

A PRELUDE TO *BIBLICAL* EVANGELISM

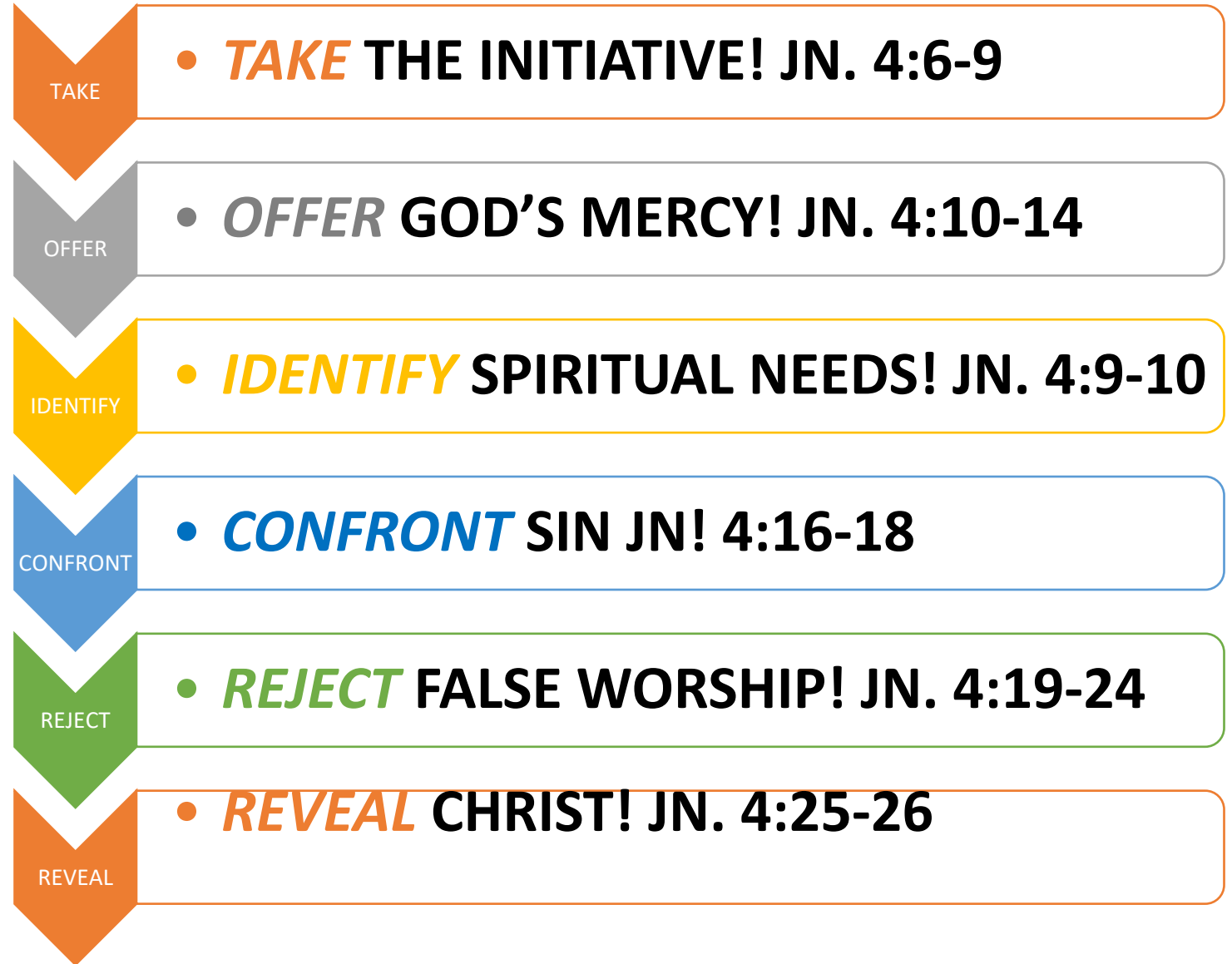




THE FRUIT OF
THE RIGHTEOUS IS A
TREE OF LIFE,
AND HE WHO IS WISE
WINS SOULS.

