

# 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

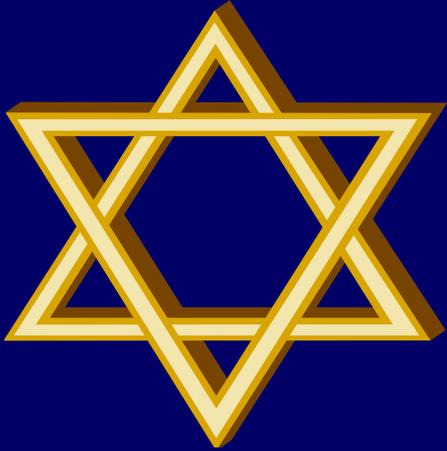
## Chapter 19



Dr. Andy Woods

Senior Pastor – Sugar Land Bible Church  
President – Chafer Theological Seminary

# 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?



# Response to Kingdom Now Problem Passages

1. Passages from Christ's ministry
2. Passages from Acts
- 3. Passages from Paul**
4. Passages from the General letters
5. Passages from Revelation
6. Miscellaneous Arguments





### 3. Passages from Paul's Writings

- a. Walk worthy of the kingdom (1 Thess. 2:12)
- b. Kingdom power (1 Cor. 4:20)
- c. He must reign until... (1 Cor. 15:23-28)
- d. Kingdom is not eating & drinking (Rom. 14:17)
- e. King of Kings & Lord of Lords (1 Tim. 6:15)
- f. Transferred into the Kingdom (Col 1:13)
- g. Fellow workers for the Kingdom (Col. 4:11)

## 1 Corinthians 15:23-28

“<sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming, <sup>24</sup> then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.”



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# 1 Corinthians 15:24

“then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.”





## Alva J. McClain

Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God as Set Forth in the Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), 435.

“The time of the Kingdom may be ascertained from the main subject matter of the context, which is *resurrection*. Every man must be raised from the dead, we are told, but each in his own order. . . . This threefold order of resurrection fits the eschatological system of the New Testament; first the resurrection of Christ Himself; second, the resurrection of His saints at the Second Advent (1 Thess. 4:13–18); third, the resurrection of the unsaved at the ‘end’ (cf. Rev. 20:11–15). Since the Kingdom is to be established at the second coming of Christ, and it is to be delivered up to the Father at the ‘end,’ the period of the kingdom must be located in the future between the two resurrections, as also indicated clearly in Revelation 20.”

