

Seeking My King & His Kingdom

#42 Rejecting The Throne Of David

The 2nd Coming Of Jesus Christ to earth is the key that will unlock the fulfillment of all prophecy, covenants and promises. The Old Testament prophets in plain language and glowing terms foretold of an era or age of universal righteousness and peace on earth under the reign of "Messiah the Prince."

II Sam. 7:12-16: Davidic Covenant: Unconditional covenant between God and David:

God promised David that the Messiah [Jesus Christ] would come from the lineage of David and the tribe of Judah and would establish a kingdom that would endure forever.

1, David's "house," "kingdom," and "throne" will be established forever.

a. House: The Messiah will come from the lineage of David; a dynasty in the lineage of David

b Kingdom: There will be a people who are governed by a king.

c. Throne: The authority of the king's rule

d. Forever: Eternal and unconditional nature of this promise

The Rejection of the Throne of David, the chosen office of God's future righteous rule upon the earth, has been seen repeatedly throughout history. Seen inside Israel:

Background Information:

A. II Sam. 16:6-7 And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David:

and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. ⁷ And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:

Note: Belial means "without a master," and symbolizes true independence, self-sufficiency and personal accomplishment; a demon of immense wickedness who oppose authority

B. II Samuel 19-20

1. David has been forced to flee Jerusalem due to the revolution instigated by Absalom.

2. Absalom acts as king for a few days before he is killed by Joab.

3. David is invited to return to Jerusalem to resume his rule over the nation of Israel.

4. On the way there is strife between the men of Judah [David's tribe] and the men from the other tribes in Israel.

5. Somewhere between the Jordan River and Jerusalem, a rebellion is instigated by Sheba who utters words of abuse and rejection of David. It is a cursing of the royal Jewish tribe of Judah.

II Sam. 20:1-2 And there happened to be there a man of Belial, a rebel, whose name *was* Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjamite. And he blew a trumpet, and said:

"We have no share in David, Nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse;

Every man to his tents, O Israel!"

² So every man of Israel deserted David, *and* followed Sheba the son of Bichri.

But the men of Judah, from the Jordan as far as Jerusalem, remained loyal to their king.

Note: The venomous denunciation was coming from within Israel - not the pagan outsiders!

Is this God's providential preparation of the nation of Israel for its future division?

6. The Israelites forsake David as their king and return to their homes.
7. Sheba is cornered in an Israelite fortified city and is put to death. [Beheaded]
8. The division of Israel is reversed.

[David is king; He is not king; He's invited to be king again; His kingdom is divided; then united.]

Is God preparing the nation for the division He purposes?

Fast Forward: After the death of King Solomon:

1. Rehoboam, Solomon's son, was set to be Israel's next king.
2. ALL Israel gathered at Shechem to make him their king.
3. People had sent word to Jeroboam in Egypt to return to Israel to represent their interests.
4. Their request was to "lighten the load" Solomon had placed on them. [heavy taxes]
5. The brash young king turned a deaf ear to their requests.
6. Rehoboam's arrogance was too much. The seeds of division had been sown years before during the reign of David and the words of Shimei and Sheba.

I Kings 12:16 So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David.

So Israel departed unto their tents.

1. These bitter words and the venom are specifically directed at the Throne of David. It's as though Sheba's words years before become the motto of those who rebel in Israel. From this division on, the nation will not reunite.

The Breach of Jeroboam

1. The 10 tribes seek out Jeroboam and appoint him as their king.
2. Israel cuts off and rejects the royal tribe of Judah, the house and throne of David.
3. This is the throne which the returning Messiah will rule from in His coming Millennial Reign.
4. He is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah who is to sit upon David's throne for 1000 years.
5. In many peoples' hearts, He is not welcome. Kings and rulers of nations in the end times clearly do not want Him to return. [Ps. 2]
6. Jeroboam leads the Northern 10 Tribes, Israel, into deeper idolatry.
7. They are taken captive by Assyria and lose their sovereignty and their national roots.

Results: 1. One kingdom, the royal house of Judah, is visible today and can be seen. They have their Hebrew language, genealogy, religion and connection to their past in greater Israel.

2. The northern kingdom, Israel, disappeared from view into the fog of history.
3. Did Israel curse themselves?

Scripture indicates this division will last all the way until the end-time drama.

