



BAND of BROTHERS – WEEK 7: The Final Kingdom

FALL 2021

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

– Revelation 21:2 ESV

- **The final kingdom**

- Is the kingdom already here or yet to come?

- Already here

- One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, “When will the Kingdom of God come?”*

- Jesus replied, “The Kingdom of God can’t be detected by visible signs. You won’t be able to say, ‘Here it is!’ or ‘It’s over there!’ For the Kingdom of God **is already among you.**” – Luke 17:20-21 NLT*

- Yet to come

- “I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you **in my Father’s kingdom.**” – Matthew 26:29 ESV*

- So, is it here or yet to come?
 - Are we already in it or still looking for it?
 - What did Jesus have to say?

- **Matthew 24**

- As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, **when** will these things be, and **what** will be **the sign of your coming** and of **the end of the age?**” – Matthew 24:3 ESV*

- **When** will the temple be destroyed?
- **What** will the sign be of your coming and the end of the age
sign – *sēmeion* – (say-my-on)
 - What should we look for?
 - How will we know?

- They are looking for **the sign** of His Kingdom

coming – *parousia* – (par-oo-see'-ah)

- Often used to refer to His Second Coming
- But it literally means “advent” or “presence”
*“What will be the sign of **your arrival** as King?”*
- They weren’t looking for a **second** coming
- They’re waiting for the final fulfillment of the **first**

- The end of the age

- They are not asking about **heaven**
- They are referencing **the age to come**
- The time of **Messiah’s rule**
- They were still expecting Jesus to set up His **kingdom on earth**

*...he [God] raised him [Jesus] from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in **this age** but also in **the one to come**. – Ephesians 1:20-21 ESV*

“The phrase “this age ... the age to come” describes a Jewish understanding of the cosmos. With the term “this age,” the biblical author refers to the period of history in which he finds himself – a period characterized by evil, rebellion, wickedness, and darkness. In contrast, “the age to come” refers to the period that will follow God and His Messiah’s eschatological intervention at the end of history, which will be characterized by life, peace, righteousness, and light.” – D. R. Brown, M. Custis, & M. M. Whitehead, *Ephesians*

- They are looking for **the sign** of His Kingdom

- Signs of the times

*And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, **but the end is not yet**. – Matthew 24:6 ESV*

- It’s not what you think

*For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. **All these are but the beginning of the birth pains**. – Matthew 24:7-8 ESV*

- The future was going to look bleak

- But a remnant will remain faithful, and the gospel will be proclaimed

...this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. – Matthew 24:14 ESV

- And **then** the end will come

*I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters, so that you will not feel proud about yourselves. Some of the people of Israel have hard hearts, but this will last only **until the full number of Gentiles comes to Christ**. – Romans 11:25-26 NLT*

“The hardening of Israel and their rejection from the people of God is only partial and temporary; it will last until the full number of Gentiles has come in...”

“When His purpose with the wild branches (Gentiles) has been completed, He will turn again to the natural branches; the veil will be taken away from their eyes (2 Cor. 3:16) and they will believe and be grafted into the people of God. Thus ‘all Israel will be saved.’” – George Eldon Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*

*There is **neither Jew nor Greek**, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, **then you are Abraham’s offspring**, heirs according to promise. – Galatians 3:28-29 ESV*

*For Christ himself has brought peace to us. **He united Jews and Gentiles into one people** when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us....**He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. Together as one body**, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. – Ephesians 2:14, 15-16 NLT*

- **The End**

- The disciples are eagerly anticipating “the end”
- But Jesus describes something dark and foreboding
- The kingdom they longed for **would** eventually come
- But only after “all these...” – Matthew 24:15-21

- A Bleak Picture

- Things are going to get **far worse**, not better
- Jesus is describing **unprecedented** trials

“...such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.” – vs. 21

- This is **end-of-times** type of stuff
- It would not happen in the disciples’ lifetimes

- Christ’s followers would see a partial fulfillment

- They would experience tribulation – 24:9
- Some would be put to death – 24:9
- Nations would hate them for their faith – 24:9

- Many would fall away – 24:10
- Others would be betrayed – 24:10
- Some would be led away by false prophets – 24:11
- They would see a rise in lawlessness – 24:12
- And the love of many would grow cold – 24:12

...in the last days there will be very difficult times. For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that! – 2 Timothy 3:1-5 NLT

- “Those days”
 - “Immediately after the tribulation of **those days** the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” – Matthew 24:29-30 ESV*
 - What days?
 - Certainly not the days of the apostles
 - And not even in our day
 - Yet, these things have to happen before the end comes and the Kingdom of God is fulfilled

[SEE “MILLENNIAL VIEW” CHART]

- **All things made new** – Revelation 21
 - Let’s fast-forward to the end
 - A new heaven and a new earth

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶ And he

said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.” – Revelation 21:1-8

- A new Jerusalem – Revelation 21:9-27

²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. – Revelation 21:22-27 ESV