PROVERBS 11:30 NASB

PRINCIPLES
FOR
BIBLICAL
EVANGELISM
FOUND IN
JOHN 4, “THE
WOMAN AT
THE WELL.”



THE
MILLENNIAL
KINGDOM *of* CHRIST

THE *CLIMAX* OF HUMAN HISTORY

- ***IMAGINE A WORLD*** dominated by righteousness and goodness—a world where there is no injustice, where no court ever renders an unjust verdict, and where everyone is always treated fairly.
- ***IMAGINE A WORLD*** where what is true, right, and noble marks every aspect of life, including interpersonal relations, commerce, education, and government.
- ***IMAGINE A WORLD*** where there is complete, total, and permanent peace, where joy abounds and good health prevails—so much so that people live for hundreds of years.

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- ***HUMANLY SPEAKING***, that description may seem far-fetched, a utopian fantasy that could never be reality. Yet it accurately describes conditions during the ***FUTURE EARTHLY KINGDOM OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST***.
 - The restored and radically reconstructed earth of the millennial kingdom will constitute ***PARADISE REGAINED***.
 - The **1,000**-year reign of the ***SAVIOR OVER THE EARTH*** is the divinely planned and promised culmination of all redemptive history and the realization of the hope of all the saints of all the ages.

THE *MILLENNIAL* KINGDOM

- ***THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM*** is called by many names in Scripture.
- In (MATT. 19:28) **JESUS** calls it ***“THE REGENERATION.”***
- (ACTS 3:19) describes the kingdom as ***“TIMES OF REFRESHING,”*** while verse 21 of that chapter calls it ***“THE PERIOD OF RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS.”***
- The apostle **PAUL** refers to it in (EPH. 1:10) as ***“AN ADMINISTRATION SUITABLE TO THE FULLNESS OF THE TIMES.”***
- But the Bible’s teaching on the kingdom is not confined to the New Testament. The kingdom is an important theme throughout Scripture; it is the goal toward which all of redemptive history progresses. In the words of **JOHN BRIGHT**, “The Bible is one book. Had we to give that book a title, we might with justice call it ***‘THE BOOK OF THE COMING KINGDOM OF GOD.’***”

- **GOD'S KINGDOM** may be broadly defined as the sphere in which He reigns. In its universal, eternal sense, God's kingdom encompasses everything that exists, because God is the **SOVEREIGN RULER** over all of His creation.
- **DAVID** declared that truth in (PSA. 103:19): ***"THE LORD HAS ESTABLISHED HIS THRONE IN THE HEAVENS, AND HIS SOVEREIGNTY RULES OVER ALL."***
- **HISTORICALLY**, GOD HAS **MEDIATED** HIS RULE ON EARTH THROUGH HIS PEOPLE, first through Adam and Eve, then Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, the judges of Israel (including Samuel), and the kings of Israel and Judah.

- *IN THE PRESENT ERA*, God mediates His rule POLITICALLY through *HUMAN GOVERNMENTS* (ROM. 13:1–7) and SPIRITUALLY through *THE CHURCH* (ACTS 20:25; ROM. 14:17; COL. 1:13).
- In the MILLENNIAL KINGDOM, the *POLITICAL* and *RELIGIOUS* elements of God's temporal, earthly rule will be reunited in *THE PERSON OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST*.

REVELATION 20

- One of the clearest passages of Scripture on the **MILLENNIAL KINGDOM** is **(REV. 20:1–10)**. This is, in every sense of the word, a **CLIMACTIC CHAPTER** in Scripture. It brings us to the **REIGN OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST ON EARTH** in His kingdom—the culmination of redemptive history as it unfolds in this world. In a sense, **THIS KINGDOM IS THE CLIMAX OF ALL HUMAN HISTORY.**
- **THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST** has been called “**PARADISE REGAINED.**” Paradise was lost when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, but it will finally be restored with the reign of Christ. Since the Fall, generation after generation of saints have looked forward to the realization of their hopes **WHEN CHRIST WILL SET THE WORLD IN ORDER AGAIN.**