## 1 Corinthians 15:23-28

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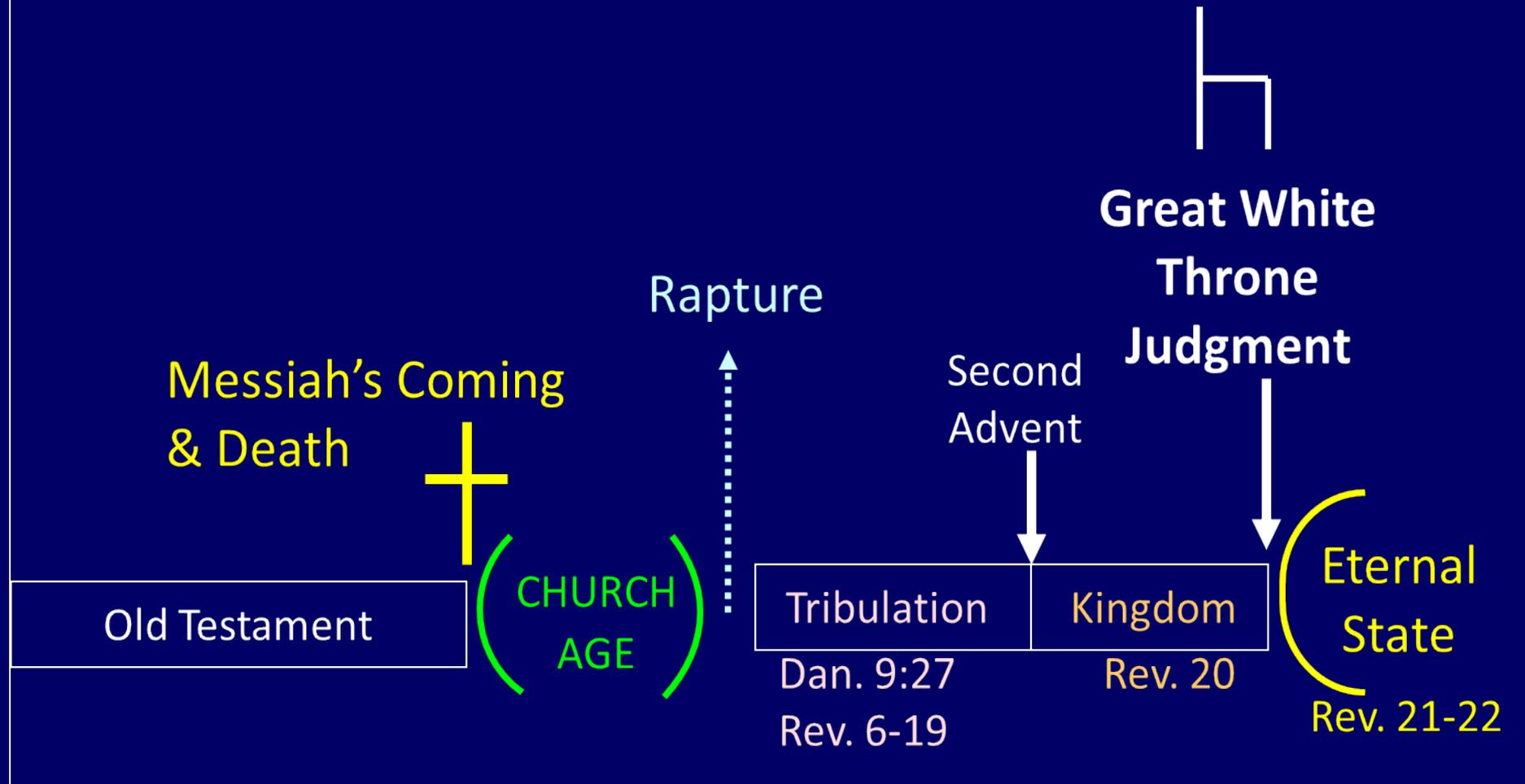


