back, it will be in glory (**1 Pt.4:13, 5:1**). Think of the reaction of those who have encountered a glimpse of such glory: *Isaiah* (Woe is me! For I am lost); *Ezekiel* (when I saw it [likeness of the glory of the Lord] I fell on my face); *John* (When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.)

(4) There is no teaching in the New Testament about a partially renewed earth before eternity. To the contrary, the world that then existed [before the Flood] was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment.

(5) What makes the Millennium peaceful and prosperous - a perfect ruler with better laws? How does a build-up of a rebellious multitude, like the sands of the sea, for a final battle (**Rev.20**) escape Jesus' notice? **Zech.14** (a millennial prophecy) says that if any of the families of the earth do not go up to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, there will be no rain ... there shall be the plague. Is the Millennium a time when outward conformity is enough? **The whole point of the New Covenant** was to build a kingdom of people that had new hearts, and not be under law.

(6) To have a future kingdom with a rebuilt temple and sacrifices, celebrating Jewish feasts, takes the progress in salvation history and moves it backwards. Hebrews says that **Christ was the end and fulfillment of the temple and sacrificial system**.

### The Kingdom of God



The kingdom of God is God's sovereign, saving rule, embodied in the phrase, *I will be your God, and you will be my people*. It can be defined as God's people, in God's place, under God's rule, and blessing. It is a major theme in Scripture and is one way of explaining the story of the Bible.

**The pattern of the kingdom** is seen in Eden, but it was lost at the Fall. Abraham was promised that God would re-establish his kingdom through his descendants. That promise was partially fulfilled in the history of Israel, and their prophets foretold a coming King (Messiah) and kingdom.

**The kingdom was inaugurated with the coming of Christ.** (Mt.3:2 - John the Baptist said, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Lk.17:21 - Jesus said, *the kingdom of God is in your midst.*)

During the time between Christ's ascension and second coming the kingdom of God is proclaimed. (Acts 8:12 - Philip preached the good news [gospel] about the kingdom of God. Acts 20:25 - Paul to the Ephesians - *I know that none of you, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will see my face again.*

**Christ is currently reigning in heaven** for the sake of his church (Eph.1:15-22). **We are in his kingdom right now.** (Col.1:13 - *he delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.* Rev.1:5 - *To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father ...*)

At the same time **Scripture is clear that we are to expect persecution/tribulation.** (Rev.1:9 - *I John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus ...* Acts 14:22 – *through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.*)

### **Amazing Grace, verse 3**

*Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come;  
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.*

v.5

*Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail, And mortal life shall cease,  
I shall possess, within the veil, A life of joy and peace.*

**We are anticipating living forever in a perfect kingdom.** (2 Pet.1:11 ... *there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; Mt.25:34 –Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*)

### **Abrahamic Covenant: The Progression of Fulfillment in Salvation History**

The Abrahamic Covenant was initially, physically fulfilled by the physical descendants of Abraham, but it has its true and complete fulfillment in Jesus Christ and his church. It will have its ultimate, eternal fulfillment in the **new heavens and new earth**. *Rightly Dividing the People of God* by Keith Mathison (p.26)

**Example:** The promise to Abraham to give him the land of Canaan.

1. **A limited physical fulfillment.** Josh.21:43-45. *the Lord gave to Israel all the land that he*

*swore to give to their fathers ... the Lord gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn. Not one word of all the promises that the LORD made to the house of had failed: all came to pass. At this point, around five years after entering , the victory was officially won, even though some battles remained. It would be another 400 years before the kingdom reached its zenith under Solomon. And yet the fulfillment was in a sense incomplete, because it was meant to be a **type** and **shadow**.*

**2. The true and complete fulfillment came with Christ.** *The spiritual reality that these types pictured belongs to the church. The Promised Land was called 's inheritance and rest. **Hebrews 3 and 4** tells us what the land foreshadowed. *We who have believed [the gospel, 4:2] enter that rest. (4:3) ... For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then there remains a Sabbath-Rest [keeping] for the people of God (4:8-9).* This Rest, in turn, points to an eternal fulfillment. We are currently in the time of what is referred to as the already, but not yet. These spiritual blessings are ours because of our status in Christ, but we are awaiting their fullness at the coming of Christ.*

**3. The ultimate fulfillment is in eternity,** in the new heavens and new earth. **Hebrews 11** gives us some insight into Abraham's faith in God and how he expected the promises would be fulfilled. *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance ... By faith he went to live in the land of promise as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God (11:8-10).* The passage goes on to say that all people of faith are seeking a homeland ... a **better country**, that is, a heavenly one.

