

# Fundamentals of Our Faith from the Beginning

## *Frameworks and the Future*

### **Amillennialism or Realized Millennialism**

#### **1. An overview of the system:**

- a. Amillennialists believe that the “millennium” is the interadvental age during which Christ reigns from heaven with His saints who have died. Though this reign is spiritual and heavenly, yet the kingdom is manifest on the earth through the Church and the advance of the gospel.
- b. AMs believe “the kingdom of God is both present and future...was founded by Christ at the time of his sojourn on earth, is operative in history now and is destined to be revealed in its fullness in the life to come” (Hoekema). Matthew 12:28; Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17 vs. Matthew 7:21; 8:11-12; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 2 Timothy 4:18.
  - i. The promises made to Abraham, Israel, and David are fulfilled in Christ and His people (the Church) in many respects now but in fullness in the new heavens and new earth.
  - ii. The present and future aspects of the kingdom mean that believers now enjoy the spiritual blessings of the kingdom (already) while still awaiting the fullness of these blessings (not yet).
  - iii. Some believe this kingdom reign is heavenly only while others believe it is the spiritual reign of Christ through His Church on earth, but all believe that the kingdom breaks into this world in this already/not yet reality.
- c. AMs believe in a two-age eschatology: this “present age,” marked by gospel advance amid opposition and the “age to come,” which is the consummation of all things and do not find an extended “age of righteousness” before or after Christ’s return (Luke 18:28-30; 20:34-36).
  - i. In this present age, the gospel will be preached in the whole world, the fullness of the Gentiles will come in, yet opposition and persecution will remain until Christ’s return when He inaugurates the age to come (Matt. 24:14; Rom. 11:25; 2 Tim. 3-4:5, etc.).
  - ii. We are currently living in “the last days,” but there is coming a “last day” of judgment (Acts 2:16-17; 1Cor. 10:11; Heb. 1:1-2 vs. John 6:39-40, 44; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Tim. 4:8).
  - iii. Christ’s second coming is the consummation of all things and includes the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked, the judgment of all, and the inauguration of the eternal state (Matt. 13:39-43; 25:31f; John 5:25-29; Acts 24:15; 2 Thess. 1:6-10, etc.).
  - iv. Many believe that there will yet be a great ingathering of ethnic Jews at the end of the age when the Lord grafts them back into His tree (Rom. 11:17-27).
- d. Believers who die reign with Christ in the heavens in the intermediate state (a minority believe the millennial reign only refers to those who have been martyred).
- e. Many believe Revelation as a whole describes the Church age from various vantage points, and the millennium described in Revelation 20 is this present age.
  - i. Satan was bound during the life of Christ thus enabling the Great Commission for global success (Rev. 20:1-3, cf. Matthew 12:28-29, Luke 10:17-19, etc.). This binding is specific to the deception of the nations (note the same term in Matt. 28:19).
  - ii. Satan will be loosed at the end of the age to lead a global rebellion (Rev. 20:7).
  - iii. Some are partial preterists.

## **2. What are common questions and difficulties for amillennialism?**

- a. Often AM is dismissed by accusations that it requires an allegorical interpretation of Scripture, posits “replacement theology,” is antisemitic, and is derived from Platonism.
- b. If Revelation 19 describes judgment at the end of the age and if chapter 20 chronologically follows 19, both post and amillennialism are seriously undermined.
- c. AMs are accused of spiritualizing or minimizing texts that indicate an earthly age of great righteousness. The AM conception of the way Christ’s kingdom is manifest on earth does not go far enough.
  - i. It does not take into full account passages like Isaiah 2, 11, 65, etc.
  - ii. It does not take into full account the success of the Great Commission and its implications for societal change.
  - iii. It denies the literal fulfillment of the land promises made to Israel.