

THE COMING KINGDOM



What Is the Kingdom and
How Is Kingdom Now Theology
Changing the Focus of the Church?

Andrew M. Woods

Foreword by Thomas Ice

Kingdom Study Outline



1. What does the Bible Says About the Kingdom?
2. Why do some believe that we are in the kingdom now?
3. Why does it matter?



9 Ways Kingdom Now Theology Impacts the Church

1. Loss of “pilgrim” status
2. Social Gospel
3. Ecumenical & interfaith alliances
4. Rejection or marginalization of Bible prophecy
5. Building the wrong kingdom
6. Charismatic theology
7. Prosperity Gospel
8. Anti-Israelism
9. **Lordship Salvation**



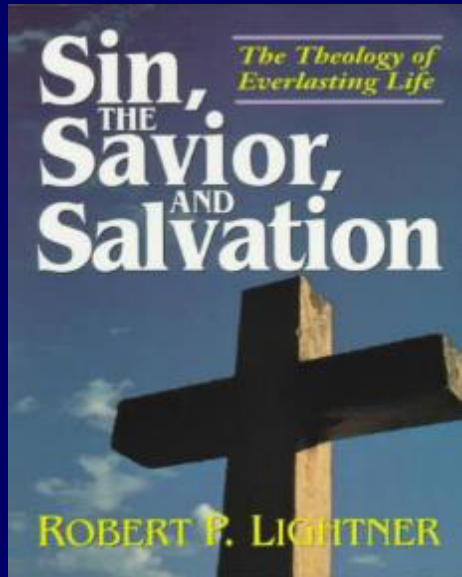
John 5:24

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”





Lordship Salvation Defined



“Lordship Salvation refers to the belief which says the sinner who wants to be saved must not only trust Christ as his substitute for sin, but must also surrender every area of his life to the complete control of Christ.”

John MacArthur

Faith Works, p. 25

“Jesus is Lord of all, and the **faith** He demands involves **unconditional surrender**...He does not **bestow eternal life** on those whose hearts remain set against Him.”



Lordship Salvation: 7 Problems



- ✓ Changes the gospel
- ✓ Places an impossible burden upon the unsaved
- ✓ Confuses justification with sanctification
- ✓ Confuses the result of with requirement for salvation
- ✓ Fails to make basic dispensational distinctions
- ✓ Ignores the reality of a carnal Christian
- ✓ Destroys the assurance of salvation

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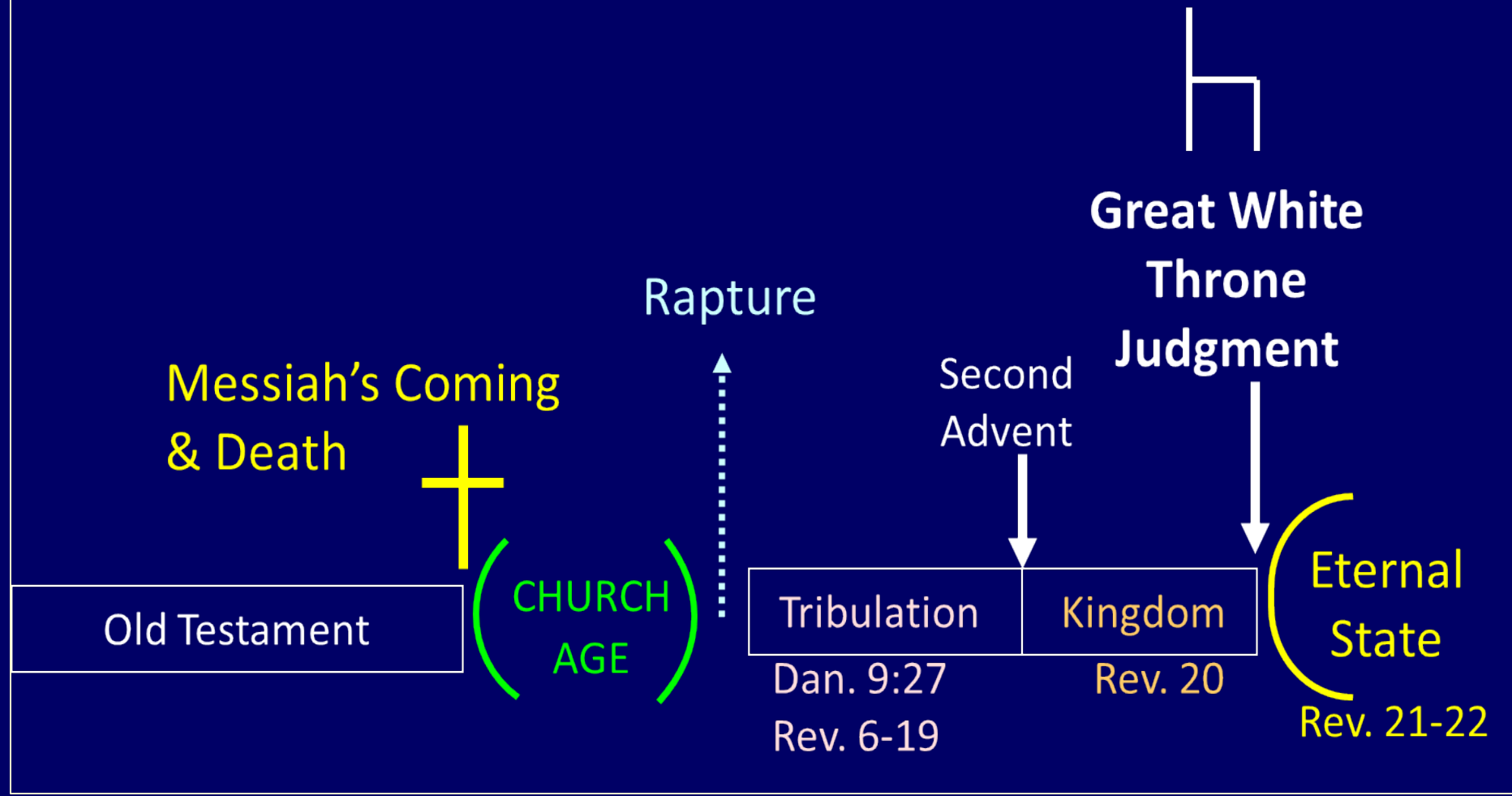
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Dispensational Theology is a System of Theology

