

Q424 : Dispensational Theology and the Millennium

Responding to a question concerning the Millennial Kingdom

Question

Strange arguments made by dispensationalism?

I have something to discuss with you. According to dispensational theology, Christians in the church will be raptured into the air to reunite with Jesus Christ before the great tribulation of the end times. After the seven-year tribulation, Christians will return to Earth with Jesus Christ and begin to reign for the millennium. Here's a question: Christians in the millennium will no longer need to eat, will not die, will be holy and sinless, and will not reproduce. However, the Israelites and Gentiles on Earth will still need to eat, commit sins, die, and engage in sexual activity. How can holy Christians coexist with these sinful people on Earth?

There's one more thing. In the millennial kingdom, the temple mentioned in Ezekiel [40](#) will be rebuilt on earth, and the Jews will resume sacrificing. This requires the resumption of killing cows and sheep, which is inhumane.

Secondly, in Ezekiel [45](#), there appears a king of Israel at that time. Since this king also needs to sacrifice for himself, and Jesus Christ is completely sinless, then this king is not Jesus Christ. Some dispensationalist books point out that this king is Jesus Christ's "regent", while some authors believe that this king is King David himself. That is, King David will be resurrected in the future to serve as this "regent". I find these arguments a bit strange. What do you think about these viewpoints?

Glorified Christians Coexisting with Sinful People?

Glorified believers are like their resurrected Lord

I don't see the problem in relation to glorified Christians (1Cor. 15:48-49) coexisting with unglorified, sinful people during the millennium.

In essence, this is no different than the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, Who had ongoing fellowship, and shared meals with sinners prior to His final ascension to the right hand of the Father. Also note that post-resurrected (glorified) Moses and Elijah were present with some of Jesus' (sinful, unglorified) disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mat. 17:3-4; Mark 9:4-5; Luke 9:30-33).

See "Who Populates the Millennial Kingdom?"^a

Sacrificing Animals is Inhumane?

What informs our worldview?

If sacrificing cows and sheep during the millennium is "inhumane," then this same perceived problem applies during Old Testament times as well as during the ministry of Jesus—when the temple still existed and animal sacrifices were ongoing.

But animal sacrifices were mandated by God as part of the law of Moses.

Are you prepared to say that the Law of Moses, which the Psalmist and Paul tell us is "perfect", "holy, "just," and "good" (Ps. 19:7; Rom. 7:12; 1Ti. 1:8)—is inhumane?

Sacrificing Animals is Inhumane?

What informs our worldview?

It was God Himself who required "two male lambs in their first year without blemish" be offered "day by day", one in the morning and the other in the evening (Num. 28:3-4). That's a lot of animals over the course of each year—not counting all the other animals offered on other occasions.

God "owns the cattle on a thousand hills" (Ps. 50:10) and can mandate they be used however He pleases. This is what He did for thousands of years before the cross—and will do again during the millennium.

Mankind's dominion mandate does not exclude the taking of animal's lives according to God's intentions. The assumption that animal sacrifice is inhumane stems from a worldview influenced more by more recent cultural views than God's Word.

See *Millennial Sacrifices*^b.

The King of Israel in the Millennium

A sinner and father

Although referred to as "My servant David" (Eze. [37:24](#)), as you point out, he is a *sinner*.

²² On that day [on the 14th day of the 1st month—Passover] the prince shall prepare **for himself** and for all the people of the land a bull *for* a sin offering. (Eze. [45:22](#))

¹⁸ Moreover **the prince shall not take any of the people's inheritance by evicting them from their property**; he shall provide an inheritance for his sons from his own property, so that none of My people may be scattered from his property. (Ezekiel [46:18](#))

More than that, he has sons, apparently during the millennium.

¹⁶ . . . If the prince gives a gift *of some* of his inheritance to any of **his sons**, it shall belong to **his sons**; it is their possession by inheritance. ¹⁷ But if he gives a gift of some of his inheritance to one of his servants, it shall be his until the year of liberty, after which it shall return to the prince. But his inheritance shall belong to **his sons**; it shall become theirs. (Ezekiel [46:16-17](#))

The King of Israel in the Millennium

A sinner and father ... can't be Jesus, can't be David

These facts mean the individual can be neither David (raised, glorified and sinless during the millennium) or the ultimate Representative of the Davidic line, Jesus Christ.

