

Millennium Future or Kingdom Now?

By Orlando Mostert
Kingdomvision.co.za

INTRODUCTION

The common view in all popular prophecy books from America is that Jesus is only one day in the future coming to establish His Kingdom and that Kingdom will last for exactly 1000 years. This false teaching arises both from a wrong translation of the Greek word for “thousand” in Rev. 20 as well as a total denial of the present Lordship of Jesus over all principalities and powers both in heaven and on earth. Is Jesus Lord now or only in the future? Is His kingdom for only 1000 years or everlasting? Is the Kingdom to be established by His Church or 144,000 Jews? It is time to boldly proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom for the Kingdom has come!

Before looking closer at the scriptures that clearly show us that the Kingdom has indeed come and that Jesus is now Lord let me first pose some questions to you. This is not just a minor theological debate about whether you are a “pre-mill” or “post-mill” or “a-mill” or do you believe in a “pre-trib” Rapture etc. This issue goes to the fundamental issue of who is Jesus and are His claims true! Do you really believe that Jesus is Lord now? If so why do you insist that He must physically be present in Jerusalem for 1000 years before He can rule His Kingdom on earth? Do you believe that you are presently seated with Christ in heavenly places ruling in this life with His authority or do you think only one day in the Millennium you are going to rule with Christ? Do you believe that upon His resurrection from the dead He triumphed over Satan, death and hell and that all power in heaven and earth have been given unto Him? If so, why do you think He will only exercise that power one day in the Millennium and not now? Do you believe that Christ has delegated His authority to the Church to trample on Satan and destroy his works? If so why do you then think that the Church does not have the authority to bring in the Kingdom and only 144,000 Jews in the tribulation are going to do that?

The truth of the matter is that you in your spirit already believe the Kingdom message. What you need to do is to get your mind in tune with your spirit! Your mind has been fed defeatist false teaching coming out of the popular prophecy books telling you, “relax, it isn’t time for the Kingdom, that is only going to be in the future, this is not your job in any case, the Jews will bring in the Kingdom, you can’t expect to disciple nations, the Antichrist is taking over the world, you’re ok, you’re getting Raptured out of here so don’t sweat it!” Let me help you ditch this false teaching and get you on the Kingdom agenda!

What about the Millennium?

Let’s get to the immediate objection: How can this be the Kingdom Age if the Millennium has not arrived yet? Revelation 20 clearly says that Christ will come and rule for a thousand years and then the end will come, does it

not? Christ has not returned yet, He is not ruling yet and therefore the thousand year millennial reign of Christ has not started yet and therefore it cannot be the Kingdom Age. And if I am claiming in this teaching that the Kingdom Age started at the triumphant resurrection of Jesus Christ then in fact the Kingdom Age should have finished a thousand years later in 1033 AD! It’s obvious that nothing great happened in 1033 AD so where are you going to put the Millennium if not in the future?

Ok, good point so let’s have a close look and see what scripture actually says.

The only reference in the Bible that states that Christ reigns for “a thousand years” is found in Revelation 20. The argument around these verses among Bible students was; should we take this phrase “a thousand years” literally or figuratively? Does Jesus literally reign for an exact period of a thousand years or is this meant in a figurative way like Psalm 50 says that “the cattle on a thousand hills” belong to the Lord. Surely the cattle on hill 1001 also belong to the Lord? Traditional interpretation has always been to see it as figurative, not literal since Revelations is so full of other figurative narratives like beasts and dragons etc.

The Dispensationalists, however, responded and said no way, Revelation 20 clearly states that the saints are to reign with Christ for “a thousand years” and demanded a literal interpretation of those verses and not a figurative interpretation.

Well, here’s the problem... if you want a literal translation of what really is stated in Rev. 20 then you need to go to the original Greek manuscript to see what is actually written there...which I did and found an amazing surprise there! Now I had enough semesters of basic and advanced Koine Greek (ancient Greek) in College, not to be an expert in ancient Greek, but enough to use a good concordance like Strong’s. I also remember from my Greek classes that while there is a definite article like “the” in Greek, there is no indefinite article like “a”, which is added by translators. Then looking up the word