Traditional-normative dispensational theology is a system that embodies three essential, fundamental concepts called the **sine qua non** (lit. “without which is not”):

1. The **consistent** use of a plain, normal, literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation;
2. Which reveals that the **Church is distinct from Israel**;
3. God’s overall purpose is to bring **glory to Himself** (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14).

Prophecy Panorama



Hebrews 5:11-14

¹¹ Concerning him we have much to say, and *it is* hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. ¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³ For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

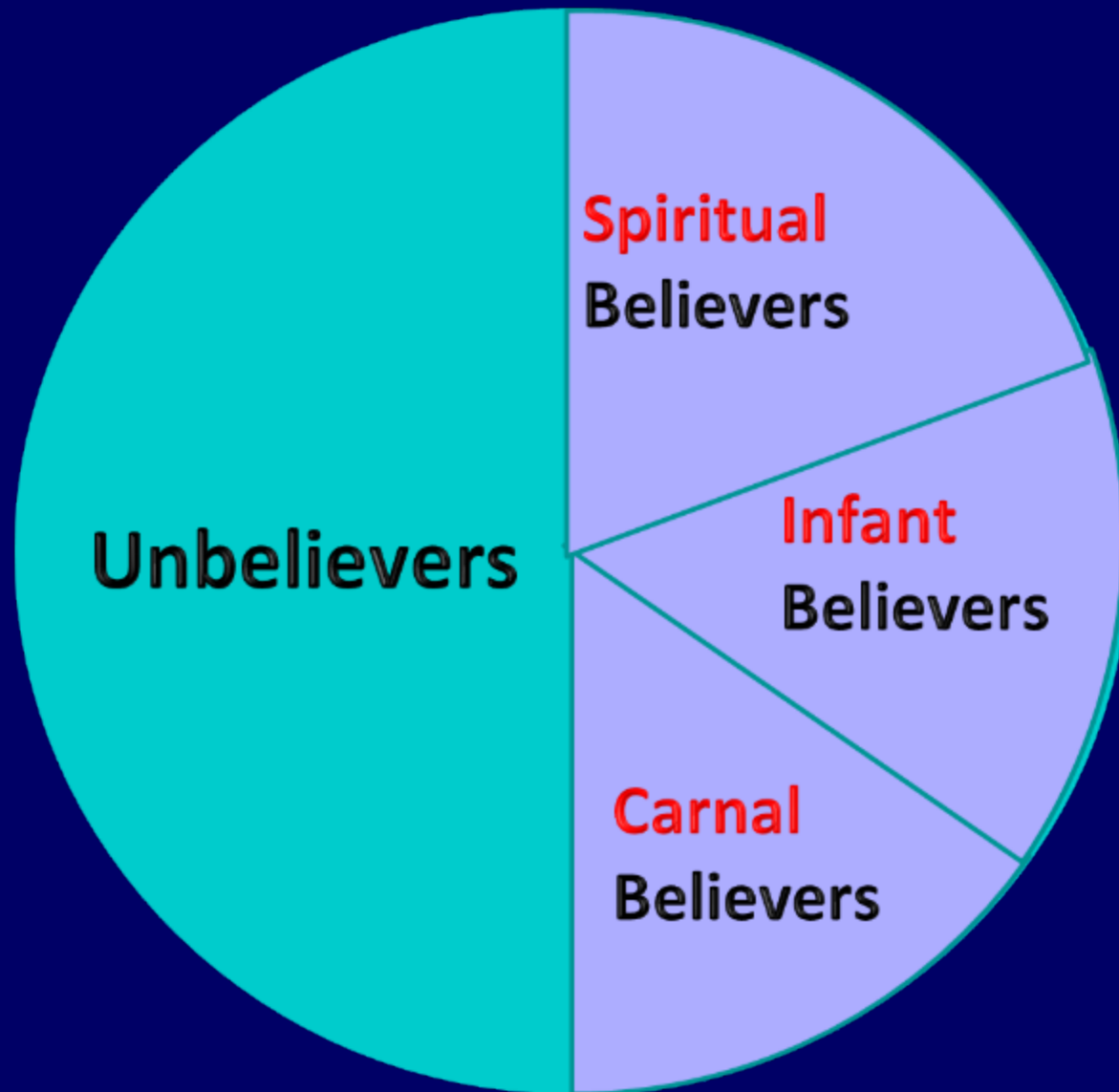


1 Corinthians 3:1-3

¹ And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to **spiritual** people but as to **carnal**, as to **babes** in Christ.
² I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it*, and even now you are still not able; ³ **for you are still carnal**. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, **are you not carnal** and behaving like *mere* **men**?
(NKJV)



4 Kinds of People from 1 Corinthians 3:1-3



Kenneth L. Gentry

He Shall Have Dominion: A Post Millennial Eschatology (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian economics, 1992), page 335.



“The proper understanding of the thousand-year time frame in Revelation 20 is that it is representative of a long and glorious era and is not limited to a literal 365,000 days. The figure represents a perfect cube of 10, which is the number of quantitative perfection.”



Zane Hodges

Zane C. Hodges, “Assurance and Works: An Evangelical Trainwreck,” *Grace in Focus* (March–April 1994), accessed April 1, 2016, <http://www.faithalone.org>.