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# Prophecy Panorama

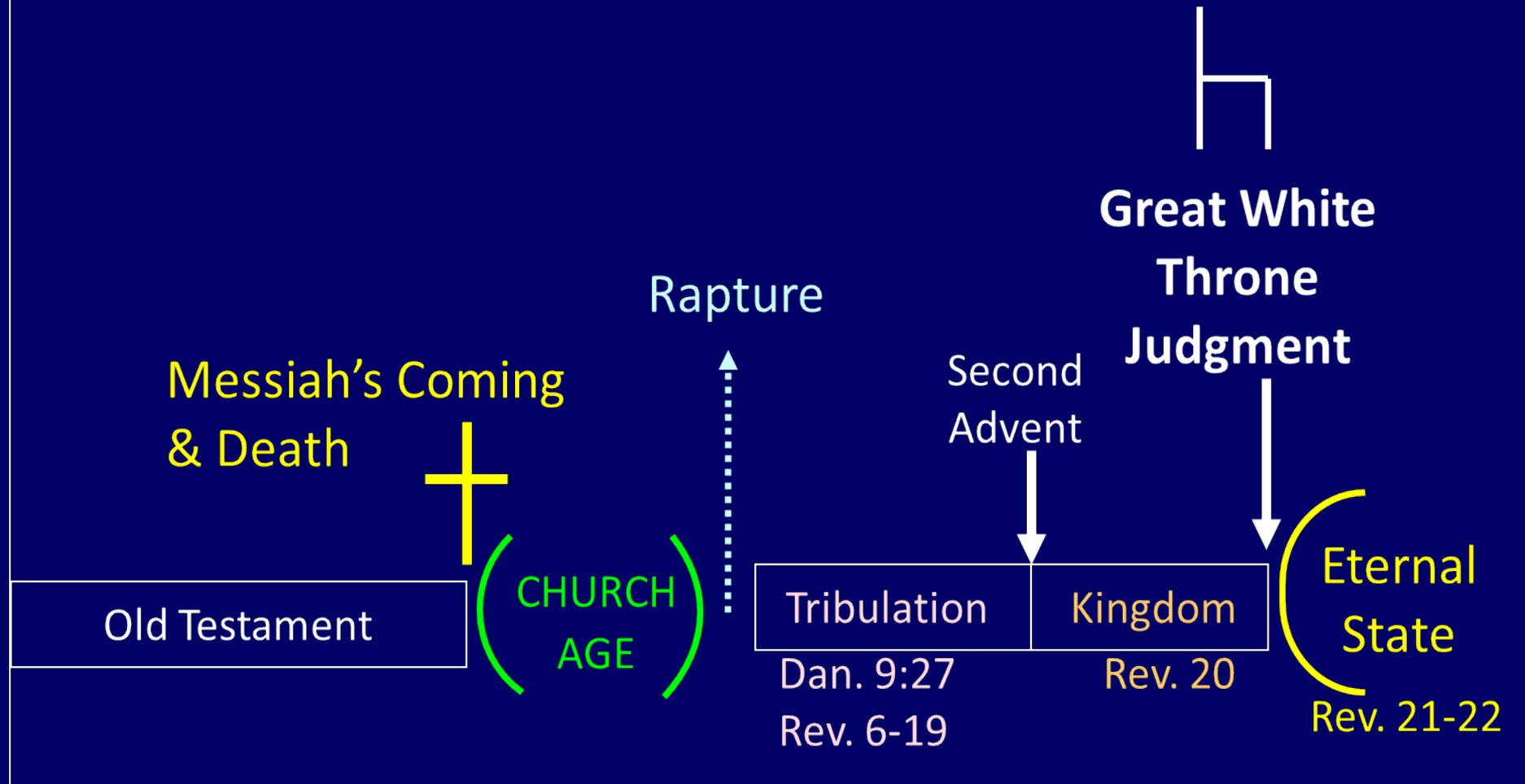


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## Michael J. Vlach

Michael J. Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be a Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus* (Los Angeles, CA: Theological Studies, 2015), 96.

“a considerable gap of time certainly exists between the first and second resurrections, which makes a gap between the second and third possible. From our standpoint in history, at least two thousand years separates these events.”

## 1 Corinthians 15:23-28

“<sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that (*epeita*) those who are Christ’s at His coming, <sup>24</sup> then (*eita*) comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.”



## 1 Corinthians 15:7

“then (epeita) He appeared to James, then (eita) to all the apostles;”





## Michael J. Vlach

Michael J. Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be a Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus* (Los Angeles, CA: Theological Studies, 2015), 97-98.

“Paul’s use of the words *epeita* and *eita*, which are related to ‘after that’ [v. 23b] and ‘then’ [v. 24a]. . . This understanding is also supported by a similar *epeita* . . . *eita* formula earlier in the chapter. In 1 Corinthians 15:5–8, Paul lays out a chronological order of events concerning Jesus’ resurrection appearances. After stating that Jesus was raised on the third day (v. 4) he says, ‘and that He appeared to Cephas, then [*eita*] to the twelve. After that [*epeita*] He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then [*epeita*] He appeared to James, then [*eita*] to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.’”



## Michael J. Vlach

Michael J. Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be a Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus* (Los Angeles, CA: Theological Studies, 2015), 97-98.

“No doubt that Paul is offering a chronological progression of resurrection appearances, and he uses *epeita* and *eita* to reveal a progression of appearances. Verse 7 is particularly significant since, like 1 Cor. 15:23b–24a, this verse also offers the *epeita* and *eita* formula and shows chronological progression with a time gap. Jesus appeared to James and then appeared to all the apostles. In both cases the formula indicates a similar time gap: 1 Cor. 15:7: *epeita* . . . *eita* indicates a gap of days. First Cor. 15:23b–24a: *epeita* . . . *eita* indicates a time gap of which we know includes thousands of years (at least two thousand–one thousand).”



