

# 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



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## Lewis Sperry Chafer

vol. 5, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids, MI:  
Kregel Publications, 1993), 350.

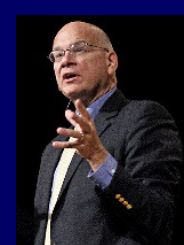
“So the church was fully warned from the beginning about the nature of this age, and taught concerning her pilgrim character while here and her holy calling and separateness from the ‘evil age.’”



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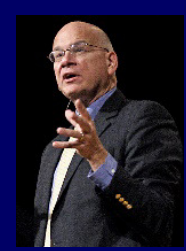




# The Purpose of Jesus's Life, Death, and Resurrection

Tim Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*  
(New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2018), 224.

“Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection was an infinitely costly rescue operation to restore justice to the oppressed and marginalized, physical wholeness to the diseased and dying, community to the isolated and lonely, and spiritual joy and connection to those alienated from God. To be a Christian today is to become part of that same operation, with...the joyful assurance of eventual success. The story of the gospel makes sense of moral obligation and our belief in the reality of justice, so Christians do restorative and redistributive justice wherever they can.”

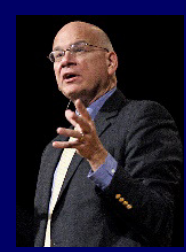


# The New Gospel?

Timothy Keller, "The Gospel in All Its Forms: Like God, the Gospel is Both One and More Than That," online: [www.acts29.com/tim-keller-explains-the-gospel](http://www.acts29.com/tim-keller-explains-the-gospel), May 23, 2008, accessed 29 October 2019.

“A generation ago evangelicals agreed on ‘the simple gospel’:  
(1) God made you and wants to have a relationship with you,  
(2) but your sin separates you from God. (3) Jesus took the  
punishment your sins deserved, (4) so if you repent from sins  
and trust in him for your salvation, you will be forgiven,  
justified, and accepted freely by grace, and indwelt with His  
Spirit until you die and go to heaven. There are today at least  
two major criticisms of this simple formulation. Many say that  
it is too individualistic, that Christ’s salvation is not so much to  
bring individual happiness as to bring peace, justice, and a  
new creation.”





# The New Gospel?

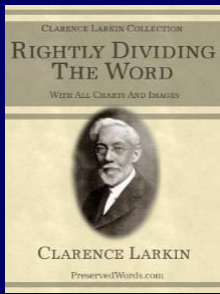
Timothy Keller, “The Gospel in All Its Forms: Like God, the Gospel is Both One and More Than That,” online: [www.acts29.com/tim-keller-explains-the-gospel](http://www.acts29.com/tim-keller-explains-the-gospel), May 23, 2008, accessed 29 October 2019.

“A second criticism is that there is no one ‘simple gospel’ because ‘everything is ‘contextual’ and the Bible itself contains many gospel presentations that exist in tension with each other...John emphasizes the individual and inward spiritual aspects of being in the kingdom of God. He is at pains to show that it is not basically an earthly social-political order (John 18:36). On the other hand, when the Synoptics talk of the kingdom, they lay out the real social and behavioral changes that the gospel brings.”

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# Clarence Larkin

*Rightly Dividing the Word, 48.*

“The great mistake the Church has made is in appropriating to herself in this Dispensation the promises of earthly conquest and glory which belong exclusively to Israel in the ‘Millennial Age.’ As soon as the Church enters into an ‘Alliance with the World,’ and seeks the help of Parliaments, Congresses, Legislatures, Federations and Reform Societies, largely made up of ungodly men and women, she loses her spiritual power and becomes helpless as a redeeming force.”

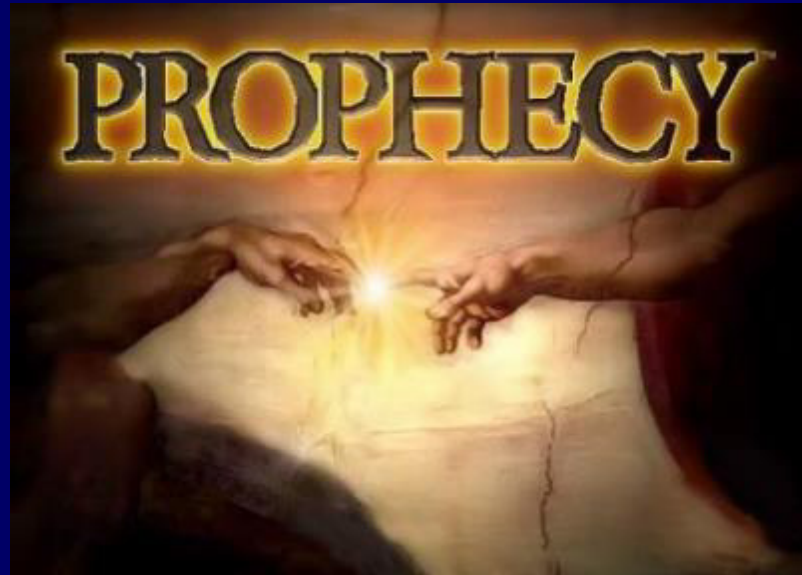
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# Biblical Prophecy: Importance