“Regrettably, some published materials written by DTS faculty members confirm my earlier concern. First there was Dr. Darrell Bock’s review of MacArthur’s *The Gospel According to Jesus* which showed significant confusion on the subject of assurance (see *Bib Sac*, Jan–Mar, 1989, pp. 21–40; see my review in the *GES Journal*, Spring 1989, pp. 79–83 and especially pp. 81–83). Darrell has told me both in person and in writing that his position is “soft lordship” salvation—a view that would have been rejected by the founder and first president of Dallas Seminary, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer.”

John MacArthur



“Israel and the Church are separate entities...and in that regard, I consider myself a...dispensationalist...There is a tendency, however, for dispensationalists to get ***carried away*** with compartmentalizing truth to the point that they make ***unbiblical differentiations***. An almost ***obsessive desire*** to categorize and contrast related truths has carried various dispensationalist interpreters [*Chafer, Ryrie, Hodges, etc.*] far beyond the legitimate distinctions between Israel and the Church. Many would also draw ***hard lines*** between salvation and discipleship [***justification and sanctification***], ***the church and the kingdom***, ***Christ's preaching and the apostolic message***, faith and repentance, and ***the age of law and the age of grace***.” (bold & emphasis mine) “*The Gospel According to Jesus,*” page 31

John MacArthur



“Unfortunately, traditional dispensationalism tends to miss that simple point. Some dispensationalists teach that ‘the gospel of the kingdom’ Jesus proclaimed (Matt. 4: 23) is distinct from ‘the gospel of the grace of God.’ The substance of this ‘gospel of the kingdom,’ one popular source says, is ‘that God purposes to set up on earth the kingdom of Christ . . . in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.’ Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote that the gospel of the kingdom was for the nation of Israel only ‘and should in no wise be confused with the gospel of saving grace.’”