Scripture declares that lost Israel will be found even as Hosea found lost Gomer.

Consider: It seemed God's covenants and promises would fail when Israel was divided into 2 kingdoms around 1009 BC. God raised up many prophets who continued emphasizing to Israel that God would still bring to pass His promises to them. Sixteen of these prophets left writings concerning the coming king and kingdom.

Fast Forward: The Church began in the summer of 32 A.D. when the Holy Spirit fell on the 120 in the upper room. The Body of Christ spread out from Jerusalem on that epic Day of Pentecost. Throughout history, within the Church, as in the world, and even inside Israel there is a hostile, demonic to the Throne of David.

The establishment of this throne on earth is the culmination of all Messianic prophecies relating to Israel and to the Church. However, subversive elements within "Gnostic Christianity" have denied that Christ will physically reign over a renewed creation. Results:

1. It rejects true and literal fulfillment of Messianic promises.
2. It steals the "blessed hope" of our returning Lord.

3 Major Views of The Millennium

Views	Christ Returns	Characteristics
Premillennial	At the end of the 7 Yr. Tribulation Period Before the 1000 Year Kingdom	Christ returns BEFORE establishing the literal kingdom on earth. Reign with the saints for 1000 years. Fulfills OT & NT Prophecy
Postmillennial	After a Golden Age on Earth	Christ returns after the 1000 years which represents a golden age that is ushered in by the triumph of the Gospel as the world converts to Christianity through the Church's efforts.
Amillennial	<u>NO</u> Literal Earthly Kingdom	Christ is presently reigning over a spiritual kingdom in: (1) hearts of men (2) in heaven & (3) the church. Satan was bound at the time of the cross.

Amillennialists: The 1000 years is a symbol representing an extended period of time. Many believe that the fullness of the kingdom has already arrived on earth and we are presently in the age between the first and second resurrections. "Generally speaking, this view holds that Christ will return in His 2nd coming and immediately usher in the new heaven and the new earth with no intervening 1000 year reign.

This view interprets many passages in the OT and the NT that refer to the millennial kingdom as being fulfilled in a non-literal way.

Early Church Fathers:

1. The earliest Church Fathers for which we have record [even those who were only a generation or two away from John] held to the same basic view of the Church: Pre-millennial

a. They interpreted God's promises literally and understood a coming kingdom of God on earth which did not correspond with the Church age.

2. The early adherents of pre-millennialism either had direct contact with John, the longest living apostle, or with his most famous disciple Polycarp.

3. Papias [60-130 AD], the bishop of Hierapolis, was known as "the hearer of John and a companion of Polycarp." He furnished the earliest extra-biblical witness to the millennial doctrine taught by the Apostles.

4. The pre-millennial fathers of the ante-Nicene age [1st century to early 4th century] included church leaders who were contemporary with and in some cases instructed by the apostles and those who were in turn their disciples. This group includes:

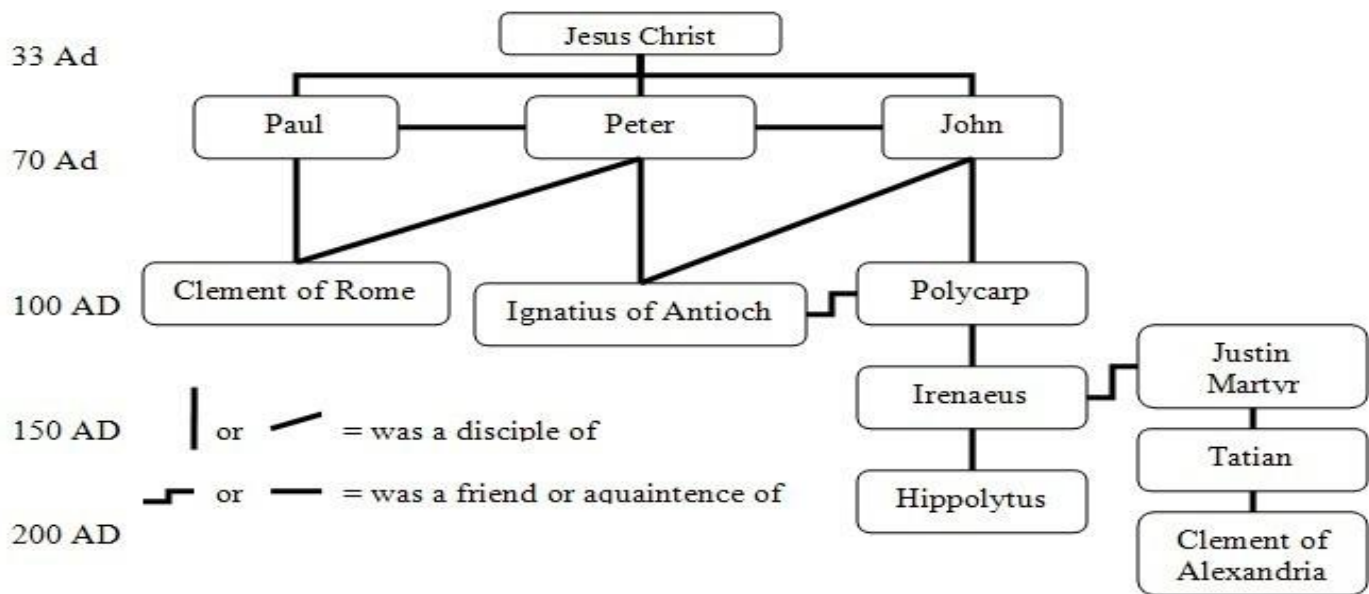
Clement: bishop of Rome, 90-100 Papias: bishop of Hierapolis

Polycarp: bishop of Smyrna Ignatius: bishop of Antioch

5. Pre-millennialists of the 2nd century included:

Justin Martyr: apologist Irenaeus bishop of Lyons

Hippolytus: presbyter & teacher in Rome Tertullian apologist, theologian



6. Their writings show a belief in a literal, earthly Millennial Kingdom at Christ's coming.

Ephraim the Syrian [306-373 AD] was a major theologian and writer of the Byzantine Church.

a. His writings reveal a literal method of interpretation and a teaching of the pre-millennial return of Christ.

b. Ephraim's manuscript lays out the events of the last days in chronological sequence.

Significantly he began with the Rapture using the word "imminent." Then he described the Tribulation of 7 years duration under the Antichrist's tyranny, followed by the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ to earth with His saints to defeat the Antichrist.

c. The purpose for the rapture: "Because all saints and the Elect of the Lord are gathered together before the tribulation which is about to come and are taken to the Lord, in order that they may not see at any time the confusion which overwhelms the world because of sin."

d. He described the last $3\frac{1}{2}$ years as "forty-two months or 1,260 days."

e. He states: "There will be a great tribulation, as there has not been since people began to be upon the earth." He also describes the Mark of the Beast system.

f. He wrote: Daniel's 70th Week will be fulfilled in the final seven years at the end of this age that will conclude with Christ's return at the Battle of Armageddon to establish His kingdom.

Dr. Whitby *Treatise on Tradition*: "The doctrine of the Millennium or the reign of the saints on earth for 1000 years is now rejected by all Roman Catholics, and the greatest part of Protestants. Yet it passed among the Christians for 250 years and was delivered by many Fathers of the 2nd and 3rd centuries. They spoke of it as the tradition of our Lord and His apostles....It was received not only in the Eastern parts of the Church by Papias in Phrygia and Justin in Palestine, but by Irenaeus in Gaul, Nepos in Egypt, Apollinaris, Cyprian, Victorinus in Germany, by Tertullian in Africa, Lactantius in Italy and Severus and by the Council of Nicea about 323 AD.

Conclusion: The early church looked longingly for Christ's return as their "Blessed Hope" to rid the world of its desperate, evil rulers.

Denying a literal Millennium is particularly dangerous because it appears to be an attack on the very character of God. The OT is replete with commitments for a literal Messiah ultimately ruling the world through Israel from His throne in Jerusalem.

There are at least 1845 reference in the OT and 17 OT books give prominence to the event.

There are at least 318 references in the NT and 23 books give prominence to the event.

George Ladd *Crucial Questions About The Kingdom of God*: "With one exception, Caius, there is no church Father before Origen [185-254 AD] who opposed the millenarian interpretation.

