

The Kingdom, The Millennium, & The Eschaton

A Brief Overview of New Testament Prophecy

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Introduction - The Framework of NT Hermeneutics

One of the more startling aspects of the NT message is its repeated announcement that in Jesus Christ the future has come to the present. Our Lord Himself, His forerunner John the Baptist, and His apostles all announce and extrapolate on this theme.

The Baptist's announcement was, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. 3:2; cf. Mk.1:14-15). For the apostle Paul, Christ came "when the fullness of time was come," or more simply, when time had become full (Gal.4:4). Moreover, in Christ, Paul declared, God had come good on all His ancient promises (2Cor.1:20). And this was no mere opinion of the significance of the Lord Jesus taken up solely by His enthusiastic followers; our Lord spoke of *Himself* in these very terms.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Mat. 5:17). "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Lk.10:23-24). "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached" (Lk.16:16). ". . . the kingdom of God is come to you" (Mat.12:28).

Moreover, this is the very thing Jesus instructed His disciples to preach (Mat.10:7; cf. Mat.24:14; Lk. 10:9). Clearly, what had been the long hope of Israel had come in the Person of Jesus Christ. The promised realities of the eschaton have come. The kingdom of God is *now*.

This accounts for the eschatological nature of NT soteriology. For example, salvation is defined in such eschatological terms as "eternal life," "resurrection," and *present* entrance into the kingdom (e.g., Jn.5:24). In Paul the "justification" anticipated for the righteous as they would stand at the bar of God's judgment is in Christ a present reality, something enjoyed by faith ahead of time (e.g., Rom.5:1). The blessings of the New Covenant, which today's believer enjoys, are themselves (originally) cast in an eschatological context (cf. Jer.31:31ff; Ezek.36:22ff). Christ has already delivered us from "this present evil age" (Gal.1:4) and has placed us into His own kingdom (Col.1:13). We live even now "in the heavenlies" (Eph.2:6). In Christ the future is present; the eschatological kingdom is now.

But as with many areas of Biblical theology, eschatology is not that simple. A just as impressive list of NT statements indicate that the kingdom of God is *not yet*. We are instructed to pray, "Thy kingdom come" (Mat.6:10). Christ's kingdom is regularly associated with His second coming (Mat.25:34; Lk.19:11-15, etc.).¹ To see Christ one day as He comes in His kingdom is the object of the Christian's hope.

Plainly, then, the kingdom -- the eschaton -- is *both* now and not yet. It is present in its spiritual and "mystery" form (Mat.13:1-52), but it awaits the return of the King for its full manifestation (e.g., 2Tim.4:1).

Eschatological Differences

With this much most amillennialists and premillennialists would agree. There is both a present and a future aspect to Christ's kingdom, a present realization and a future manifestation. The point of disagreement concerns the way in which the fulfillment is brought about in the eschaton. Amillennialism sees in the eternal state the full manifestation of the promises; this is ushered in immediately upon the return of Jesus Christ. Premillennialists see the kingdom promises fulfilled in history upon the return of Jesus Christ; this "inter-regnum" period issues in to the eternal state. Both agree to the present realization of the kingdom; the difference lies in the understanding of its character in the eschaton.

More specifically, to state the issue in the form of a question, does the Scripture speak of the eschatological kingdom as fulfilled in *history*? Perhaps better: Does the eternal state follow directly upon the return of Jesus Christ? Or does a kingdom period intervene?

Approach

At the end of the discussion, the decision will have to rest not on hermeneutical presuppositions, an assumption which has for too long been the excuse for failure to complete the more difficult task of exegesis. We have already seen that our Lord has left us with a hermeneutic of considerable tension, and there have been interpretive errors made on both sides. There have been those who see virtually no fulfillment of the kingdom promises in this present age; for them, kingdom truth is wholly a concern of the future. Theirs is an over-literalized eschatology. Others, however, ignoring the "not yet," have presented what we may rightly call an over-realized eschatology. For them, virtually all of prophecy is already fulfilled, and the Bible is all but silent on the future. But the hermeneutic which our Lord gave us is one of now *and* then.

The question of this further manifestation of the kingdom *prior* to the eternal state, however, is a question not of hermeneutics but of exegesis. The basic framework given by our Lord could feasibly allow for either. *What must be examined specifically are those passages which provide a chronological framework for the future.* What is offered here are some miscellaneous thoughts from these passages. Perhaps more details will be taken up at a later time.

Revelation 20

Perhaps we should begin with Rev.20, the *crux interpretum* and focus of the most heated debate. This passage presents a period of time, designated as a thousand years (hence, *millennium*), during which Satan is bound and cast into the abyss and thus unable to deceive the nations (vv.1-3). At the beginning of this period is a "resurrection" of the faithful (vv.4-5). Following the thousand years is the release of Satan and a final rebellion (vv.7-9), the final destruction of Satan (v.10), and the second resurrection (vv.5-6; 13). These are the basic facts with which we must work.