John MacArthur



“Another early dispensationalist writer declared that the gospel Jesus preached had nothing to do with salvation but was simply an announcement that the time had come to set up the kingdom of Christ on earth. That may fit neatly into a particular dispensational scheme, but Scripture does not support it. We must not forget that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, not merely to announce an earthly kingdom. When Jesus proclaimed His kingdom, He was preaching salvation.” *“The Gospel According to Jesus,”* page 96

Messengers of the Kingdom In Matthew



- John the Baptist – 3:2
- Jesus Christ – 4:17
- 12 Apostles – 10:5-7
- Seventy – Luke 10:1, 9

Matthew 3:1-2

“Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”



Matthew 4:17

“From that time Jesus began to preach and say,
‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at
hand.’”



Matthew 10:5-7

“These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: “Do not go in *the* way of *the* Gentiles, and do not enter *any* city of the Samaritans; ⁶ but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷ And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”



Matthew 15:24

“But He answered and said, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’”



Luke 10:9

“Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come...and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’”



Matthew 4:23

“Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.”



Matthew 28:18-20

“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of **all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”



Matthew 12:24

“But when the Pharisees heard *this*, they said,
“This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul
the ruler of the demons.”



Matthew Outline

Pedigree of the king (1–2)

◆ Preparation of the king (3–4)

◆ Pedagogy of the king (5–7)

• Power of the king (8–9)

– Program of the king (10)

– Progressive rejection of the king (11–12)

– Preparation of the king's disciples (13–20)

• Presentation & rejection of the king (21–23)

◆ Prophecies of the king (24–25)

◆ Passion of the king (26–27)

Proof of the king (28)

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Matthew 24:14

“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.”



Acts 16:30-31

“and after he brought them out, he said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’³¹ They said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’”





ROME

Philippi

Corinth

EPHESUS

Antioch

Jerusalem

Black Sea

Mediterranean Sea

ASIA MINOR

Philippi

Map by Gabriel Morris

Kingdom Gospel vs. Personal Gospel

	KINGDOM GOSPEL	PERSONAL GOSPEL
BIBLICAL EXAMPLE	Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:5-7	Acts 16:30-31
TARGET AUDIENCE	National Israel (Matt. 10:5-7)	All nations (Matt. 28:18-20)
TYPE OF SALVATION OFFERED	National	Personal and individual
PORTRAYAL OF CHRIST	National Savior and King	Personal Savior
KINGDOM EXPECTANCY	Imminent	Absent
CONTRIBUTION TO GOD'S PROGRAM	Appearing of the kingdom	Building of the church (Matt. 16:18; Rom. 11:25b)

Kingdom Gospel vs. Personal Gospel

	KINGDOM GOSPEL	PERSONAL GOSPEL
SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATION	Mosaic Covenant (Exod. 19:5-6; Deut. 28:15-68)	Gen. 3:15; 15:6; John 3:16; Gal 3:16
WHEN PREACHED?	Early Gospels and Tribulation (Matt. 3:2; 24:14)	Church Age
PREACHED TODAY?	No	Yes
PERPETUAL AVAILABILITY?	No	Yes
WHICH GOSPELS?	Synoptics	John
CROSS, ATONEMENT, RESURRECTION, ASCENSION, HOLY SPIRIT, FORGIVENESS OF SINS	No	Yes

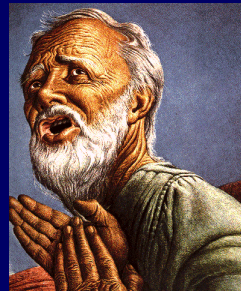
Belief – God's One Condition for Justification

Gen 15:6

Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.



Acts 16:30-31

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..."



Lewis Sperry Chafer

Salvation: God's Marvelous Work of Grace (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1991), 49–50; idem, *Grace: The Glorious Theme* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 132.

“Such insistence is too often based on Scripture which is addressed to the covenant people, Israel. They . . . being covenant people, are privileged to return to God on the grounds of their covenant by repentance. There is much Scripture both in the Old Testament and in the New that calls this one nation to its long-predicted repentance....The preaching of John the Baptist, of Jesus and the early message of the disciples, was, ‘repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’; but it was addressed only to Israel (Matt. 10:5, 6).”

“This good news to that nation was the ‘gospel of the kingdom,’ and should in no wise be confused with the Gospel of saving grace.”



Charles Ryrie

So Great A Salvation, Pages 36-37

“Even the New Testament uses the word *gospel* to mean various types of good news, so one has to describe what good news is in view. . . . In the Gospel of Matthew, all but one time the word *gospel* is used concerning the good news of the gospel of the kingdom. This is the message of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1–2), of our Lord (Matthew 4:17), and of the twelve disciples when they were first sent out by the Lord (Matthew 10:5–7). What was the good news about the kingdom? The correct answer lies in the concept and hope of the kingdom that the Jewish people had at the time of the first coming of Christ. In fact, their hope was for the establishment of the promised rule of the Messiah in His ...



