

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

The Coming Kingdom

Chapter 9



Dr. Andy Woods

Senior Pastor – Sugar Land Bible Church

Adjunct Professor of Bible & Theology – College of Biblical Studies

Kingdom Study Outline



1. What does the Bible Say About the Kingdom?
2. The Main Problem with Kingdom Now NT interpretations
3. Why do some believe that we are in the kingdom now?
4. Why does it matter?



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| 1. Eden | 6. Old Testament Prophets |
| 2. Abrahamic Covenant | 7. Post exile |
| 3. Mosaic Covenant | 8. Offer of the King / Kingdom |
| 4. Divided Kingdom | 9. Rejection of the Offer |
| 5. Times of the Gentiles | 10. Interim Age |



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THE INTERIM AGE

1. The Inter-advent Age (Matt. 13)
2. The Church Age (Matt. 16:18)



Five Preliminary Observations

1. An Authentic Age
2. An Age Caused by Israel's Unbelief
3. A Mystery Age
4. A Priestly Age
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Luke 19:11 (NASB)

“While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.”



Luke 19:15 (NASB)

“When he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him so that he might know what business they had done.”



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Daniel 9:26 (NASB)

“So you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until **Messiah the Prince** *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. ²⁶ Then after the sixty-two weeks **the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing**, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.”





“God not only knows beforehand the choice His creatures will make, but is Himself able to work in them both to will and to do of His own good pleasure. The Scriptures present many incidents which disclose the fact that the will of God is executed by men even when they have no conscious intention to do the will of God. . . . Was the death of Christ in danger of being abortive and all the types and prophecies respecting His death of being proved untrue until Pilate made his decision regarding that death?”

Lewis Sperry Chafer, vol. 5, *Systematic Theology*
(Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993), 347-48.

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Matthew 13:11 (NASB)

Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.”



Ephesians 3:9 (NASB)

“and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things.”



“Mystery” Defined

“In the N.T, it [*mystērion*] denotes, not the mysterious (as with the Eng. word), but that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by Divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those who are illumined by His Spirit.”

W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: Nelson, 1996), 424.

Ephesians 3:3-6 (NASB)

“that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. ⁴ By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; ⁶ to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel”.



Ruth 1:16 (NASB)

“But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you *or* turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.”



Daniel 2:18-19, 27-30 (NASB)

“¹⁸ so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁹ Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven; ²⁷ Daniel answered before the king and said, “As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians *nor* diviners are able to declare *it* to the king. ²⁸ However, there is a God in heaven who mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in ...



Daniel 2:18-19, 27-30 (NASB) cont'd

...the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind *while* on your bed. ²⁹ As for you, O king, *while* on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place. ³⁰ But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than *in any other* living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind.”



Two Battleground Passages

1. Ephesians 3:5

2. Romans 16:25-26



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Ephesians 3:5 (NASB)

“which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as [hos] it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.”



Acts 2:15 (NASB)

“or these men are not drunk, as [hos] you suppose, for it is *only* the third hour of the day.”



Ephesians 3:9 (NASB)

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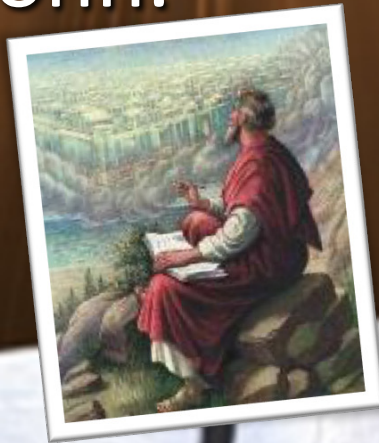
Ephesians 3:5 (NASB)

“which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed [*apokaluptō*] to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.”



Revelation 1:1

“The Revelation [apokalypsis] of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John.”



Ephesians 3:5 (NASB)

“which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now [*nyn*] been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.”



Ephesians 3:10 (NASB)

“so that the manifold wisdom of God might now now [nyn] be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*.”



Ephesians 3:5 (NASB)

“which in other generations was not made known [*gnōrizō*] to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.”