## Michael J. Vlach

Michael J. Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be a Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus* (Los Angeles, CA: Theological Studies, 2015), 97-98.

“The fact that the *epeita* and *eita* formula indicates a gap of similar time in 1 Cor. 15:7 (days) reveals the likelihood that the formula in 1 Cor. 15:23b–24a also indicates a gap of similar time (many years). Remember, that the main issue is whether the *epeita* and *eita* formula allows or indicates a time gap between the resurrection of those at the time of Jesus’ coming and the ‘end.’ The evidence indicates that it does, not only from the immediate context of 1 Cor. 15:22–24, but from a similar grammatical construction in 1 Cor. 15:5–8.”

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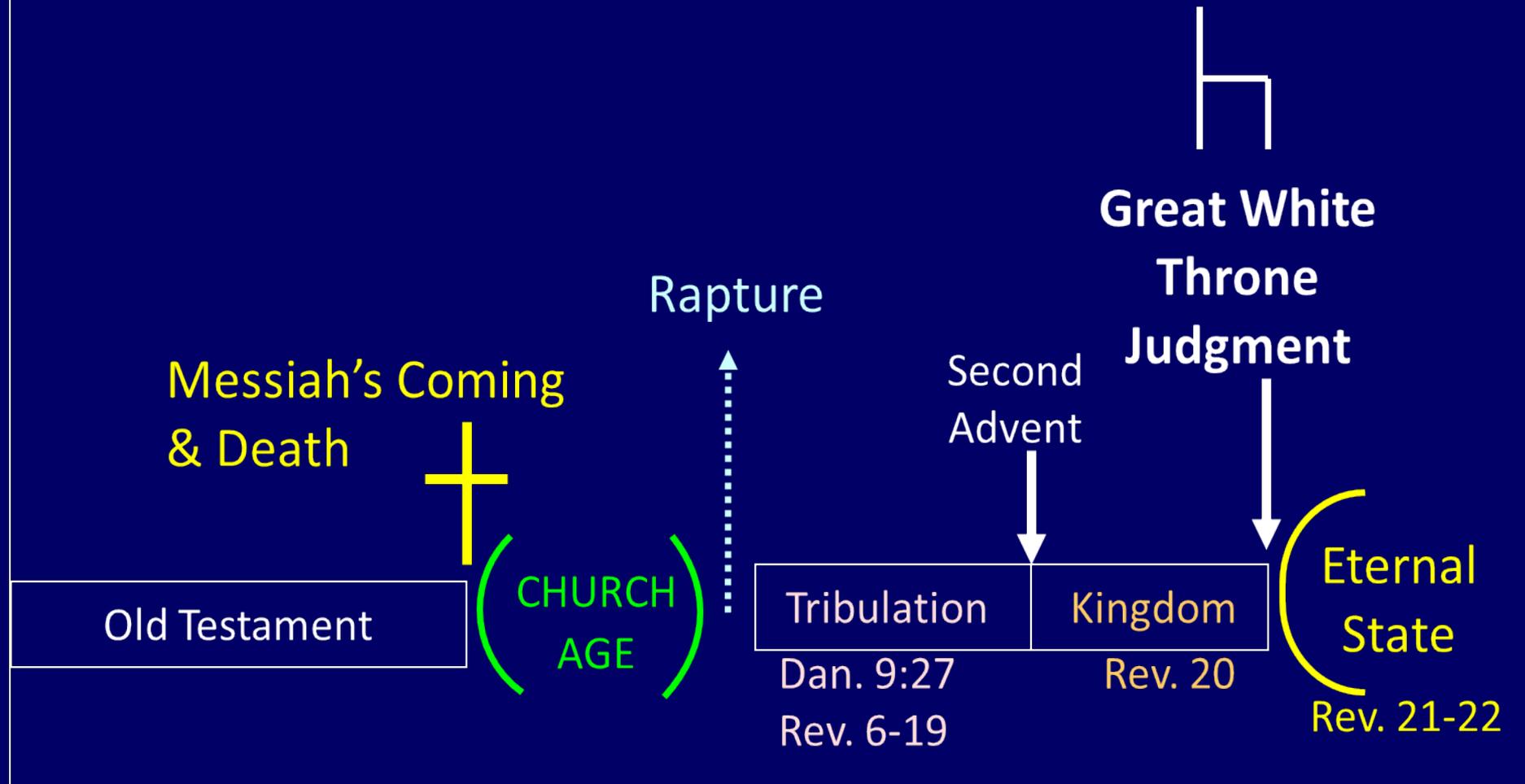