- It is at that time that Jesus Christ will reign fully as **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS** over all creation. **THIS KINGDOM IS THE END OF HUMAN HISTORY**—the end of the present universe as we know it. And after the thousand-year kingdom is completed, everything in the created order will be **COMPLETELY DESTROYED** because it has all been tainted by sin. **EVEN THOUGH CHRIST WILL RULE OVER IT, IT WILL STILL BEAR THE MARKS OF SIN.**
- Finally, after the Lord completely destroys the created universe, He will create a new heaven and a new earth in eternal perfection. This new heaven and earth will remain untainted by sin and will be **THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM WHERE CHRIST REIGNS WITH ALL THE SAINTS FROM EVERY AGE.**

- ***SO REDEEMPTIVE HISTORY*** runs from the fall of man through Christ's first advent until He comes back in judgment, sets up His kingdom, destroys the world, and, lastly, makes way for the new heaven and the new earth untouched by sin of any kind.

- But before we get to that, we need to examine the ***THREE*** common interpretations of the ***MILLENNIAL KINGDOM***:

1. ***POSTMILLENNIALISM***,

2. ***AMILLENNIALISM***.

3. ***PREMILLENNIALISM***.

WHAT IS THE *MALLINIAL* KINGDOM?

- ***THE *KINGDOM OF GOD**** is one of the great themes of the Bible. Last time, we saw how all of human and redemptive history culminates in the future earthly kingdom of Christ, the ***MILLENNIAL KINGDOM*** or ***THE MILLENNIUM***. Yet many Christians have interpreted the nature of this kingdom differently.
- Taking the text of ***REVELATION 20*** (and the numerous other biblical passages that speak of the earthly kingdom) at face value leads to what is called a ***PREMILLENNIAL* VIEW OF ESCHATOLOGY**:
- ***THAT IS, CHRIST WILL RETURN *FIRST* AND THEN ESTABLISH A LITERAL KINGDOM ON EARTH, WHICH WILL LAST FOR A THOUSAND YEARS.***

POSTMILLENNIALISM

- **POSTMILLENNIALISM** is in some ways the **OPPOSITE** of **PREMILLENNIALISM**.
- **PREMILLENNIALISM** teaches that Christ will return before the millennium; **POSTMILLENNIALISM** teaches that He will return at the end of the millennium.
- **PREMILLENNIALISM** teaches that the period immediately before Christ's return will be the worst in human history.
- **POSTMILLENNIALISM** teaches that before His return will come the best period in history, so that Christ will return at the end of a long golden age of peace and harmony.

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- One **POST**MILLENNIALIST writes, “*THE **MILLENNIUM** TO WHICH THE **POST**MILLENNIALIST LOOKS FORWARD IS THUS A GOLDEN AGE OF PROSPERITY DURING THIS PRESENT DISPENSATION, THAT IS, DURING THE CHURCH AGE”*

- **THAT GOLDEN AGE**, according to **POSTMILLENNIALISM**, will result from the spread of the gospel throughout the world and the conversion of a majority of the human race to Christianity. Thus **“CHRIST WILL RETURN TO A TRULY CHRISTIANIZED WORLD.”**
- The **MILLENNIAL KINGDOM**, according to **POSTMILLENNIALISTS**, will be established by the church, not by the personal intervention of Jesus Christ. Nor will Christ reign personally on earth during the millennium, but rather **THROUGH HIS CHURCH.**
- In keeping with the generally optimistic views of those eras, **POSTMILLENNIALISM** flourished in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The impact of the **ENLIGHTENMENT**, the **INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION**, the rapid pace of **SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY**, and **DARWIN’S THEORY** of evolution convinced many that society was progressing inevitably toward a **UTOPIA.**