“thousand” in Strong’s concordance (Strong’s G5507) I find that the Greek word used for “thousand” in Revelation 20 is “Chilioi”. Now here is the amazing thing about that word. (Look this up yourself in your Strong’s Concordance!) “Chilioi” is in fact a plural noun meaning “thousands”! The singular noun “thousand” is spelled “Chilias” and is used in Rev.7. So in actual fact a literal translation from the original Greek used in Rev. 20 says that Christ reigns for “thousands of years” and not “a thousand years”!. Now when the translators of the Bible came across this “thousands of years” in the Greek they decided to interpret it as meaning that Christ reigns for an indeterminate long period of time much like “cattle on a thousand hills” are many hills or Peter saying that “a day with the Lord is as thousand years” (he did not mean exactly a thousand years) and so they wrote He reigns “a thousand years”. They assumed it would be taken figuratively that Christ reigns for a long time. Unfortunately the early Fundamentalists and Dispensationalists were not Greek scholars and did not realize that a literal translation from the original Greek said Christ reigns “thousands of years” and instead demanded a literal interpretation of what the beloved King James translation clearly stated, that Jesus will reign for only what they thought was a literal thousand years. Folks, this is both a wrong translation as well as a wrong interpretation!

So let me say this clearly:

There is no scripture in the Bible that says that Jesus Christ will reign for 1000 years in the future!

Instead the clear teaching of all scripture is that Jesus Christ is now the risen Lord! His Kingdom has come and His will is being done. He has all power in heaven and on earth. He will continue to reign for as long as it takes until every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus is Lord! His Kingdom began on earth on the day of Pentecost when He poured out His Spirit on 120 in the upper room in 33 AD and that Kingdom will grow and grow until it fills the earth...and don’t be surprised that it takes thousands of years because that is exactly what Revelations said it would take! God rules eternity and He has lots of time!

Now let’s see if scriptures support this wonderful vision of Kingdom Now or the Dispensationalist idea of Kingdom Postponed.

Kingdom Present or Kingdom Postponed?

You must be careful of people who try to push their pet theories on their interpretation of one scripture! Proper expository teaching takes the Bible from Genesis to Revelation to get the mind of Christ. So if you take away the wrong translation of “thousand” from Rev. 20 and instead put in “thousands of years”, what other scriptures are you going to use to prove that Jesus rules one day in the future for a thousand years? There are none! Instead lets look to see what both the Old Testament as well as the New Testament teaches about the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Daniel’s Timing of the Coming Kingdom

In my article “Countdown to the Messiah” we saw an accurate 490 year countdown in the book of Daniel to the appearance of the Messiah. But equally remarkable was that Daniel also actually prophesied when the Kingdom of God was to appear on the earth!

In Daniel chapter 2 we have the prophecy of the great statue of 4 metals and in Chapter 7 the prophecy of 4 beasts. These signify that four kingdoms were to come after each other. All prophecy writers agree that these four successive kingdoms were, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. But note the wonderful declaration made by Daniel 2:44:

But in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people but shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall last forever.

Daniel prophesied that during the time of the Roman Empire the Lord would set up his Kingdom here on earth and that it would last forever. That means the kingdom would not be set up 2000 years later nor would it last only a thousand years...it would last forever!

Daniel chapter seven repeats this amazing prophecy using four beasts to signify the four coming world empires. But once again during the time of the fourth beast empire the Lord would set up His kingdom.

Incredibly Daniel accurately predicted not only the exact time for the appearance of Messiah the King but also how many world kingdoms would rise and fall during this time until Messiah came to set up His Kingdom on the earth! But the Kingdom postponed teachers don’t believe Daniel!

The Kingdom Postponed Doctrine...

The Kingdom Postponed theory that is taught in most prophecy books says that, yes Jesus did come to proclaim the gospel of Kingdom at His first coming and yes He did intend to inaugurate the Kingdom of God on earth but the Jews who were supposed to be inheritors of this Kingdom rejected the King and His Kingdom. Then after this rejection of the Kingdom by the Jews, the Lord then turned to the Gentiles with the gospel of grace and the launching of the Church age. This Church age dispensation however is only a “parenthesis” period until the Church is Raptured out of the earth. Then the Lord will once again offer the Kingdom to the Jews who will then accept and a 144,000 Jews will proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom during the 7 year Great Tribulation period. This will then lead to the thousand year Millennial reign of Christ on earth ruling from Jerusalem.