### Same Verses, Different Conclusions

If we are reading the same verses, why do we come to different conclusions? **Basic presupposition or assumptions determine where you end up.** In this case, one of the fundamental differences is **how** or **in what manner you believe the promises to Abraham and Israel are fulfilled**, i.e. brought to completion.

**A. Dispensational Theology:** The prophets spoke of a future utopia, **a time of great blessing for Israel**. If you believe that what they said must be fulfilled in the language of the OT, then you need a time period when the Jewish people are all back in the Promised Land, with the exact borders laid out in Scripture; a renewed empire under a descendant of David; a rebuilt temple and the resumption of sacrifices and Jewish holy days; **there is peace because the Gentile nations are under their rule**. What is currently called the millennium. All descriptions of what this time period is like are from the OT. (Moore, **Daniel p.226**) **Rev.20** speaks of the **thousand years** that Jesus is reigning so it seems like a good place for this time of perfect blessing. But this passage only speaks of Christ reigning with the souls of believers and **it ends with a great rebellion**.

**B. Amillennial Theology:** The other view looks at the same verses and says, "**How does the NT interpret this?**" (An interesting exercise: when the NT quotes the OT, go back and look at the context) Remember that **Jesus said all the Scriptures are ultimately about him**. **Lk** says that before he ascended *he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, v.24:45*, and in **Acts 1** he spent that

40 days *speaking about the kingdom*, **v.1:3**. The rest of **Acts** makes it clear that he is referring to the **gospel**, not what is commonly called the millennium.

> Read the prophecies and prayers in **Lk.1&2**. The promises to Abraham and Israel's fathers are fulfilled in the coming of Christ.

> In **one of Peter's first sermons**, **Acts 3:24**, he said, all the prophets who have spoken, from **Samuel** and those who came after him also *proclaimed these days*.

> **Galatians** teaches that the promises made to Abraham were ultimately to Christ, and if you belong to Christ, you are the children of Abraham and heirs of the promises. The people of God are now Jews and Gentiles, **3:16, 29**.

> **Believers have been given all of Israel's designations**: the true circumcision (**Phil.3:3**); the elect of God (**Col.3:12**); saints; a chosen race; a holy nation; a people for his own possession (**1 Pt.2:9**).

> **What about a rebuilt temple?** Christ is the meaning for which the temple existed, and the church is called the temple of God, **1 Cor.3:16; 1 Pt.2:5**.

> **What about the Promised Land?** It was called Israel's inheritance and rest. **Hebrews 3 and 4** says *this was a picture of our salvation, a Sabbath Rest for the people of God*, **4:9**, an eternal, imperishable, inheritance!

> **Whenever you come across an OT reference, notice how it is used in the NT (Acts 15)**.

**C. So is God keep his promises to Israel?** Yes, **on a much grander scale** than they anticipated.

**1 Cor.2:9** paraphrases **Isa.64:4** *what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined – what God has prepared for those who love him*. Example: In 1900 a man told his young son that he'll give him a horse and buggy when he grows up and gets married. Twenty years later he gave him an automobile which had since been invented. Didn't he literally fulfill his promise? In fact, he upgraded it!

**The pattern we see is:**

(1) **a limited physical fulfillment of God's promises** which serves as types and shadows in anticipation of the spiritual realities to come

(2) **with the coming of Christ came the spiritual realities** those types portrayed – **the essence of the promises was much grander than the physical description of them**

(3) **the ultimate fulfillment is in eternity**, in the perfection of the NEW heaven and earth