- 27% of Scripture was prophetic at the time it was written
- 2 Pet 1:19



# AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

V. 19



- More sure than eyewitness testimony
- World is in the Dark, Scripture is the Light
- Morning Star = Jesus

**Rev. 2:28; 22:16**



# J. Dwight Pentecost

Prophecy For Today, Page 20

“A short time ago, I took occasion to go through the New Testament to mark each reference to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and to observe the use made of that teaching about His coming. I was struck anew with the fact that almost without exception, when the coming of Christ is mentioned in the New Testament, it is followed by an exhortation to godliness and holy living.”

# Clarence Larkin

*The Second Coming of Christ, 51.*



“The ‘Kingdom Idea’ has robbed the Church of her ‘UPWARD LOOK,’ and of the ‘BLESSED HOPE.’ There cannot be any ‘Imminent Coming’ to those who are seeking to ‘Set up the Kingdom.’”





## John 14:1–3

<sup>1</sup> “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also. <sup>4</sup> “And you know the way where I am going.”





## Ante-Nicene Fathers: "Heavenly and Eschatological" Interpretation of John 14:1-3

“Interestingly, references to John 14:1-3 virtually disappear when perusing the writings of the Nicene and Post-Nicene fathers. This is a bit surprising, given the abundance of material in these later writers when compared with the Ante-Nicenes. I would assume that with the rise of Augustinian amillennialism and its optimistic interpretation regarding the present arrival of the Kingdom of God, the kind of hope held out in John 14:1-3 ceased to hold relevance.”

George A. Gunn, “Jesus and the Rapture: John 14,” in *Evidence for the Rapture: A Biblical Case for Pretribulationism*, ed. John F. Hart (Chicago: Moody, 2015), 119, n. 22.



## Rick Warren

*Purpose Driven Life, 285-86.*



“When the disciples wanted to talk about prophecy, Jesus quickly switched the conversation to evangelism. He wanted them to concentrate on their mission in the world. He said in essence, ‘The details of my return are none of your business. What is your business is the mission I have given you. Focus on that!’ If you want Jesus to come back sooner, focus on fulfilling your mission, not figuring out prophecy. Speculating on the exact timing of Christ’s return is futile, because Jesus said, ‘No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.’ Since Jesus said He didn’t know the day or hour, why should you try to figure it out? What we do know for sure is this: Jesus will not return until everyone God wants to hear the Good News has heard it.”

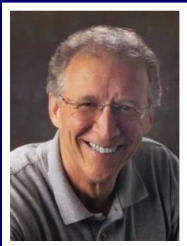


## Rick Warren

*Purpose Driven Life, 285-86.*



“Jesus said, ‘The Good News about God’s kingdom will be preached in all the world, to every nation. Then the end will come.’ If you want Jesus to come back sooner, focus on fulfilling your mission, not figuring out prophecy. It is easy to get **distracted** and sidetracked from your mission because **Satan** would rather have you do anything besides sharing your faith. He will let you do all kinds of good things as long as you don’t take anyone to heaven with you. But the moment you become **serious about your mission**, expect the Devil to throw all kinds of diversions at you. When that happens, remember the words of Jesus: ‘Anyone who lets himself be distracted from the work I plan for him is **not fit for the Kingdom of God**.’”



## John Piper

John Piper, message preached at the 2015 Gospel Coalition National Conference; cited in Paul R. Wilkinson, *Israel Betrayed: Volume 2: The Rise of Christian Palestinianism* (San Antonio, TX: Ariel, 2018), 331

“For two generations, perhaps, we have failed to study prophecy with anything like the rigor that it deserves. We have been so afraid of being viewed as one of those Zionist, right-wing, antichrist-sniffing, culture-denying, alarmist left-overs from the Schofield prophecy conference era that we give hardly any energy to putting the prophetic pieces together—at least not in public.”

## 2 Peter 3:3-4

“<sup>3</sup> Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, <sup>4</sup> and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.’”