Let me quote from two of the favorite writers of the Kingdom Postponed doctrine and then show you the enormous problems this false teaching creates for the Church and the believer:

“God...made the attempt to set up His Kingdom on earth”, but the Jews rejected it, so “the Kingdom has been withdrawn” until the second coming. (Larkin, Dispensational Truths, p.85)

“Messiah’s Kingdom on earth was offered by John and Jesus. It was rejected so was postponed until Christ comes to set up the Kingdom” (Dake, Annotated Bible, p.3)

The Kingdom Now Doctrine...

The Kingdom now doctrine states that the Kingdom of God on earth was inaugurated by Jesus Christ at His first coming. The reign of Christ began at His resurrection when He triumphed over all the power of the enemy and He is now ruling being seated at the right hand of God with all power in heaven and earth given unto Him. He will continue to rule until all His enemies are made His footstool. The last enemy to be conquered is death. His Kingdom began small, in the hearts of His disciples but as prophesied by all the prophets it will grow and grow till it fills the earth. Daniel’s prophecy says that His kingdom will be like a rock that strikes the fourth world empire (Rome) and then grow and grows till it fills the earth. Isaiah and Habakkuk says His glory will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

His second coming will be at the consummation of the ages when He has subjected all under Him and He then presents the Kingdom to the Father and the dead are resurrected and all are presented for judgment before God. (1 Cor. 15). This reign of Christ is manifested through His Church here on earth who are tasked with spreading His Kingdom everywhere. The gates of hell will not prevail against the all conquering Church of Jesus Christ who is His body, His bride and His temple in whom He dwells.

So what does the scripture teach us?

The Kingdom has come and Jesus is now Lord and now ruling over all

or

The Kingdom will one day come and Jesus will one day rule for a thousand years.

The first obvious starting point is not what does Dake, Larkin, John Hagee or TBN or 700 Club believe but what did Jesus teach and believe about the Kingdom?

Jesus said “...*the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye and believe the gospel*” (Mark 1:15). (see also Matt. 3:1-2 and Matt 4:17).

If Jesus came to set up the Kingdom but had to postpone it because the Jews had the ability to postpone the Kingdom by rejecting it, then it means Jesus did not know they would reject it...otherwise why proclaim it was at hand? But if He knew they would reject it and He would have to postpone it for 2000 years then why say it is at hand? That would be a lie! Can you see that those who hold this Kingdom Postponed view make Christ out to be either ignorant or a liar!

Did Jesus believe the Kingdom of God had come?

“ But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, then know the kingdom of God is come upon you.” (Luke 11:20) What do you think He believed? And can you see why the devils don’t want you to believe that the Kingdom has come? Because we now have authority to cast out devils and they know it! The devils know that the Kingdom has come even if the theologians don’t.

Did Jesus believe the time had come for the Kingdom to appear?

Mark 9:1: “*For verily I say unto you, there be some standing here that shall not taste of death till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power*”. When did the Kingdom of God come? Jesus said it would come while some of those listening to His words almost 2000 years ago were still alive!

What did Paul believe and teach? Kingdom Now or Kingdom Postponed?

Paul states we are now in the Kingdom, because God has “delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Col.1:13).

What did John believe? Kingdom Now or Kingdom Postponed?

John writing in his introduction to the Churches of Asia in the beginning of Revelations says, “...*Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the first begotten from the dead and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and made us kings and priests unto God...*” (Rev. 1:5-6). What do you think John believed? Jesus is one day in the future a king for a thousand years or is He King now over all the rulers of the earth and we are now kings and priests in that Kingdom?

But is Jesus Christ now King or must we wait for the Second Coming for Him to be crowned King of Kings?

According to the Dispensational-Kingdom Postponed teachers, Jesus is savior now but only at His second coming is he King of Kings when He comes to sit on David’s throne in Jerusalem as the King of Israel during the Millennium. But this is not what scripture says:

I Tim 6:15-16 says that Jesus is now the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Matth 28:19 Jesus says that all power in heaven and earth had now been given unto him.

Heb. 10 : 12,13 says that He is now seated at the right hand of God until all His enemies are made His footstool.

1 Cor. 15: 25 says that “he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet”.

There are so many more scriptures but the point is clear: Jesus is now both Lord and Savior. He is ruling now not just one day in the supposed Millennium. And if He is Lord now then His Kingdom has come!

The two Gospel theory..