Who is the prince who is prominently mentioned in this chapter [Eze. 44] and in every one through the remainder of the prophecy with the exception of chapter 47? The rabbis understood this to be a prediction of the Messiah, but there are cogent reasons why we cannot make this identification. The prince cannot be the Messiah, first because he is distinguished throughout from a priest. He has no priestly rights, as some former kings exercised from a priest (see 1K. 8:22,54; 9:25; 10:5; 2K. 16:12-13; 2Chr. 26:16). On the other hand, the Scriptures are clear that the Messiah has definite priestly prerogatives in the millennium (cf. Ps. 110:4; Zec. 6:12-13). Second, the prince needs to offer a sin offering for himself. There is no conceivable occasion upon which the stainless Messiah, Son of God, would need to offer a sin offering for Himself. Third, the prince has sons (Eze. 46:16), which is unthinkable in the light of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the Messiah is definitely ruled out as even a possibility for this role. . . . Some think it is David himself, pointing to such passages as Eze. 34:23-24; 37:24. But, as we have seen, these Scriptures foretell the Son of David, the Messiah. Though not impossible, such an identification with David is not probably in view of the broad context of prophecy concerning the kingdom. The author believes it is a future scion of David's dynasty who will represent the Messiah, governmentally in the affairs of earth. -- Charles Lee Feinberg¹

A Descendant of David

Living at the Second Coming

It appears this individual must be another descendant in the line of David—beyond the time of Jesus, through one of His brothers, down through our age—continuing unbroken all the way to the millennium. In this way, he can be referred to as God's servant *in the line of David*, referred to as "My Servant David." Of course his rule would be under the headship of his glorified resurrected ancestor king David, subject to the ultimate rule of King Jesus.

As surprising as this may sound, there is an analogous situation concerning the priestly line through the sons of Zadok, who minister within the millennial temple (Eze. [40:46](#); [43:19](#); [44:15](#); [48:11](#)) and also make sin offerings on their own behalf (Eze. [44:27](#)). Similar to the prince, they cannot be glorified individuals, and appear to be unglorified descendants of Zadok (and Phinehas, the distinguished priest who was the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the brother of Moses: Ex. [6:25](#); 1Chr. [6:4](#)).

A Descendant of Levi

Living at the Second Coming

This is an expected outcome of the Priestly Covenant^c, an oft-neglected but important topic^d: preservation of the priestly line is no less certain than preservation of the kingly line.

¹⁵ 'In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this *is the name* by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.' ¹⁷ "For thus says the LORD: 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; ¹⁸ **'nor shall the priests, the Levites, lack a man to offer burnt offerings before Me, to kindle grain offerings, and to sacrifice continually.'**" (Jeremiah [33:15-18](#))

Some attempt to find fulfillment of verse 18 in Jesus,³ but Jesus is in the line of **Judah**, not **Levi** (Heb. [7:13-14](#)).

Two Preserved Lines of Descent

In the line of David... in the line of Levi

It would appear the passages in Ezekiel necessitate the existence of unglorified descendants in *both the kingly line of David and the priestly line of Levi* (through Phinehas and Zadok) who enter the millennium as sinners to minister under the headship of Jesus during the millennium.

I would agree: this situation *seems strange*. But I don't know of a more viable explanation which incorporates all that Scripture has said about both the kingly and priestly lines when passages concerning the millennial period are taken at face value. (We don't favor the "escape hatch" of spiritualizing these passages. There are enormous problems with spiritualizing the end of Ezekiel, as discussed in our [bible study of the book^e](#). See especially the [discussion of Ezekiel 44^f](#).)

Perhaps most unexpectedly: this infers that there are people living among us today, descendants of Judah and descendants of Levi → Phinehas → Zadok, who's are in the line leading to the individuals described by Ezekiel who serve in the millennium. They may only be known to God, but this is what the Word of God appears to require.

Endnotes

Endnotes:

1. [Ref-0171](#), 257-258
2. [Ref-1367](#), loc. 953-960
3. David Baron assumes Christ can fulfill the Levitical promise. "The same Scriptures, which speak of the perpetuity of the Davidic seed and throne, speak also of the unceasing continuance of the priesthood. . . . The truth is that neither have God's promises in reference to the throne nor to the priesthood failed—for Christ is, in His blessed Person, the Prophet, Priest, and King. He is all this now at the right hand of God, for not only are all the essentials of the Aaronic priesthood fulfilled in Him, but He is "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek"; and when He is manifested again on earth to take up His throne and reign, "He shall be a priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.""² We are not questioning whether Jesus is both King and Priest, but His priesthood is Melchizedekian, not Levitical! The fulfillment of Jeremiah [33:18](#) *requires* a descendant in the line of Levi no less than the fulfillment of Jeremiah [33:17](#) *requires* a descendant in the line of Judah.

Sources:

Ref-0171 Charles Lee Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1969).

Ref-1367 David Baron, *The History of the Ten "Lost" Tribes: Anglo-Israelism Examined*, 4th ed. (London, England: Morgan & Scott Ltd., 1915+).

Links Mentioned Above

- a - See https://spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/topics/millennium.html#4.11.8.
b - See https://spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/topics/temple.html#4.16.5.10.2.
c - See <https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/documents/articles/181/181.htm>.
d - See <https://www.spiritandtruth.org/questions/264.htm>.
e - See <https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/85.htm>.
f - See https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Ezekiel_Bible_Study_by_Tony_Garland/44_Ezekiel_44/index.htm.