- **Come, Lord Jesus!**

He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! – Revelation 22:20 ESV

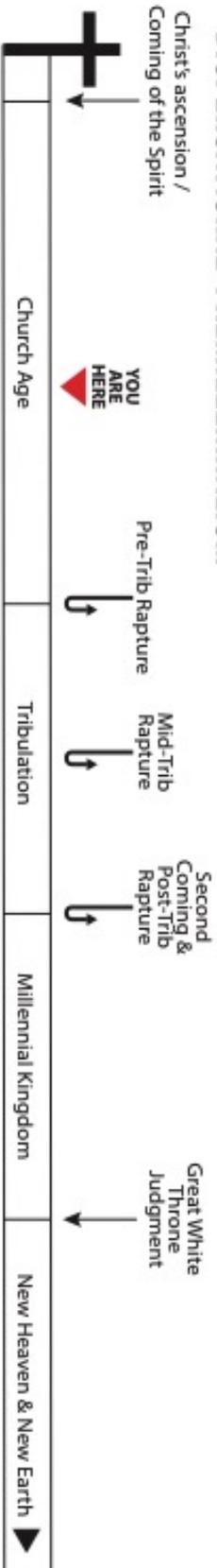
Next Week: Ambassadors of the King

For Further Discussion

- Why is it so dangerous to misunderstand God’s divine timeline for the coming of the Kingdom?
- Look at Revelation 21:9-21. What is all this fantastic imagery is meant to tell us about our future home?
- Why should all discussion of the coming Kingdom prompt us to say with John, “Come, Lord Jesus!”?

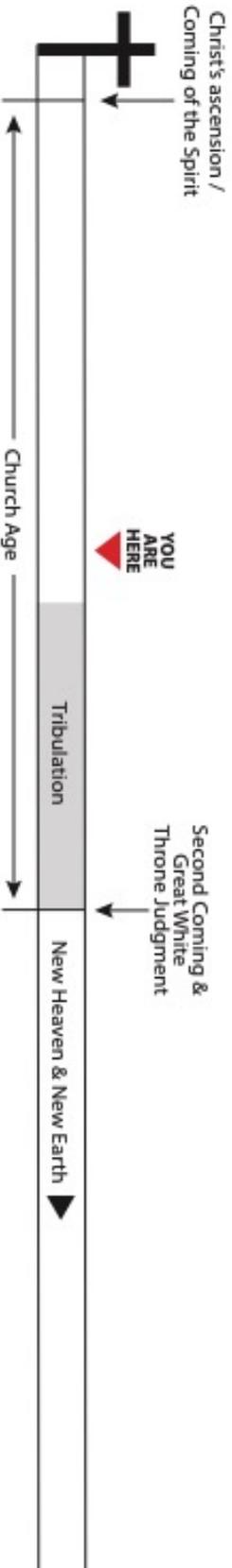
MILLENNIAL VIEWS

DISPENSATIONAL-PREMILLENNIALISM



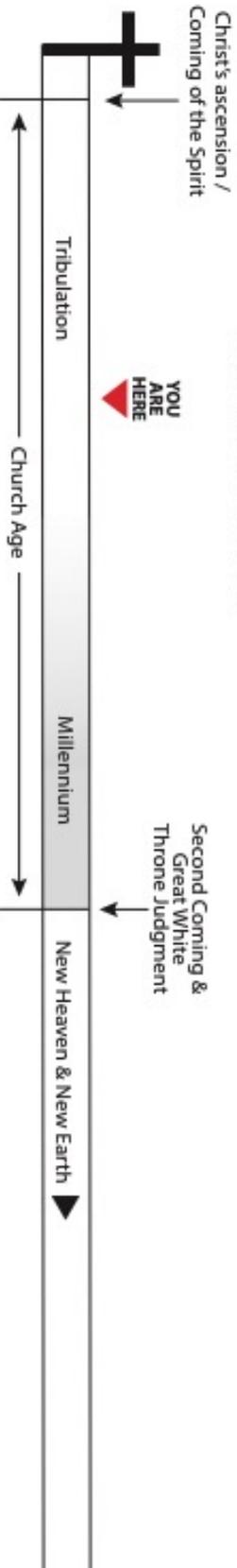
AMILLENNIALISM

There is no literal 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth. They believe that the Kingdom of God was inaugurated at Christ's resurrection. Satan has already been defeated and "bound." Christ is currently reigning from heaven. Interpret Rev. 20:1-6 non-literally.



POSTMILLENNIALISM

Believe the millennium is an era (not a literal thousand years), during which Christ will reign over the earth, not from a literal and earthly throne, but through His church. The gradual increase of the Gospel and its power to change lives will result in the Christianization of the world. The church is the fulfillment of Israel.





WEEK 8 HOMEWORK: Ambassadors of the King

FALL 2021

After looking at the final state of the Kingdom, we'll backtrack and investigate our role as citizens living as ambassadors of the coming kingdom in this present age. Jesus is King and we are citizens of the kingdom but, for the time being, we are living as aliens and strangers in a strange land. This lesson is intended to speak to our current role as we await the Lord's return for His bride, the Church.

- After all we've discussed about the kingdom so far, what do you think should be our role as Christians as we live in this particular time period? What should we be doing?

Go back and read 2 Corinthians 5:11-15. What kind of insight does Paul provide in attempting to answer the previous question?

- Read the following passages and then write down how you might practice what they say in your everyday life.

Colossians 1:9-14

Ephesians 4:1-4

Ephesians 5:10-14

Romans 12:1-2

Romans 6:13

1 Corinthians 6:20

Matthew 5:14-16

- Now, spend some time reading and thinking about Jesus' High Priestly Prayer record in John 17:10-17. What does Jesus ask the Father to do for us?

What do you think it means to be in the world, but not of it?

It seems obvious that we are called to live on this planet as what Peter calls "aliens and strangers" (1 Peter 2:11). We are ambassadors from another city operating on behalf of our King. But how do you think we are supposed to interface with the culture as we live in anticipation for the Kingdom to come?