# Emergent Eschatology and Genre

“The book of Revelation is an example of popular literary genre of ancient Judaism, known today as Jewish apocalyptic. Trying to read it without understanding its genre would be like watching *Star Trek* or some other science fiction show thinking it was a historical documentary...instead of being a book about the distant future, it becomes a way of talking about the challenges of the immediate present.”



Brian McLaren, *The Secret Message of Jesus*, 175-76



## Eschatology A Sin?

Justin Taylor, “Dever: ‘You Are in Sin If You Lead Your Congregation to Have a Statement of Faith that Requires a Particular Millennial View,’”  
online: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/dever-you-are-in-sin-if-you-lead-your/>, July 14 2009, accessed May 28, 2019.

“I think that millennial views need not be among those doctrines that divide us. . . . I am suggesting that what you believe about the millennium—how you interpret these thousand years—is not something that it is necessary for us to agree upon in order to have a congregation together. The Lord Jesus Christ prayed in John 17:21 that we Christians might be one. Of course all true Christians are one in that we have his Spirit, we share his Spirit, we desire to live out that unity. But that unity is supposed to be evident as a testimony to the world around us. Therefore, I conclude that we should end our cooperations together with other Christians ...only with the greatest of care, lest we rend the body of Christ for whose unity he’s prayed and given himself.”





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*"Therefore, I conclude that it is sin to divide the body of Christ—to divide the body that he prayed would be united. Therefore for us to conclude that we must agree upon a certain view of alcohol, or a certain view of schooling, or a certain view of meat sacrificed to idols, or a certain view of the millennium in order to have fellowship together is, I think, not only unnecessary for the body of Christ, but it is therefore both unwarranted and therefore condemned by scripture. So if you're a pastor and you're listening to me, you understand me correctly if you think I'm saying you are in sin if you lead your congregation to have a statement of faith that requires a particular millennial view. I do not understand why that has to be a matter of uniformity in order to have Christian unity in a local congregation."*



# Justin Martyr

*Dialogue with Trypho, 80.*

“But I and every other completely orthodox Christian feel certain that there will be a resurrection of the flesh, followed by a thousand years in the rebuilt, embellished, and enlarged city of Jerusalem as was announced by the prophets Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the others.”



## Darrell Bock

Darrell Bock, "The Reign of the Lord Christ," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 49–50.

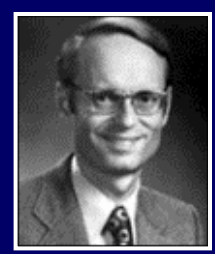
*“Being seated on David’s throne is linked to being seated at God’s right hand. In other words, Jesus’ resurrection-ascension to God’s right hand is put forward by Peter as a fulfillment of the Davidic covenant, just as the allusion to Joel fulfills the new covenant. To say that Peter is only interested to argue that the Messiah must be raised misses the point of the connection in these verses and ignores entirely the allusion to Psalm 132 in the Davidic covenant. This passage and Luke 1:68–79 also counter the claim that no New Testament text asserts the present work of Jesus’ as a reigning Davidite sitting on David’s Throne. The throne on which Jesus is said to sit is the one promised to David’s descendent through the Davidic promise of 2 Samuel, which was initially passed on through Solomon. **Jesus sits here as David’s promised Son on David’s promised Throne.** This fits Old Testament imagery as well. The idea of sitting describes the idea of rule, as the parallelism of Jeremiah 22:30 shows. **As the Davidic heir, Jesus sits in and rules from heaven.**”*



# Charles Ryrie

*Dispensationalism, Page 176-177*

“...ignoring the great prophecy of the seventy weeks in Daniel 9:24–27. Nowhere in the progressives’ writings to date have I found any discussion of the passage, only very brief and occasional citations of the reference itself. . . . While not denying the pre-tribulation Rapture or the literal tribulation period, revisionists do not give much attention to these aspects of eschatology. Blaising and Bock do not take obvious opportunities to mention the Rapture, and in one place (discussing 1 Thessalonians 5) they say only that the rapture ‘would appear to be pre-tribulational.’ They decry (as do many of us normative dispensationalists) the sensationalism of some interpreters of prophecy. But abuse of a doctrine is no reason for playing down the truth of that doctrine.”



