

## **AMILLENNIALISM AND THE REIGN OF JESUS CHRIST**

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The motivation to write this article came from a previous article that appeared in June of 2022, written by Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr.

It was titled: 'Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church,' and I read it with great interest and appreciation. That article was written from the postmillennial perspective. I thought it would be worthwhile to write an article presenting the amillennial understanding of the reign of Christ, especially for the fact that amillennialism has a such a long standing within historic Christianity.

It should first be understood that the term "amillennial" does not mean that amillennialists deny the existence of the millennium, as described in Revelation 20:4. However, we interpret that passage of Scripture differently than the dispensationalists. They teach that the 'thousand years' is to be taken as a still future, literal thousand year reign of Christ on earth. We would first point out that there is no specific indication given in Revelation chapter 20 that Jesus is reigning upon the earth itself, from an earthly throne in Jerusalem. In fact, we find in Revelation 4:1, and 4:2 that John is called up to God's throne in heaven and it is this heavenly throne that is in view throughout the entire book.

We also point out that the book of Revelation is a prophetic presentation of the heavenly reign of Christ in bringing redemptive history to its promised conclusion. This vision is presented to John in symbolic scenes, images, and numbers. To properly interpret what John has written down about this vision, one needs to study the teaching and doctrinal portions of the New Testament where the Apostles discuss in non-symbolic language both the reign of Christ as well as His second coming at the end of this present age. In those portions of Scripture, no apostle speaks of a literal thousand year reign of Christ on earth, and neither does Jesus Himself in His discussions about the Kingdom and the end of the world, ever speak about a thousand year reign on earth.

With this said, the amillennialist believes that the thousand year reign in Revelation chapter 20 is a symbolic period of time (now more than 2000 actual years) in which Jesus has been seated on His heavenly throne, at the right hand of God the Father. It began with His first advent, after He returned to His throne in heaven. During His heavenly reign, the gospel of the kingdom is being preached throughout the world, under His authority (Matthew 28:18-20), having begun in the city of Jerusalem with the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2 and continuing to the end of this present age up to the Day of Christ ( Matthew 24:14).

On that Day, He will return in Power and Glory to consummate His heavenly kingdom with the resurrection of the just and the unjust, the final judgment and the creation of the new

heavens and the new earth. At His judgment seat, He will present His Church as His chosen people, the Redeemed, cleansed of all sin and found holy, blameless, and righteous before Him. As His Holy people accompany Him at His judgment throne in praise and worship, He will judge the world and remove all the unrighteous from His kingdom once and for all eternity. He has not been waiting to reign for over 20 centuries as dispensationalists teach, but He has been reigning throughout the days in which the gospel is being preached. By His word, the devil's captives are being set free from sin and death, being made alive in Christ by His sovereign electing grace and saving power.

In fact, the powerful grace deliverance from sin and death unto life, and the translation into His kingdom of light is the result of Christ's life, death, resurrection, ascension and His present reign over all the rulers of the darkness of this age. As Paul writes in Ephesians chapter 1, verses 20 and 21; that God the Father has "seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come." -NKJV.

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