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**“<sup>26</sup> The last enemy that will be abolished is death.** <sup>27</sup> For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, ‘All things are put in subjection,’ it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him.<sup>28</sup> **When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.”**



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## Psalm 110:1-2

“<sup>1</sup> The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at My right hand **Until** I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.’  
<sup>2</sup> The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from **Zion**, saying, **‘Rule in the midst of Your enemies.’**”



## Hebrews 10:12-13

“<sup>12</sup> but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, <sup>13</sup> waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET.”



## 1 Corinthians 15:23-28

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## Psalm 8:4-6

“<sup>4</sup> What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him? <sup>5</sup> Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! <sup>6</sup> You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.”



## Genesis 1:26-28

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

<sup>27</sup> God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. <sup>28</sup> God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”



# Theocratic Administrator



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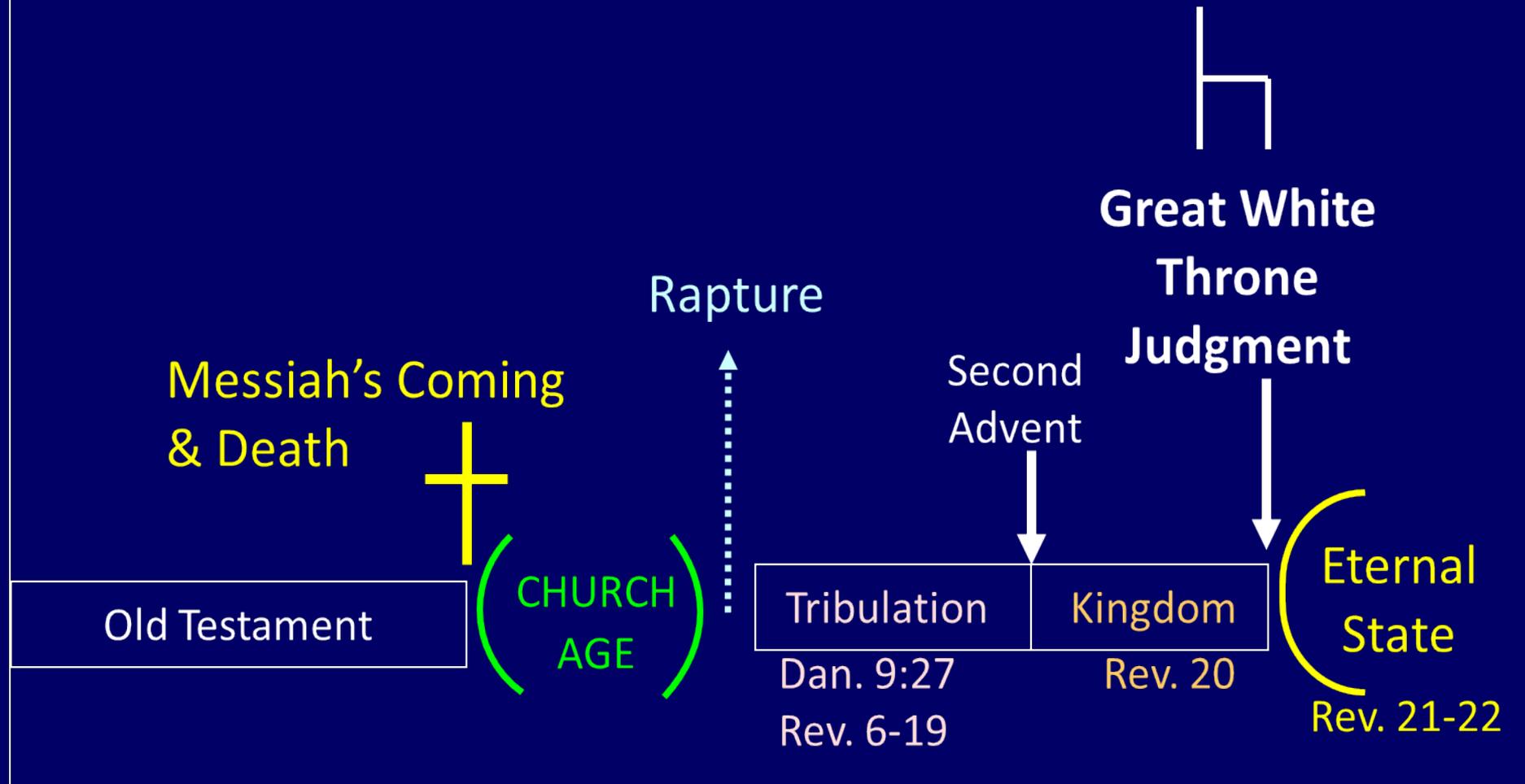