Every Geographical Location in Acts/Epistles



Colossians 1:26 (NASB)

*“that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His.”*



Ephesians 3:5 (NASB)

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Two Battleground Passages

1. Ephesians 3:5

2. Romans 16:25-26



Romans 16:25-26 (NASB)

²⁵ “Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,
²⁶ but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, *leading* to obedience of faith.”



The “Mystery” in Progressive Dispensationalism

“The evidence from the Old Testament prophecies and in some cases their later Jewish interpretation shows a relationship between what was promised and what is now revealed. Specifically, the promises concerning the salvation of the Gentiles along with Israel, a certain solidarity between the promises concerning the Messiah and his people, and, perhaps most important, the prediction of the indwelling Spirit of God, make it difficult to deny some connection between this Old Testament hope and the mystery of the union of Gentiles and Israel in Christ found in Ephesians 3.”

Robert L. Saucy, “The Church as the Mystery of God,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for a Definition*, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 149.

The “Mystery” in Progressive Dispensationalism

“A normal, contextual, and historical reading of the phrase, shows, then, that the most natural reading of this benediction is to see a reference to the prophetic Hebrew Scriptures here. . . . If this is so, then mystery, at least in this Romans context *must refer not to totally new truth, but to truth that was already somewhat revealed in those Scriptures.*”

Darrell Bock, “Hermeneutics of Progressive Dispensationalism,” in *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism: A Comparison of Traditional and Progressive Views*, ed. Herbert W. Bateman (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 117 n. 28.

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Ephesians 2:20 (NASB)

“having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*.”



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Order of Paul's Letters

1. Galatians (A.D. 49)
2. 1–2 Thessalonians (A.D. 51)
3. 1–2 Corinthians (A.D. 56)
4. Romans (A.D. 57)
5. Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians (A.D. 60–62)
6. 1 Timothy, Titus (A.D. 62–66)
7. 2 Timothy (A.D. 67)



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Romans 1:2-3 (NASB)

“² which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, ³ concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh.”



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Location	Beginning	End
Function	Introduction	Doxology
Mystery	No	Yes
Davidic lineage	Yes	No
“Holy” modifying “Scriptures”	Yes	No
Definite article before “Scriptures”	Yes	No
“Prophets”	Noun	Adjective
“Prophets”	Old Testament	New Testament
Scripture	Old Testament	NT “mysteries” (Rom. 11:25b)
“My Gospel”	Absent	Present

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“For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”



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2. Romans 16:25-26



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Revelation 3:21 (NASB)

“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”



Revelation 12:5 (NASB)

“And she gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.”



John 17:5 (NASB)

“Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”



Revelation 3:7 (NASB)

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this:...”



Revelation 5:5 (NASB)

and one of the elders said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.”



Revelation 22:16 (NASB)

“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”



Hebrews 7:3 (NASB)

Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.”





“Similarly, the earthly kingdom that according to the Scriptures had its origin in the covenant made to David, which is mundane and literal in its original form and equally as mundane and literal in uncoun­ted references to it in all subsequent Scriptures which trace it on to its consummation, is by theological legerdemain metamorphosed into a spiritual monstrosity in which an absent King seated on His Father’s throne in heaven is accepted in lieu of the theocratic monarch of David’s line seated on David’s throne in Jerusalem.”

Lewis Sperry Chafer, vol. 5, *Systematic Theology*
(Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993), 315.