But the Dispensational Rapture – Kingdom Postponed preachers don't believe this. They believe there are two different Gospels; the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Grace. The Gospel of the Kingdom was preached by Christ but because the Jews rejected Him the Kingdom message was withdrawn and will only be preached again during the tribulation by 144,000 Jews. In the interim the Gospel of Grace is to be preached by the Church. I know this is difficult to believe in the face of such overwhelming Kingdom scriptures I have given you above but let me quote from some of their teachers;

“In the gospels, the Lord proclaims the gospel of the Kingdom. After the Church is taken out (in the Rapture) the gospel of the kingdom will again be proclaimed” (Ironsides, The Lamp of Prophecy, p.62)

“The gospel of the kingdom is to be preached again after the Rapture of the Church for a witness unto all nations...” (Larkin, Rightly Dividing the Word, p.53)

“A remnant of the Jews will preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. Today we preach the Gospel of grace.” (Ford, Seven Simple sermons on the Second Coming, p.48)

“The gospel of the kingdom is not preached now...God called another man, Paul, and revealed to him the gospel of grace. When God will have completed the body of Christ and will have taken them to be with Himself in the rapture...then the gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world.” (Pentecost, Judgments, p.49)

That's right...two Gospels! One preached by the Jews one day for the Jews to re-establish a Jewish kingdom where Jesus will be crowned king. This is their gospel of the Kingdom! That is why they are obsessed with anything to do with Israel. Watch Israel, watch for the new temple to be rebuilt. Watch for Russia to invade Israel. Its almost all over, the end times are upon us! This is what the American televangelists believe, this is what all the popular prophecy books teach, this what the major Pentecostal Churches teach.

The other Gospel for them is the Gospel of grace that is to be preached by the Church. Get born again, go to church, hang in there, the rapture is any moment and then we are out of here and the Jews can then carry on with their gospel of the Kingdom.

Remember, according to this theory Jesus came to the Jews to be their king and set up His kingdom but they rejected Him and so Jesus withdrew the Kingdom but after the Rapture they will accept the Kingdom offer. Now let me state the real shocking truth:

Jesus was offered the Jewish Kingdom by the Jews but He rejected it!

The Jews of Jesus day wanted a political, military Kingdom that would destroy the hated Roman occupiers. They perceived this Jesus son of David was indeed that proph-

sied Messiah that would come and contrary to the Kingdom Postponed theorists they not only offered Him the Crown they wanted to force Him to be King:

“Then those men when they had seen the miracles that Jesus did, said This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king, He departed again into a mountain, Himself alone.” (John 6: 14,15)

And still today the modern “Judaizers” in the evangelical movement want a physical King Jesus sitting in Jerusalem, organizing a vast global bureaucracy overseeing sewage works, tax collections, train connections, trade relationships and with a vast army of angels standing ready to bash anyone who would dare not obey His directives. And then after a thousand years of this rule by Christ and His followers the world is so disgusted with a thousand years of Christ and His rulership that Satan is able to organize an international revolt of the oppressed masses against Christ and His Kingdom! Folks, Jesus rejected this kind of Kingdom the first time the Jews offered it to Him, what makes you think He is going to accept it the second time?

But what about Luke 22: 29-30 where Jesus promises His disciples that He appoints them a Kingdom and they would eat and drink at His table and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel? When is this supposed to take place if not in the Millennium?

In the parallel verse in Matthew 19:28, Jesus explains that they would sit on thrones “in the regeneration”. When is the “regeneration”? Is it the Millennium? Paul tells us in Titus 3:5-6 “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of **regeneration** and renewing of the Holy Spirit..” . “Regeneration” means to be born again. Jesus said you must be born again to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (John 3: 1-8). And the moment we are born again we are raised up in Christ and seated with him in heavenly places. The Bible says, “and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 1:3; 2:1-6). Rev. 1: 5-6 says “Jesus Christ who is...the prince of the Kings of the earth ...that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and has made us Kings”

Folks, the Kingdom is now! We are now Kings seated in heavenly places ruling with Christ! Not one day in the supposed Millennium! When we sit at the Communion table to eat and drink we are now eating and drinking in His Kingdom! This is not something that is going to happen for just a thousand years sometime in the future! It is now a present reality and has been since the day of Pentecost when the Church was founded and given the keys to the Kingdom to let the multitudes into the Kingdom!.

This is the Gospel, there is no other:

The Kingdom of God has come (not one day), Jesus is now Lord (not one day). This Kingdom will last forever (not just a thousand years). We are now reigning with Christ bringing in His Kingdom (not one day).