

# What's Next?

## Revelation 20:4-6; Daniel 12:1-13

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### Introduction

- Throughout the centuries, men have dreamed of a utopia here on earth
- No such utopia in the near future, for the world is in for a bumpy ride during the tribulation period.
- The belief in the Second Coming of Christ is accepted by almost all denominations considered to be Christian.
- But while belief in the Second Coming is almost universal among Christians, what comes next after His coming is up for debate.
- Some believe that the Second Coming is not to be taken literally, but there are many "second comings" at conversion or at the death of a believer. Jesus comes for them.
- But if you take the prophetic Scriptures at face value and interpret them literally, they clearly teach that Jesus Christ will return bodily in the future. But what will transpire after His coming?

### What's Next?

#### A. The Establishment of Jesus' Kingdom: Literal or Spiritual?

##### 1. Prediction of a Millennial kingdom

- Revelation 20:4-6-- *"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."*

##### 2. Three Views regarding the Kingdom

###### a. A-Millennial: No future, literal kingdom (Majority View)

- 1) Jesus Christ is reigning now in heaven and in a spiritual sense over our lives
- 2) Satan was defeated at the cross and is now bound, limited in what he can do.
- 3) Support for this view.
  - Luke 17:20b-21-- *"The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."*
  - John 18:36-- *"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."*
- 4) Agreement: Jesus Christ's present spiritual reign over us. But does not negate the many passages of Scripture that speak of a future kingdom here on earth.
  - Romans 10:9-10-- *"confessed with our mouth that Jesus is Lord, and we believed in our heart that God has raised him from the dead!"*
- 5) Course of Future Events: The world will become progressively evil. But there is no literal future tribulation period, but the prophecies of Revelation are being fulfilled now in a general sense. In the end, mankind will gather for a final battle against God. Christ will return to raise the dead and to judge the world at the Great White Throne Judgment. The return of Christ will be followed by the destruction of this physical world and the creation of a new heavens and earth. But NO LITERAL, FUTURE 1,000 YEAR KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

- b. **Post-Millennial: The Church will bring in the Kingdom after which Jesus Christ will return. (Minority View)**
- 1) The world is getting “better and better” through the church’s ministry.
  - 2) Flourished at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. World War I was to be the “war that ends all wars”.
  - 3) Adolph Hitler and the Third Reich. Consider himself to be the one to usher in the Kingdom by conquering the world and annihilating the Jews.
  - 4) Post-Millennialism is making a comeback today with Dominion Theology.
  - 5) Course of Future Events: From the church’s influence, the world gets better and better. For a 1,000 years the world will experience peace and prosperity, followed by the return of Jesus Christ at the end of the 1,000 years to judge the world at a general judgment after a general resurrection.
- c. **Pre-Millennial: Jesus Christ at His Second Coming will establish a literal Kingdom here on earth and will reign for 1,000 years. (Minority View)**
- 1) During the Millennial Kingdom, all of the covenants that God made with Israel in the Old Testament will be fulfilled literally and totally. The Abrahamic Covenant, the Palestinian Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant.
  - 2) The kingdom will continue for 1,000 years after which it will merge into the eternal kingdom.
  - 3) The Universal belief of the early church for the first 250 years.
    - Oswald T. Allis (a-mil)-- *“premillennialism was extensively held in the early church, how extensively is not definitely known. But the stress that many of its advocates placed on earthly rewards and carnal delights aroused widespread opposition to it; it was largely replaced by the “spiritual” view of Augustine.”*
    - Whitby (Post-mil)-- *“The doctrine of the Millennium, or the reign of the saints on earth for a thousand years is now rejected by all Roman Catholics, and by the greatest part of Protestants; and yet it passed among the best Christians for two hundred and fifty years, for a tradition apostolic; and as such, is delivered by many church fathers of the second and third century, who speak of it as the tradition of our Lord and His apostles, and of all the ancients who lived before them.”*
3. **Underlying debate: The interpretation of Scripture. Literally or Allegorically?**
- a. **The Allegorical Interpretation of Scripture?**
- 1) Began with Augustine in the fourth century
    - a) 1,000 years interpreted to be the time between the first and second coming of Christ
    - b) Binding of Satan took place at the cross-- not future
  - 2) Reformers adopted the allegorical interpretation of prophetic Scripture except they believed the Jesus Christ was ruling in heaven today. The “millennium” is happening today in heaven as a reward for faithfulness.
- b. **All sides agree that interpreting the Old Testament prophecies literally leads to Pre-millennialism.**
- Floyd Hamilton (A-Mil)-- *“Now we must frankly admit that a literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies gives us just such a picture of an earthly reign of the Messiah as the pre-millennialist pictures.”*
  - Loraine Boettner (Post-Mil)-- *“It is generally agreed that if the prophecies are taken literally, they do foretell the restoration of the nation of Israel in the land of Palestine with the Jews having a prominent place in that kingdom and ruling over the other nations.”*
- c. **So why not take the prophecies of the Old Testament that speak of a future kingdom literally?**
- 1) A misunderstanding of how the New Testament writers used the Old Testament Scriptures.
  - 2) Who determines whether something is to be interpreted literally or allegorically since the normal rules of interpretation do not apply?