- **THAT OPTIMISTIC VIEW** was in harmony with **POSTMILLENNIALISM**, which also teaches that the world is going to get better and better (though by different means). But the numbing horror of the First World War, the moral decadence of the Roaring Twenties, the hard times of the Great Depression, the madness of the Nazis' slaughter of the Jews, and the worldwide catastrophe of the Second World War brought an end to the naive optimism that had prevailed before World War I.
- **POSTMILLENNIALISM** accordingly also declined in popularity. In recent years, however, there has been a resurgence of postmillennialism in such movements as **LIBERATION THEOLOGY**, **CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM**, and **THEONOMY**: ***"IS THE CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL VIEW THAT GOD'S CIVIL AND JUDICIAL LAWS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT ARE STILL BINDING ON MODERN NATIONS AND SHOULD FORM THE BASIS FOR CIVIL LAW"***

***A*MILLENNIALISM**

- **THE NAME *A*MILLENNIALISM** is somewhat misleading, since it implies that ***A*MILLENNIALISTS** do not believe in a millennium. While it is true that they reject the concept of an ***EARTHLY* MILLENNIUM**, and especially one that is actually **1,000** years in duration, ***A*MILLENNIALISTS** do believe in a kingdom.
- ***THEY BELIEVE*** the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah's kingdom are being fulfilled ***NOW***, either by the saints reigning with Christ in heaven, or (**spiritually, *NOT* literally**) by the church on earth.
- Far from disbelieving in the millennium, ***A*MILLENNIALISTS** believe ***WE ARE IN IT NOW***, as one advocate states: "As far as the thousand years of Revelation 20 are concerned, we are in the millennium now." The conclusion of this view is that the one thousand years which (**REV. 20:2–7**) references **six times** is merely ***SYMBOLIC*** for "***A LONG TIME.***"

ONE *THOUSAND* YEARS?

- **THERE IS ABSOLUTELY *NO* GOOD EXEGETICAL REASON TO INTERPRET THE *MILLENNIUM* AS ANYTHING OTHER THAN ONE THOUSAND YEARS.** Such is purely an arbitrary act on the part of the interpreter, based on his ***PRESUPPOSITIONS***. **ROBERT L.** Thomas writes,
- If the writer wanted a very large ***SYMBOLIC NUMBER***, why did he not use **144,000** (7:1ff.; 14:1ff.;), **200,000,000** (9:16), ***“TEN THOUSAND TIMES TEN THOUSAND, AND THOUSANDS OF THOUSANDS”*** (5:11), or an incalculably large number (7:9)?
- Fact is, ***NO* NUMBER IN REVELATION IS VERIFIABLY A *SYMBOLIC* NUMBER.** On the other hand, ***NONSYMBOLIC USAGE*** of numbers is the rule. ***IT REQUIRES MULTIPLICATION OF A LITERAL 12,000 BY A LITERAL TWELVE TO COME UP WITH 144,000 IN 7:4–8.***

- THE CHURCHES, SEALS, TRUMPETS, and BOWLS are all literally **SEVEN** IN NUMBER.
- THE **THREE** UNCLEAN SPIRITS OF 16:13 are actually **THREE** in number.
- THE **THREE** ANGELS connected with the three last woes (8:13) add up to a total of **THREE**.
- THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES AMOUNT TO EXACTLY SEVEN.
- The equivalency of 1,260 DAYS and **THREE AND A HALF YEARS** necessitate a **NONSYMBOLIC** understanding of both numbers.
- The **TWELVE** APOSTLES and the **TWELVE** TRIBES of Israel are literally **TWELVE** (21:12–14).
- THE **SEVEN** CHURCHES are in **SEVEN** literal cities. Yet confirmation of a single number in Revelation as symbolic is impossible.
- ***IT IS HIGHLY DOUBTFUL THAT ANY **SYMBOLIC** NUMBER WOULD BE REPEATED SIX TIMES IN A TEXT, AS **ONE THOUSAND** IS HERE.***

