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B0614 – April 9, 2006 – Major Bible Themes
Chapter 48 – The Millennial Kingdom

I. INTRODUCTION

The kingdom is a huge theme in Scripture. There is no way I can delineate everything about the kingdom in an hour. What I want to do is hit some high points. First, I want to show you some of the different views of the kingdom and give you my view and then I want to talk about the major aspects. This is a major doctrine of Scripture and has tons of revelation and this is the reason there is often confusion over the kingdom. You have literally hundreds of passages to put together into a coherent picture and many great men have devoted a tremendous amount of work to developing the teaching of Scripture on the kingdom (e.g. George N. H. Peters, Alva McClain, Stanley Toussaint).

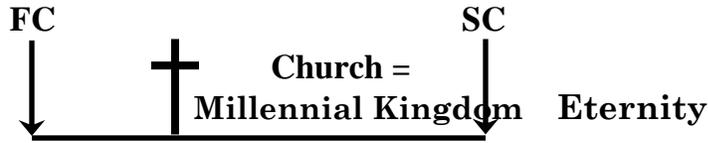
II. VIEWS OF THE KINGDOM

A. Kingdom Now

Kingdom Now views conceive of the Kingdom as present in some form now. So, in some way the Church=the Kingdom. To me, this view cannot be sustained exegetically or theologically because it confuses Israel and the Church. The kingdom was promised to Israel and no passage identifies the Church as Israel. There are two Kingdom Now views: Amillennialism and Postmillennialism. Both see the 1,000 years as a figurative number that simply refers to a long period of time. The difference between the two is that Amillennialism sees the Millennium ending in apostasy and Postmillennialism sees the Millennium ending in a golden age.

1. Amillennialismⁱ

The Millennial Kingdom is the period between Christ's 1st and 2nd Comings (non-literal). Christ will not rule on an earthly throne. The Millennial Kingdom is being fulfilled now on earth through the Church or by the saints in heaven. When Christ returns the eternal state immediately follows.



2. Postmillennialism

The gospel will ultimately triumph in the present age at which point the Millennial Kingdom will be ushered in (non-literal), a time of peace and righteousness will be fulfilled and the Millennial Kingdom will end with the glorious 2nd Coming of Christ and the eternal state will immediately follow.

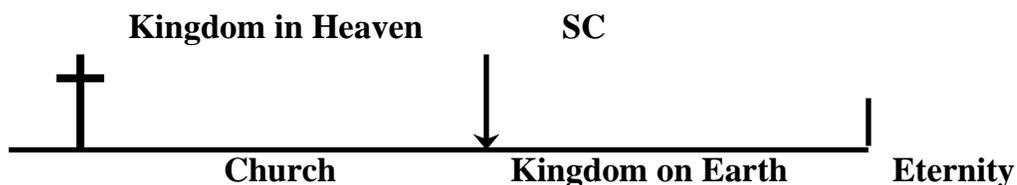


B. Kingdom Now-Not Yet

These views conceive of the Kingdom as present in a partial form now and its full form in the future.

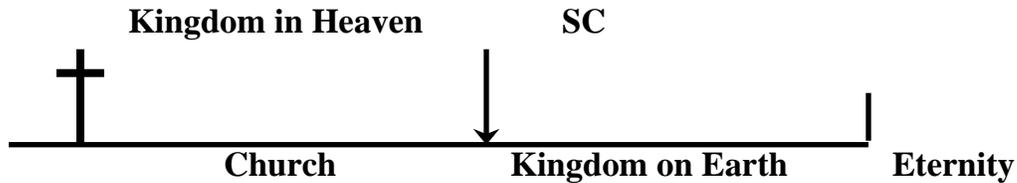
1. Covenant Premillennialism

The Kingdom is now in heaven not yet on earth.



2. Progressive Dispensationalism

The Kingdom is now in heaven not yet on earth.