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Michael J. Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be a Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus* (Los Angeles, CA: Theological Studies, 2015), 102.

“It is during the Son’s reign that Jesus, the ultimate man and king, fulfills all the prophecies, covenants, and promises concerning God’s mediatorial kingdom program. When this occurs then the eternal kingdom of the Father commences. This truth again indicates the need for an era that is distinct both from this present age and the eternal kingdom. One should not simply assume that unfulfilled promises awaiting fulfillment will be fulfilled in the eternal state. In doing so this would put fulfillment outside of the reign of Jesus the Messiah to whom the task of fulfillment belongs.”

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## Progressive Dispensationalism & Social Gospel

Craig Blaising, "The Kingdom of God in the New Testament," in *Progressive Dispensationalism*, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrel L. Bock (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1993), 273–74.

“An intermediate kingdom may be implied from Paul’s delineation of the historical stages of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:20–28. In verses 23–24, Paul marks off three stages of resurrection: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming, then comes the end...The reign of Christ which precedes the final and everlasting revelation of the eschatological kingdom covers whatever time elapses between the second and third stages of resurrection. That reign may in fact extend back to the first stage, that of Christ’s resurrection, since we have seen that Paul repeatedly speaks of Christ’s present reign using the language of Psalm 110:1 (which language is also used here in 1 Cor. 15:25).”

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(1 Corinthians 15:25, 27)

- A. Parameter's of Christ's reign should be defined by the immediate context (1 Cor. 15:23-24)
- B. Ps. 110:1-2 (vs. 25) and Ps. 8:4-6 (vs. 27) speak of Christ's direct earthly reign
- C. First Corinthians speaks of Christ's future rule (4:5, 8; 6:2-3, 9-10; 15:50)



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<sup>27</sup> God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. <sup>28</sup> God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”



# Theocratic Administrator





## Michael J. Vlach

Michael J. Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be a Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus* (Los Angeles, CA: Theological Studies, 2015), 99-101.

“With 15:25 Paul says, “He must reign until He has put all his enemies under His feet” (25). The “must” means it is necessary that Jesus reigns. Paul’s wording in verse 25 is a reference to Psalm 110:1–2, which states: “The Lord says to my Lord: ‘Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.’ The Lord will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, ‘Rule in the midst of Your enemies.’” The allusion to Ps. 110:1–2 is evidence that the “reign” of Jesus is a future earthly reign. The context of Psalm 110 is David’s Lord, the Messiah, sitting at the right hand of God for a session in heaven “until” He begins His earthly reign over His enemies from “Zion” in Jerusalem.”