Origen, [185-254 AD] pious, popular and persuasive, stands out as one of the great figures of the 3rd century church. At the age of 18, he stood out as a teacher in Alexandria.

His Christian doctrine was greatly influenced by Hellenistic thinking and Greek philosophy.

- All souls ultimately return to God.
- Gnosis, higher knowledge, is superior to faith
- Loved mysticism
- Can become intoxicated with divinity
- As you practice an inner, wordless prayer, Christ is born into your soul.
- He conceived the idea that the words of Scripture were but the "husk" in which was hid the "kernel" of Scripture truth. He began to allegorize and spiritualize the Bible.

Turning Point: The solid foundation of literal interpretation was about to suffer a devastating setback in the wedding of Church and state.

1. When Constantine defeated Emperor Licinius in 323 AD he ended the persecutions against the Christian church. Shortly afterwards Christians faced a trouble from WITHIN.

The Council of Nicea, [325 AD] composed of ~300 religious leaders determined:

- a. Affirmed the full deity and eternity of Jesus Christ taught by the Apostles
- b. Distinguished 2 resurrections: 1 before and 1 after the millennium
- c. The millennial reign of Christ is a prelude to His eternal reign. They are separated by a short final rebellion of Satan.
- d. The millennium is expected to come not as the legitimate result of a historical process but as a Sudden Supernatural Revelation.

2. At this time, many believed Rome was to be the seat of Antichrist.

The question arose: "Is Constantine the Antichrist?"

3. Convenient explanation was adopted: antichrist was "pagan Rome." This is Christian Rome.

The Millennium commenced when Constantine ascended the throne.

4. Widely accepted because of the gifts and privileges bestowed on the Church by Constantine.

a. This led to the claim that the Millennial blessings of the OT had been transferred from the Jews/nation of Israel to the Christian Church.

b. The idea arose that the "rod of iron" which was to be Messiah's rule [Rev. 2:27; 19:15+; 20:4+] was to be found in the rule of the Church in this present age.

Key Point: "When Christianity became a worldly power under Constantine, the hope of the future was weakened by the joy over present success which did not jibe with an expectation of future tribulation or the need to await the physical presence of the King to inaugurate His Kingdom. Becoming a harlot, the Church ceased to be a bride going to meet her Bridegroom. Thus, millennial hopes disappeared." [Bengel]

5. However, many would not back down that the "Papal Church" was the Antichrist.

a. They found they could not expunge the Book of Revelation from the sacred canon so they locked up the Scriptures and the Bible was "chained to the pulpits" and became a sealed book.

b. The gloom of night settled upon all Christendom and thrust the world into the "Dark Ages." 1000 yrs.

6. Amid the gloom God had witnesses to the truth: Albigeneses, Waldenses and others bore testimony to the pre-millennial return of the Lord.

Origen had greatly influenced Augustine. [354-430 AD]

George Ladd: *Crucial Questions About The Kingdom Of God*: There is no one before Augustine whose writings offer a different interpretation of Rev. 20:1-15 than that of a future earthly kingdom."

Augustine's writings deeply affected the Medieval Roman Catholic Church. His writing,

The City of God, was written as the Empire lay crumbling under a siege by half-civilized tribes.

It portrayed the Church as a new civic order in the midst of the ruins of the Roman Empire.

1. He embraced amillennialism. He believed the Church was an instrument of the state.

2. Interpret most Scripture literally unless it is prophetic. Allegorize or spiritualize it

3. Some of his writings effectively defeated a number of emerging heresies during these turbulent times. However, the allegorizing influences of Origen left an amillennial eschatology in their wake.

As the Church had increasingly become an instrument of the state, it wasn't politically expedient to look toward a literal return of Christ to rid the world of its evil rulers!

So the allegorical reposturing of prophetic Scripture was more "politically correct."

Recall: Pre-millennial was the major belief during the first 4 centuries of the Church.

Turning Point: "It was not overthrown until Augustine brought together the concepts of the Church and the kingdom of Christ in such a way as to almost equivocate the two."

Jerome [345 AD -420 AD]: "The saints will in no wise have an earthly kingdom, but only a celestial one; thus must cease the fable of 1000 years." Church largely ceased to look for Lord's return and set up His earthly Kingdom.