- Walter Kaiser-- *“Who or what will arbitrate the various nonliteral meanings suggested and decide which are to be accepted and which are spurious? Short of saying that every person’s fancy is his or her own rule, there does not appear to be any final court of appeal. There simply are no justifiable criteria for setting boundaries once the interpreter departs from the normal usage of language.”*
- 3) A-millennialists and post-millennialists are inconsistent in applying the allegorical method of interpretation.
- Luke 1:31-33-- *“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”*
    - a) Why are some parts understood literally whereas others allegorically?
    - b) Both a-millennialists and post-millennialists interpret some prophetic events literally: Christ’s Second Coming, Great White Throne Judgment; and the destruction of the present heaven and earth, and the creation of the new. Why can’t they believe in a literal kingdom here on earth?
- d. **Literal Interpretation: Jesus Christ at His Second Coming will establish His kingdom here on earth.**

## **B. The Time Gap between Christ’s Second Coming and the Establishment of His Kingdom**

### **1. The Time-Line of the Tribulation as revealed to Daniel**

#### **a. The second half of the tribulation known as a time of unparallel trouble.**

- Daniel 12:1-- *“At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Everyone who is found written in the book.”*

#### **b. The second half of the tribulation will last 3 ½ years or 1, 260 days**

- Daniel 12:5-7-- *“Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?” Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.*

- 1) It will last *“until the power of the holy people has been completely shattered.”*
- 2) A review of God’s 490-year plan to prepare the Jews to receive their Messiah and His kingdom.
  - Daniel 9:24-- *“Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.”*
    - a) Began with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem in 444 BC.
    - b) Clock stopped when the Messiah was cut off, that is, rejected by the Jews at His first coming.
    - c) One more “week of years” remaining--the seven years of tribulation to prepare the Jews to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior-Messiah.

### **2. The revelation of the time gap between Messiah’s Second Coming and the establishment of His Kingdom.**

- Daniel 12:8-13-- *“Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, “My lord, what shall be the end of these things?” And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. “And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away,*

*and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."*

- a. **Thirty days from the end of the tribulation to the removal of the "Abomination of Desolation" in the temple.**
- b. **The "blessings" for those who wait for the 1,335 days.** The blessing of entering the kingdom. So, there are 75 days from the end of the tribulation to the beginning of the kingdom.
  - Daniel 12:12-- *"Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days."*
  - 1) During this period of time there will be a series of judgments to determine who gets in and who is kept out of the Kingdom.
  - 2) During this period of time, there are several phases of the first resurrection whereby believers who have died will be raised so that they can enter the kingdom.
    - a) Resurrection of the Old Testament Saints of which Daniel is one.
      - Daniel 12:2-- *"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt."*
      - Daniel 12:13-- *"But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."*
    - b) Resurrection of the Tribulation Saints who died or were martyred.
      - Revelation 20:4b-6-- *"they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."*