C. Kingdom Not Yet

This view conceives of the Kingdom as future. Some have been confused, in my estimation, on the Kingdom and have construed Matt 13 as teaching a present “mystery” form of the Kingdom. I reject that interpretation of the parables on the basis of the fact that Matthew never re-defines the “kingdom of God” or “kingdom of heaven” to mean anything other than the OT concept of the kingdom which included an earthly eternal throne, an eternal king sitting on the throne, and an eternal kingdom. John the Baptist and Jesus came preaching “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 3:1; 4:17). It is hermeneutically unjustified to then come to the parables in Matt 13 and interpret the phrase “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 13:11) as a “new form” of the kingdom in the present age which obviously confuses the Kingdom with the Church. All Jesus meant was that he was revealing in the parables new truths regarding the future earthly kingdom. The central idea of the parables is that the kingdom had been postponed. So, they are not teaching that the kingdom had come but that a new age had to run its course before the kingdom would come. I also reject a present form of the kingdom because of Acts 1:6-8. When Jesus was resurrected He taught His disciples about the kingdom for forty days. At the end of this teaching they asked Him, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” In other words, all they wanted to know was the timing. Was Jesus going to become King of Israel then or not? And Jesus⁷ said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; ⁸ but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” So, Jesus distinguished the Kingdom from the coming of the Holy Spirit and this distinguishes the Kingdom from the Church. Jesus was not then coming to be King of Israel but the Holy Spirit was coming in His stead to start the Church. I find it very hard to believe that if the kingdom had come in a new form Jesus didn’t correct them and say, “what are you talking about, get your mind off earthly

kingdoms, don't you know the kingdom is already here in a new form". Then in Acts 3:19-21 Peter says to Israel "repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; ²⁰ and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until *the* period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time." So, Peter realized that the kingdom was not there yet since the King was in heaven. So, the kingdom can't be in heaven. Peter wanted the nation of Israel to repent and return so that the King could return and with Him the kingdom, the times of refreshing, the restoration of all things that was revealed in the OT. So, I do not believe any form of the kingdom is present now. I believe the kingdom is wholly in the future when the King returns.

1. Dispensational Premillennialism

Dispensational Premillennialism teaches that Christ offered Himself to the Jewish nation but their rejection resulted in a postponement of the Kingdom. When the Jewish nation believes in Jesus as Messiah He will return and establish the Kingdom for 1,000 years.



This is the only view that I think literally interprets all the passages regarding the Kingdom. Now, that said, I do not think this means that we have no relationship to the kingdom. I think we do and I want to explain to you your relationship to the kingdom.

First, we are the prayer warriors for the kingdom. Jesus said, "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰ 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.'" We are to pray that His kingdom come so that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Two other things to notice here; first, even though the king was present the kingdom was not present. That is why we pray for the kingdom to come. It would make no sense to pray for a kingdom to come if it was already there in some form. Second, where is the kingdom that Jesus speaks about going to be located? "on earth", not "in heaven". The kingdom can when the nation of Israel repents and this is why John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter and Paul kept preaching that message. And we ought to preach that message too. We ought to pray for the kingdom to come and for the repentance of Israel. So, our first relationship to the kingdom is that we are the prayer warriors for the kingdom.

Second, when a person believes he is regenerated and his citizenship is transferred to the kingdom. Paul said, “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,” (Colossians 1:13). This is a positional truth not an experiential one. Remember, you’ve got positional and experiential truth in the Bible. For example, the Bible says you are sanctified (1 Cor 1:2; 6:11). But it also says be sanctified (1 Thess 4:3ff). You can’t understand this unless you realize that one is positional and the other is experiential. So, transfer these ideas back to Col 1:13. The moment you believed your position was transferred from the present domain of darkness to the kingdom. This has to do with your citizenship. Your citizenship was transferred at the moment of belief from this world to the kingdom. So, if there is a heavenly “role” for who can enter the kingdom and you have believed then you’re name is on that role (When the role is called up yonder, when the role is called up yonder I’ll be there” but the role is really not ‘up yonder’ in heaven but ‘down yonder’ in time for the earthly kingdom). So, the first relationship is that you are a prayer warrior for the kingdom and second when a person believes their citizenship is transferred to the kingdom.

Third, believers are being purified for kingdom service. This has to do with your present sanctification. One aspect of present sanctification is looking for and hastening the “day of God” which is the Tribulation. Why hasten the Tribulation? Fruchtenbaum says, “This is an awesome statement to make. *The day of God* is the same thing as *the day of the Lord*; this is the most common biblical name for the seven years of the” Tribulation. “Here, Peter is encouraging believers to *earnestly* seek, desire, and look for the Day of Jehovah; the day of the Lord; the day of God” – the Tribulation. “The reason to look forward to the Tribulation is explained in verse 13: the Kingdom will be set up by means of the Tribulation judgments. Believers’ lifestyle right now, in this age, will determine their future position in the Kingdom.”ⁱⁱ So, there is a key here to sanctification and it is earnestly desiring, seeking, and hastening the Tribulation. That sanctifies a believer because it produces holy conduct and godliness. In turn, this results in higher position in the future Kingdom. So, that’s one reason we are spending so much time in Revelation on the Tribulation. You ought to earnestly be desiring these things to come upon the earth because the Kingdom is the result of these tremendous judgments.

