

# Eschatology Observations – Summary & Introduction

## SUMMARY

This post covers a lecture analyzing different end times theological positions on the kingdom of God, whether it refers to a future literal 1,000 year earthly reign of Jesus after his second coming (premillennialism) or a current spiritual reign (amillennialism). It examines key assumptions behind these views like the Abrahamic covenant's land promise, interpreting prophecy literally, already/not yet kingdom, and more. There is extensive discussion of biblical support and objections for different perspectives without definitively endorsing any one view. Action items identify evaluating assumptions on the kingdom's timing, nature and location as well as studying how New Testament writers quote and apply Old Testament passages.

## End Times Theological Positions

This post will analyze four major positions on end times prophecy (dispensational premillennialism, historic premillennialism, amillennialism, postmillennialism) without critiquing any specific view. The goal is to understand assumptions behind these perspectives and decisions that steer interpretations.

## Examining Reasons for Believing in a Literal Millennial Kingdom

Those holding a premillennial position believe Jesus' second coming initiates an earthly 1,000 year reign. Basis includes perceiving greater hope, influence from popular Bible teachers, expectations about the Abrahamic covenant's land promise, and passages mentioning Jesus' return to the Mount of Olives.

## **Questioning Key Assumptions Like the Abrahamic Covenant**

Belief in a future literal kingdom assumes the Abrahamic covenant's land promise still needs fulfillment, but passages show conditions Israel failed to meet leading to exile. Amillennialists see the covenant as conditional or transferred to the church.

## **Debating a Literal Versus Spiritual Kingdom**

The definition of "literal" is examined – non-literal does not mean "not real." Amillennialists argue spiritual fulfillment is just as real with believers collectively as the new temple. Premillennialists counter expectations of Jesus' earthly reign.

## **Assessing Already and Not Yet Aspects**

Some New Testament passages refer to the kingdom in past or present tense, while others are future oriented. An "already but not yet" view embraces both current and future elements but systems tend to over-emphasize one aspect.

## **Old Testament Background for the Kingdom**

Leviticus 26 is pivotal with promises of dwelling if Israel obeys, but exile if they don't – premillennialists see a future remembrance while amillennialists view conditions as unmet. First Kings 4 describes Solomon ruling the precise boundaries promised to Abraham.

## **New Testament Kingdom References**

In Acts 1 disciples expect a literal kingdom for Israel but in Acts 8 Philip preaches the kingdom in Jesus' gospel message. Other passages depict the kingdom as present reality or future event showing tension.

## **Action Items**

1. Evaluate assumptions on whether the Abrahamic covenant's land promise needs future literal fulfillment or was conditional, temporary, or transferred to church.
2. Assess definition of 'literal' prophecy interpretation – does non-literal mean not real?
3. Research how New Testament writers apply Old Testament passages – is there consistency in literalness?
4. Determine if biblical kingdom references support already/not yet or exclusively current or future.

## **INTRODUCTION**

A little bit of self-introduction, true confessions, is guessed; would be a better way to put it. The web-post writer of this introduction will tell you up front that probably he has the least knowledge on the subject of biblical eschatology. The reason said is because, there is going to be an attempt to make this clear, being married to any of the positions in the past was not an interest, because honestly, going along with the predominant evangelical position that's preached; any differences were not in the equation.

In this post introduction, it will not attempt to change your position, it really is not the concern or care what position you have. There will not be any persuasion to correct you of anything that you already think. The ambition of this, or goal of this, is that, it will just introduce you to positions and let all the positions be what they are, and let you be happy with which ever position you want to stand for. It's not going to critique anybody's position. It will only present positions of what others are saying, however, it will present what the scripture reveals and that's all that can be said.

Whether or not the following will make anyone change from the position one takes currently, because, to be honest with you, there are a lot of things about eschatology that are really indeterminate. You really can't know. You can guess. Some

guesses might be better than others, but we really can't even tell that in some places in scripture.

What's of more importance is when you begin to think about your position, think about things you've heard, think about things you embrace, think about things that are really important to you as far as your position. That's great, but you should go away understanding why it is you have that position, and if you understand that, you'll also be able to tell, to some degree, where you could switch or shift, or how you could be something else if you made one or two really seemingly small decisions about certain passages. If you do that, you're going to wind up somewhere completely different than where you are.

So, those are sort of goals for presenting this, and for you to understand, charity is the number one thing, and there is not going to be attempts to try to change anybody's mind on anything. What this post will try to do is get you to think about, is; well I have this position but how did I get there? And let me telegraph it by saying this, the answer to the question of how you get there is not that you know this verse over here and I can quote it.

What you're going to see hopefully, is that all of the positions, this is why people write books on them, they all look beautiful, they all look perfectly coherent. You can pick up a book on, you know one position, you can pick up a hundred books on any of these positions and they have an answer for everything even though they're diametrically opposed. The reason for that is because they've systematized and they've prepared their thoughts to defend their position. What they're not necessarily telling you is there's a set of decisions that you make prior to even going to any passage that help you filter passages in such a way that they steer your interpretation in one direction or another.

A lot of this is just subconscious. **We picked these things up**

**because of what we heard in a sermon or on the radio or read in a book.** And we've never really examined the filters that we use, and everybody uses one, including the post writer.

So, this post may seem a little ambiguous. It may be a little vague. That's deliberate. It will go through some terminology, and it's not going to be about the terms, but hopefully it would rather have you fixate on the ideas.

The other thing before going to the paper on the topic is, it's hopeful that this presentation will get a lot of interaction, because what's needed is to hear from you why you are where you are, and then we'll sort of use some of that to go in different places.

So, some of this can be completely ad hoc. It will not try to fake some way through this by saying; let's just have reader participation. It will go through a few things, but hoping that you're able to steer the topic to different places. So, the basic question is why are you where you are? Why do you land where you land?

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