Five Preliminary Observations

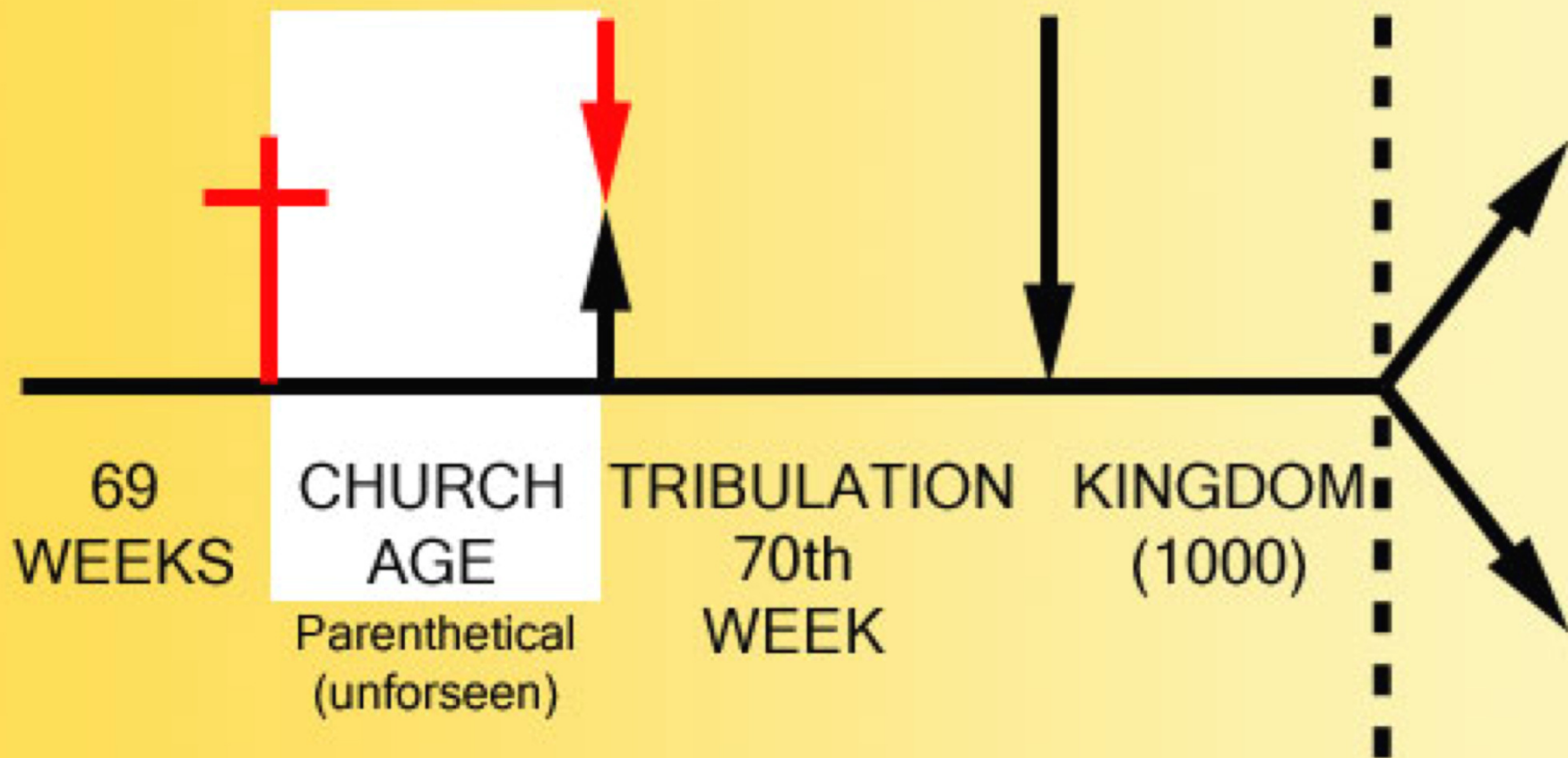
1. An Authentic Age
2. An Age Caused by Israel's Unbelief
3. A Mystery Age
4. A Priestly Age
5. An Important Age



Ephesians 3:11 (NASB)

"This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord."





The Church is not “Plan B”

“In almost 35 years since I have become a dispensationalist, I have never heard nor read of a dispensationalist teaching a plan B scenario. Yet opponents often present this straw man in their statement of what we supposedly believe. We believe that God’s single plan has always included the Church, but He did not reveal the church age part of the plan in the Old Testament. . . . Paul states specifically that the church age ‘was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (verse 11). This is why dispensationalists have never taught the so-called plan A and plan B theory that critics suppose we hold. Dispensationalists have always taught that there is a single plan carried out in stages.”

Thomas Ice, “The Uniqueness of the Church,” *Pre-Trib Perspectives* 8, no. 6 (September 2003): 4.

Conclusion

Five Preliminary Observations

1. An Authentic Age
2. An Age Caused by Israel's Unbelief
3. A Mystery Age
4. A Priestly Age
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1. Kingdom Throughout the Bible

11. Kingdom Mysteries

12. Church

13. Re-offer of the
King/Kingdom

14. Transfer of Kingdom
Authority

15. Kingdom Establishment

16. Eternal State

17. Testimony of Early
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