- For the first century and a half after the close of the New Testament era, the church was largely **PREMILLENNIAL**. Among the church fathers of that period who believed in a literal thousand-year earthly millennium were **PAPIAS** (a disciple of the **APOSTLE JOHN**), **IRENAEUS**, **JUSTIN MARTYR**, **TERTULLIAN**, and the author of the **EPISTLE OF BARNABAS**.
- That **PREMILLENNIAL CONSENSUS** was challenged by other ancient writers who advocated an **ALLEGORICAL APPROACH** to interpreting Scripture (most notably **ORIGEN**).
- But it was the influence of **AUGUSTINE**, the greatest theologian of the early church, that ensured that **AMILLENNIALISM** would dominate the church for centuries. **TODAY, MOST SCHOLARS IN THE REFORMED TRADITION ARE AMILLENNIALISTS.**

- At the heart of the debate over **MILLENNIAL VIEWS** is the issue of **HERMENEUTICS**. **ALL SIDES** in the debate agree that interpreting Old Testament prophecy **LITERALLY LEADS NATURALLY TO PREMILLENNIALISM**.
- **AMILLENNIALIST FLOYD E. HAMILTON** candidly acknowledges that truth: “Now we must frankly admit that a literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies gives us just such a picture of an earthly reign of the Messiah as the premillennialist pictures.”
- **POSTMILLENNIALIST LORAIN BOETTNER**, cited earlier, agrees with Hamilton’s assessment: “It is generally agreed that if the prophecies are taken literally, they do foretell a restoration of the nation of Israel in the land of Palestine with the Jews having a prominent place in that kingdom and ruling over the other nations”

JUST IN CASE YOU **DIDN'T** KNOW

- EXEGESIS VS. HERMENEUTICS:
- EXEGESIS: IS THE ACTUAL PRACTICE OF DIGGING INTO A SPECIFIC TEXT TO *PULL OUT* ITS MEANING.
- HERMENEUTICS: IS THE BROADER FRAMEWORK AND SET OF RULES THAT GUIDES HOW YOU DO EXEGESIS.
- THE HERMENEUTICAL CIRCLE: THIS IS THE PROCESS OF MOVING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN A SMALL PART OF THE TEXT (LIKE A SINGLE WORD OR VERSE) AND THE LARGER CONTEXT (THE PARAGRAPH, THE WHOLE BOOK, AND THE ENTIRE BIBLE) TO ENSURE *ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING*.

PREMILLENNIALISM

- **TIMING:** CHRIST RETURNS BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM.
- **NATURE:** **JESUS** PHYSICALLY COMES BACK TO EARTH (FOLLOWING A PERIOD OF TRIBULATION) TO ESTABLISH A LITERAL, **1,000-YEAR EARTHLY KINGDOM** WITH JERUSALEM AS ITS CENTER.
- **SUB-TYPES:** DIVIDED INTO **HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM** (FOCUSING ON THE VISIBLE RETURN OF CHRIST AFTER THE TRIBULATION) AND **DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM** (INCORPORATING A PRE-TRIBULATION **RAPTURE** AND A DISTINCTION BETWEEN **ISRAEL** AND THE **CHURCH**).

POSTMILLENNIALISM

- **TIMING:** CHRIST RETURNS AFTER THE MILLENNIUM.
- **NATURE:** THE WORLD BECOMES GRADUALLY **CHRISTIANIZED** AND TRANSFORMED THROUGH THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL AND SOCIETAL IMPROVEMENT, CREATING A GOLDEN AGE OF PEACE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS ON EARTH. AT THE END OF THIS LONG ERA, **CHRIST RETURNS.**

AMILLENNIALISM

- **TIMING:** THERE IS **NO LITERAL** FUTURE **1,000**-YEAR **MILLENNIUM**.
- **NATURE:** THE "**MILLENNIUM**" IS INTERPRETED **SYMBOLICALLY** AS CHRIST'S CURRENT, SPIRITUAL REIGN IN HEAVEN AND IN THE HEARTS OF BELIEVERS BETWEEN HIS FIRST AND SECOND COMINGS.
- **SATAN** IS CURRENTLY BOUND IN THE SENSE THAT HE CANNOT STOP THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.
- **WHEN CHRIST RETURNS**, IT IMMEDIATELY USHERS IN THE FINAL JUDGMENT AND THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH.