

## My Personal Journey into Amillennialism

Questions I asked that led me to tentatively adopt Amillennialism:

1. Where did we get the idea of a secret rapture?

1 Thessalonians 4:6; 5:3-4 => The surrounding context does not describe a thief secretly coming in the back window. It's more like a thief kicking in the front door. 1 Thessalonians 5:3-4 links the idea of a thief in the night with words like "sudden" and "surprise." Not only that, but when Paul describes the same return in 1 Thessalonians 4, it's sudden but public—so not secret.

2. How do people get saved if the entire Church has been taken out of the world?

Romans 10:14 => "How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?"

3. Have we unduly unhitched the rapture from the return of Jesus and the resurrection?

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 => Are the rapture, Jesus's return (*parousia*), and resurrection separate events? How many advents are there? Two or three?

4. If Christ's second return is linked with the resurrection, then how can premillennialism argue that people will die during the millennial Kingdom after Christ returns?

1 Corinthians 15:22-23 deliberately connects Christ's return with the resurrection—"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ."

## What is Amillennialism?

The name is a bit misleading because the prefix "a" makes it seem like amillennialism doesn't believe in a Millennial, which is not true. Amillennialism is built on the core belief that there is a

real, literal millennial kingdom based on what we've read in Revelation 20. So, don't let the name fool you. Amillennialism holds to a millennial kingdom.

How Amill agrees with Premill and Postmill:

- There is a **Millennial Kingdom**.
- There will be a **Man of Lawlessness (an Antichrist)** and a **great apostasy**—in which the world definitively sets itself up against God's reign.
- Before the end, there will be a **great tribulation** in which believers will suffer.
- Jesus will **suddenly return** (though we disagree with a secret rapture).
- A **future resurrection** is linked with Jesus's return and final defeat of death.

## Four Hermeneutical Keys for an Amillennialism Interpretation of Events:

1. Amillennialists believe that Revelation 20's **Millennial kingdom is a spiritual, real, and symbolic kingdom that is currently a reality in heaven.**

Christ on the throne => Matthew 28:18 and Revelation 5:12

The church age is not just a parentheses in redemptive history.

2. Satan is bound and being plundered of his captives.

Satan is currently bound, though not destroyed.

Mark 3:27 => "But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, *unless he first binds the strong man*. Then indeed he may plunder his house."

3. Israel's Future is a Mass Repentance.

**The church is not a replacement for Israel.** Instead, **the church is an extension or a continuation of Israel.** In Paul's words, God's people belong to the same Olive Tree—with natural branches (Jews) and wild branches (Gentiles) that have been grafted in (Romans 11:17). What's more, throughout the rest of Romans, Paul dismisses the idea that being the children of Abraham

(i.e., Israel) is a matter of ethnicity. For him, it's a matter of covenant faith. There are natural branches and unnatural branches, but only one olive tree. For Paul there is a difference between ethnic/national Israel and the remnant—Israel within Israel (see Romans 9:6; 11:1-2). When it comes to Israel, there is an elect people within ethnic Israel.<sup>1</sup> So, the dispensational premillennialism idea that there are two people of God is not true. There's only one people of God.

Jesus as True Israel who has received and fulfilled God's promises (2 Corinthians 1:20):

- Land (Matthew 28:18)
- Seed (Isaiah 53:10)
- Blessing (Galatians 3:16)

Israel's Future Repentance => Romans 11

4. Christ's return will mean the end of death, the final judgement of the wicked, and the Kingdom's consummation.

1 John 3:2: ***"Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."***

1 Corinthians 15:52: ***"For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed."***

If we are supposed to be changed (going from mortal to immortal, from perishable to imperishable) when the trumpet sounds and Jesus appears, then it would seem that the premillennial position that believers are still mortal and die is untenable. If you hold to premillennialism, you have to explain how death still exists even after Jesus appears. Amillennialism holds that Jesus's appearance means the disappearance of death and mortality.

## **Our Eschatology Has Consequences**

Premill:

Amill:

Postmill:

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<sup>1</sup> Sam Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 307.