Let me say one more thing regarding the importance of the kingdom before we look at the nature of the Kingdom. Jesus said, “seek first His *kingdom* and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt 6:33). The kingdom is of first importance. The kingdom is like a key that unlocks Scripture. Understand the kingdom and the rest of Scripture opens up like a flower in blossom. Some people say, oh, that was for the Jews

of the 1st century, only they were supposed to seek the kingdom while it was near. Oh no, that would be a radical misunderstanding of Scripture. Look at Paul in

Acts 28:28-31 "Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen." ²⁹ *When he had spoken these words, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves.* ³⁰ And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, ³¹ preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

This is well after the church had begun and Paul was quitting the Jews and going to the Gentiles and his central topics are “the kingdom of God” and “the Lord Jesus Christ”. So, kingdom preaching is for today and its something we don’t hear from the pulpit. All we hear about the kingdom is a terrible distortion of it; teaching along the lines that the Church is the kingdom or some other baloney. Oh no, the kingdom is future. At the last Passover that Jesus held with His apostles He said, “I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes” (Luke 22:18). And that won’t come until He returns and so the kingdom is very important and I hope that this is registering with you and I hope this whets your appetite for more kingdom teaching.

So, in conclusion to this section, you have three relationships to the kingdom. First, when you believe your citizenship was transferred to the kingdom. Second, you are now a prayer warrior for the kingdom. Third, seeking and hastening the Tribulation purifies us for kingdom service. Lastly, seek the kingdom first. Now lets’ turn to the nature of the Kingdom, what it will look like.

III. THE KINGDOM OF DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM

“...this Kingdom, Theocratic-Davidic, is *of* divine origin and is specially claimed *as* God’s, *He Himself* being the Ruler in and through the reigning King; that this Kingdom being *not* of worldly but divine outgrowth, is promised to Jesus Christ as the promised David’s Son; and that, owing to the foreknown rejection of the Messiah...is postponed to the ending of this age or dispensation.” (George N. H. Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, Vol 2, p 32.)

A. Heavens and Earth Renovated

The tribulation judgments will renovate the earth; massive topographical changes to the earth's surface and the earth's atmosphere will change living conditions dramatically. A great earthquake will happen when the 7th Bowl is poured out that will sink every island and flatten every mountain. This will result in increased land surface area to accommodate the population increase during the Millennial Kingdom. Jerusalem will be the high point and a river will flow out from Jerusalem. This free flow of moisture will water what are presently deserts so they will blossom with beautiful gardens. There will not be just one crop but many crops per year. Crops will produce much faster so that the reaper overtakes the harvester. There will be changes in the atmosphere so that there is increased longevity of humans. These changes will affect the demeanor of animals so that the wolf will lie with the lamb and a nursing infant will play by a cobra's den and children will lead young lions. This sounds a lot like the conditions described in the garden of Eden and that's how Ezekiel describes the renovated heavens and earth in the Millennium (Ezek 36:) which leads me to our next point.

B. Christ the King, David the Prince

The first king of the kingdom was Adam. Adam was supposed to maintain the garden and subdue and multiply so that the kingdom of God filled the whole earth. So, the kingdom was designed to be ruled by a man made in God's image. But Adam failed and handed over the kingdom of this world to Satan (Luke 4:4) so that he is the "god of this world". Satan began to develop his kingdom in the world and the first visible form of the kingdom of Satan came at the tower of Babel. And so, in the very next chapter God begins to build His kingdom program by calling out a man, Abraham. And through Abraham would come a seed, a man, the second Adam, who would fulfill the original dominion mandate given in Genesis by establishing God's rule over the whole earth. So, this is one reason Jesus Christ is the God-Man. He's got to be a true human in order to fulfill this dominion mandate and establish God's kingdom on earth. So, the kingdom is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants (2 Chron 17:10b-14; Ps 132:11) when the God-Man Jesus Christ will rule as absolute King over the whole world and David will be His Prince. This state of affairs, once established, will be undefeatable and will last forever (Dan 2:44-45).