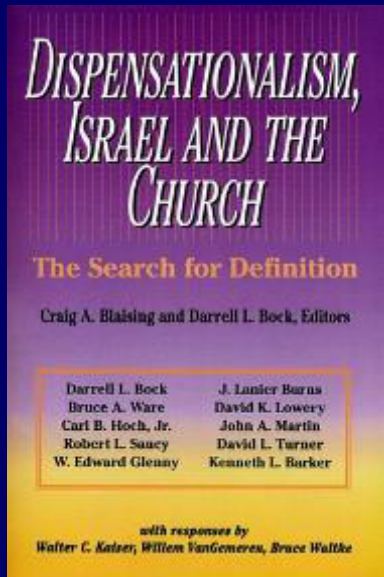
# Charles Ryrie

*Dispensationalism, Page 176-177*

“Rather, it ought to make us more zealous to present it accurately and in a balanced fashion. Furthermore, there exists already in the writings of progressives a thrust towards positioning the Revelation as a book that is ‘difficult’ to interpret. Playing up the imagery in the book, as some revisionists do, seems to play down a plain interpretation of it. The locusts in chapter 9 and Babylon in chapters 17 and 18 are examples of such ‘literal/symbolic difficulty’ in interpreting the book.”

# David L. Turner

*“The New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:1-22:5; Consummation of a Biblical Continuum,”* *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church*, ed., Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 277.



“Perhaps the absence of oysters large enough to produce such pearls in the absence of sufficient gold to pave such a city (do you take literally 1380 miles squared and high) is viewed as sufficient reason not to take these images as fully literal!... The preceding discussion serves to warn against a ‘hyper-literal’ approach to apocalyptic imagery....”

# 483 YEARS ELAPSE BETWEEN THE DECREE AND THE MESSIAH'S 1<sup>ST</sup> COMING

$$\begin{array}{r} 7 \text{ weeks /} \\ 49 \text{ years} \end{array} + \begin{array}{r} 62 \text{ weeks /} \\ 434 \text{ years} \end{array} = \begin{array}{r} 69 \text{ weeks /} \\ 483 \text{ years} \end{array}$$

**483 years (360 days) = 173,880 days**

# Biblical Mathematics

444 B.C. – (*Artaxerxes decree of Nehemiah 2*)

+33 A.D. – (*Triumphal entry of Luke 19:28-44*)

**= 477 years**

-1 – (*1 B.C. to A.D. 1 = 1 year, not 2 years*)

**= 476 years**

x 365 days

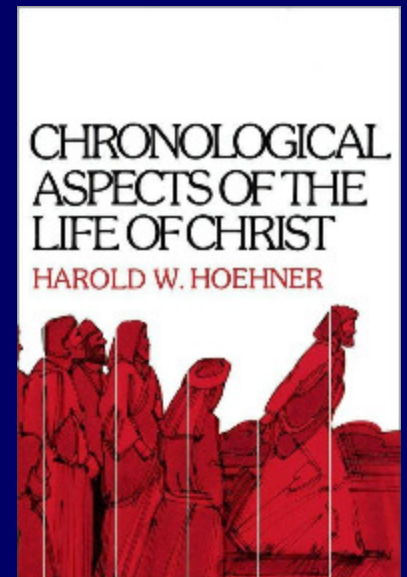
**= 173, 740 days**

+ 25 days – (*March 5 to March 30*)

**= 173, 765 days**

+115 days – (*leap years*)

**= 173, 880 days**

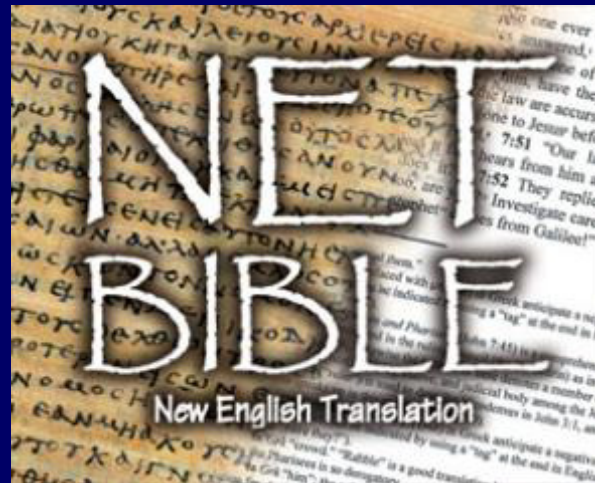




# The NET Bible

New English Translation, Beta ed. (Biblical Studies Press, 2001), 1604.

The NET Bible, by contrast, denies such an interpretation even going so far as to say that the details of the text “make a messianic interpretation of the passage difficult, if not impossible.”



Ezekiel  
Commissioned  
(1-3) mouth closed

Ezekiel  
Recommissioned  
(33) mouth opened



Judgment on



Blessing on

Judah (1-24)

- Glory departs

Judah (33-48)

- Glory Returns

Judgment  
on  
Nations  
(25-32)

Source: Charles Dyer, *Notes on Ezekiel*

Conclusion

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