Charles Ryrie

So Great A Salvation, Pages 36-37

“...kingdom on this earth, and in the kingdom that would exalt the Jewish people and free them from the rule of Rome under which they lived. But the rule of heaven did not arrive during Jesus’ lifetime because the people refused to repent and meet the spiritual conditions for the kingdom. Most only wanted a political deliverance without having to meet any personal requirements for change of life. So the kingdom did not arrive because the people would not prepare properly for it.”



John MacArthur

<https://www.gty.org/library/print/study-guide-chapter/2197>

“Listen, the Jews were looking for a political kingdom but Jesus never offered one...There’s no politics in the Sermon on the Mount. None. There is not one reference to the social, political aspect of the kingdom made here, not one. The Jews were so concerned about the politics and the social life. Jesus makes no reference to that at all...The stress is on being. It’s not on ruling or possessing, it is on being...So the political aspect of this message was devastating. It was absolutely everything was the opposite of what they expected a Messiah to say.”



George Zeller

“John MacArthur and Dispensationalism: And Our Response,” 14, accessed April 5, 2016, <http://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/dispem/jmacdis.htm>.

“MacArthur also runs counter to traditional Dispensationalism in his understanding of ‘the gospel of the kingdom’.... He sees this phrase as simply meaning that Jesus was ‘preaching salvation’.... Dispensationalists understand this as a reference to that preaching which takes place when the Messianic kingdom is ‘at hand’ which was true in the days of John the Baptist and Christ, and will also be true during the closing years of this age (Matthew 24:14). Nowhere in the New Testament does it say that the gospel of the kingdom is being preached during this church age.”

John MacArthur



“I was raised in a dispensational environment; there’s no question... But, as I got into seminary, I began to test some of those things. I have been perhaps aptly designated as a ***leaky dispensationalist***....Here’s my dispensationalism – I’ll give it to you in one sentence: there’s a difference between the church and Israel – period!... At the same time in seminary, I began to be exposed to reading among more Reformed theologians... And over the years of exegeting the scripture, it has again yielded to me a Reformed theology....”

John MacArthur



“I was convinced of it (*Reformed theology*) when I started and I’m more convinced of it now as I’ve gone through the text. ***I was convinced of it when I started because I read so many noble men who have held that view (Reformed Theology).*** It was more at that point hero worship, and now it’s become my own.”
(bold mine)

Transcribed from tape, #GC 70-15, entitled "Bible Questions and Answers." A copy of the tape can be obtained by writing, Word of Grace, P.O. Box 4000, Panorama City, CA 91412. Copyright 1994 by John MacArthur Jr., All Rights Reserved.

(My point here is only to demonstrate how John MacArthur, who claims to be a dispensationalist, has arrived at his position on Lordship salvation.)

John MacArthur



“When I wrote [GAJ] I didn’t know anybody outside of my circles really, and I didn’t know how this book would be received. But Jim Boice agreed to write the foreword, and John Piper wrote an endorsement that was absolutely stunning to me, because I was really not moving in Reformed circles at that time. I was a **leaky dispensationalist**. That was my world, and I realized that ***I was much more one of you than I was one of them.***” Interview with John Piper and Justin Taylor, *Stand*, p. 129.

John MacArthur



“The lordship debate has had a devastating effect on dispensationalism. Because no-lordship theology [a pejorative term for Free Grace] is so closely associated with dispensationalism, many have imagined a **cause-and-effect** relationship between the two...Frankly, some **mongrel species** of dispensationalism [which he has defined as the Dispensationalism of Ryrie, Chafer, and others] ought to die, and I will be happy to join the cortege.” *“The Gospel According to the Apostles,”* page 221

John MacArthur



“Who are the defenders of no-lordship dispensationalism? Nearly all of them stand in a tradition that has its roots in the teaching of Lewis Sperry Chafer. I will show...that Dr. Chafer is the father of modern no-lordship teaching. Every prominent figure on the no-lordship side descends from Dr. Chafer’s spiritual lineage. Though Dr. Chafer did not invent or originate any of the key elements of no-lordship teaching, he codified the system of dispensationalism on which all contemporary no-lordship doctrine is founded. That system is the common link between those who attempt to defend no-lordship doctrine on theological grounds.” *“The Gospel According to the Apostles,”* page 35

Conclusion

9 Ways Kingdom Now Theology Impacts the Church

1. Loss of “pilgrim” status
2. Social Gospel
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