1 Chronicles 17:11-14 "When your [David's] days are fulfilled that you must go *to be* with your fathers, that I will set up *one of* your descendants after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. ¹² "He shall build for Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. ¹³ "I will be his father and he shall be My son; and I will not take My lovingkindness away from him, as I took it

from him who was before you. ¹⁴ "But I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever.""

Jesus left earth without establishing His kingdom and He went to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father on the Father's throne (Rev 3:22) but when He comes again He will come in His kingdom and will sit on God's throne, which is called David's throne when it is on earth. It's very interesting, and many of you may not have noticed, that when the kings of the OT sit on their throne the Bible says they were sitting on YHWH's throne.

2 Chronicles 9:8 "Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you, setting you [Solomon] on His [YHWH's] throne as king for the LORD your God

So, YHWH's throne on earth is David's throne (1 Chron 29:23 compared with 1 Kings 2:12). When this throne returns to earth it will be eternal, the King who sits on it is the eternal God-Man, and the kingdom He will rule is eternal (Isa 9:7; Luke 1:32-33). So that the throne and the kingdom somehow have continuity with the New Heavens and New Earth. And David shall be prince.

Ezekiel 34:24-30 "And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David will be prince among them; I the LORD have spoken.

C. Israel's Covenants Fulfilled to Believing Remnant

The Abrahamic, Land, Davidic, and New Covenants will be fulfilled in their entirety to the believing remnant. Israel will possess the Promised Land in its entirety. The borders are described generally in Gen 15:18-21 and specifically in Ezek 47-48. The Promised Land will be the most luscious and green part of the entire earth.

D. Millennial Temple

A Millennial Temple, built by Christ Himself (Zech 6:12-13), is described in great detail in Ezekiel 40-46. Accompanying the description of the physical structure are animal sacrifices that will be offered in the temple. This has caused a lot of debate since Christ died for sins once for all. How then and for what purpose would animal sacrifices be made? As a result of these descriptions many have allegorized the Millennial Temple but it is the true test of the exegete to remain true to the text and give a searching explanation (which you will not hear today).

Flowing forth from this Temple will be a river of clean fresh water and it will teem with fish and it will flow into the Arabah (desert plains) turning desert into vegetation. Everywhere this water goes there will be life (Ezek 47). Fishermen will stand on the banks and they will cast their nets and bring in an abundance.

E. Of Divine Origin

It should go without saying that the kingdom is of divine origin and that's why it's called the kingdom of God. It's also called the kingdom of heaven and I take these terms as almost synonymous only having slight nuances in meaning. I think they both refer to the Millennial Kingdom and that's because Matthew uses them interchangeably in certain passages (e.g. 19:23-24). The phrase kingdom of God reveals the character of the kingdom. It will be godly. The phrase kingdom of heaven designates that the Father's will which is done in heaven will be done in this earthly kingdom. But both phrases refer to one and the same earthly, millennial kingdom.

CONCLUSION

There are many other things that could be said of the kingdom but today we have noted some of the major things. I take it that the kingdom is not the Church and is not present in any form now. That means I reject Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Covenant Premillennialism and Progressive Dispensationalism. I take it that the kingdom is wholly future and will be established when Christ returns as King and that is, in my estimation, the most consistent Dispensational position one can take. I think it does full justice to the literal interpretation of passages regarding the kingdom and is the easiest to defend. We are prayer warriors for the kingdom, our citizenship is transferred to the kingdom when we believe, and we are being purified for kingdom service. We are to seek first the kingdom and Christ's righteousness in the present age. At the time of Christ's return the present heavens and earth will be renovated and Christ will rule as King with David ruling as Prince. Israel's covenants will be fulfilled in their entirety and they will be the head of the nations. A Millennial Temple will be built by Christ Himself and sacrifices will be offered in this kingdom. Let's close with two great kingdom passages; one from Isaiah and one from Revelation.

Isaiah 9:7 There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with

justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

Revelation 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The *kingdom* of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

ⁱ "Its most general character is that of denial of a literal reign of Christ upon the earth. Satan is conceived as bound at the first coming of Christ. The present age between the first and second comings is the fulfillment of the Millennium. Its adherents are divided on whether the Millennium is being fulfilled now on earth (Augustine) or whether it is being fulfilled by the saints in heaven (Klieforth). It may be summed up in the idea that there will be no more Millennium than there is now, and that the eternal state immediately follows the second coming of Christ." Walvoord, John F., *The Millennial Kingdom* (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham, 1963), 6.

ⁱⁱ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *The Messianic Jewish Epistles*, 418.

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