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Michael J. Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be a Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus* (Los Angeles, CA: Theological Studies, 2015), 99-101.

“In reference to Ps. 110:1, the author of Hebrews says that Jesus is “waiting” at the right hand of the Father (see Hebrews 10:12–13). When the heavenly session from the Father’s throne is over, God installs His Messiah on earth to reign over it from Jerusalem. From our current historical perspective, Jesus is currently at the right hand of God the Father but this will be followed by a reign upon the earth. Thus, Jesus “must” reign from earth because Psalm 110 says this must happen. . . . Jesus the Son and Messiah must have a sustained reign in the realm where the first Adam failed (see Gen. 1:26, 28; 1 Cor. 15:45).”



## Michael J. Vlach

Michael J. Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be a Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus* (Los Angeles, CA: Theological Studies, 2015), 99-101.

“With 15:27, Paul quotes Ps. 8:6: “For He has put all things in subjection under His feet.” . . . The use of Psalm 8 is further evidence the Paul is thinking of a future earthly reign of Jesus. Psalm 8 explains and expands upon Gen. 1:26–28 and its truth that God created man to rule successfully over the earth. *The last Adam, Jesus, must succeed from and over the realm where the first Adam failed—earth.* The last Adam’s destiny is not to rule from heaven in a spiritual kingdom. He is to rule *from and over* the earth just like the first Adam was supposed to do. But unlike Adam, Jesus will succeed.”



## Michael J. Vlach

Michael J. Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be a Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus* (Los Angeles, CA: Theological Studies, 2015), 99-101.

“Those who place Jesus’ kingdom reign in this age from heaven over a spiritual kingdom are not giving justice to an important part of God’s kingdom program—which is for man to reign over the earth as God originally tasked him to do. Jesus as the ultimate Man and representative of mankind will fulfill this task. A spiritual reign from heaven does not complete what God requires in Gen. 1:26–28 and Psalm 8. God expects a successful reign over the earth and Jesus the Son will accomplish this task. Then He will hand the kingdom over to the Father.”

# Three Problems

(1 Corinthians 15:25, 27)

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- C. First Corinthians speaks of Christ's future rule (4:5, 8; 6:2-3, 9-10; 15:50)



## 1 Corinthians 4:5, 8

<sup>5</sup>“Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God... <sup>8</sup> You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and indeed, I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you...



## 1 Corinthians 6:2-3

“<sup>2</sup> Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent *to constitute* the smallest law courts? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?”





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Michael J. Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be a Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus* (Los Angeles, CA: Theological Studies, 2015), 103.

“As shown, the grammar of 1 Cor. 15:20–28 indicates a future reign of Jesus after His second coming to the earth. Yet the context of 1 Corinthians also strengthens this understanding. Paul viewed the kingdom reign as future in 1 Corinthians 4 and 6. With 1 Corinthians 4:8 he chided the Corinthians for thinking they were already reigning when they were not (“I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you”). And in 1 Corinthians 6:2–3 he stated that the kingdom reign of the saints involves judging angels, something that clearly was not happening in the present. So even before we arrive at 1 Corinthians 15 Paul already indicated that the kingdom is future.”



## Michael J. Vlach

Michael J. Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be a Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus* (Los Angeles, CA: Theological Studies, 2015), 103.

“As 1 Corinthians 4:8 and 6:2–3 reveal, a close connection exists between the kingdom reign of Messiah and the reign of those who belong to Messiah. So if Paul clearly places the kingdom reign of the saints in the future (which he does) in 1 Cor. 4:8 and 6:2–3, this makes it likely that the kingdom of the Son described in 1 Corinthians 15:20–28 is future as well. What Paul revealed earlier in 1 Corinthians helps inform what he is claiming later. Hence, both grammar and context indicate a futuristic understanding of Jesus’ reign in 1 Corinthians 15.”

## 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

“<sup>9</sup> Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,<sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.”



## 1 Corinthians 15:50

“Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.”



CONCLUSION

# Three Problems

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### 3. Passages from Paul's Writings



- a. Walk worthy of the kingdom (1 Thess. 2:12)
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