In the context (19:11ff) our Lord is portrayed as coming to earth in triumphal glory and taking vengeance upon His enemies. That John intends for us to understand this millennium to be following this return seems evident from his repeated use of the chronological *kai* ("and") used throughout (cf. 19:11, 17, 19; 20:1, 4, etc.). Whatever details and meanings are involved in the symbolism which John employs, the stated order of events is,

- 1) Return of Christ in victory (19:11-21)
- 2) Destruction of the evil triumvirate (the beast, the false prophet, and Satan) in which Satan is deposed to the abyss (19:19-20:3)
- 3) First resurrection (20:4)
- 4) 1,000 year kingdom (*ebasileusan . . . basileusousin*, 20:4-6)
- 5) Release of Satan and a final rebellion (20:7-9)
- 7) Final destruction of Satan, who now is cast into the lake of fire where the beast and false prophet have been (20:10)
- 8) Second resurrection & final judgment (20:11-15)

The entire passage, so it seems at first glance at least, reads as one continuous narrative. In modern theological jargon, Christ's return here is premillennial. He comes and personally brings His kingdom to its consummation.

Many, however, have understood the events of chapter 20 as a "recapitulation," describing events actually *prior* to our Lord's return. These interpreters often take refuge in the fact that much of the book of Revelation is symbolic and not to be taken literally. But whatever the significance of the symbolic language employed, the chronological framework of the passage -- Christ's coming, Christ's Kingdom, the eternal state -- leaves us with premillennialism. Moreover, explicit exegetical support for the recapitulation theory is sadly lacking; it is difficult to demonstrate any compelling reason which would make necessary such an inversion of the order of the events which John describes. It is a theological proposition, and it is one which at least appears to run against John's own chronological casting of the passage.² It is a hermeneutical consideration placed upon the text; it is not derived from the text itself. And there is exegetical necessity for saying so.

The Binding of Satan

First, the binding of Satan is said to have a specific purpose: "so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished" (v.3). That is, during this time Satan's activity is terminated. Now it has been suggested that this pictures this gospel age in which Christ's work proceeds more or less unhindered by the "strong man" who by Him is now "bound" (cf. Mat.12:28-29). Satan, so this theory goes, is not allowed today to successfully hinder the gospel. Further support is often gleaned from Rev.12:7ff where Satan is seen as "cast out" of heaven (v.9).

But the parallel is not as obvious as it might at first appear. Is the binding and fall of Satan in Mat.12 and Rev.12 the same as that of Rev.20? And how can we know? The text itself should provide some clues. Interestingly enough, a comparison of Rev.12 and Rev.20 demonstrates not a parallel but a contrast.

Most agree that Rev.12 speaks of this age, whether the church age as such or the tribulation period. Can Rev.20 be the same? Here is the data with which we must work toward our decision:

- 1) In Rev.12 Satan's time is "short" (v.12), but the time frame in Rev.20 is "a thousand years."
- 2) In Rev.12 he is cast from heaven to earth, but in Rev.20 he is cast from earth to the abyss.
- 3) In Rev.12 he frantically carries out a furious rampage over the earth, but in Rev.20 he is confined to the abyss.
- 4) Still more significantly, in Rev.12:9 Satan, on the loose, "deceives (planao) the whole world"; but in Rev.20:3 it is precisely this deception (planao) that is denied and disallowed (v.3).

Now plainly, if both passages speak of the same age, we have a contradiction. But if Rev.12 speaks of this age and Rev.20 speaks of the age to come, the tension is resolved. Indeed, chapter 20 is most easily seen as the happy *answer* and *conclusion* of the events described in chapter 12. There is obvious contrast, not identity.

Furthermore, when amillennialists ask us to equate the binding of Satan described in Rev.20 with descriptions of his defeat in places such as John 12:31 -- that is, that this be understood in a gospel sense, a work accomplished on the cross -- we must ask, Then in what sense will this binding be over at the end of the "thousand years"? The victory of Christ over Satan in His death and resurrection was final, once and for all. It is impossible to understand that as having only a thousand year duration, whatever may be symbolized by the numerical term.

Note again, the approach here does not rest on presuppositions, prior assumptions about literary genre, or the meanings of symbols in the passage. Nor does it import ideas from outside the text itself. Further, it must be

admitted that if this observation is correct -- that Satan's inability to deceive the world in Rev.20 is a different time frame from that of his active deception in Rev.12 -- then we are left with premillennialism.

Still there is more to be said on this point. Whatever symbolism is involved, Satan "bound" with a "chain," "shut up" and "sealed" in the abyss does not speak of a mere curtailing of his activity; it plainly represents its cessation. Satan is incarcerated; he is not on parole. It has often been said in jest that if Satan is bound now, he is on an awfully long chain! But plainly, the text does not allow for a long chain. His activity is brought to a halt: he is bound, and he is caged.

Satan's four titles are mentioned to emphasize this further: "He laid hold of the dragon, that old serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years" (v.2). That is to say, all the activities which these names imply will then be suppressed.

However, the NT everywhere pictures Satan in this present day as on a rampage, as does Rev.12:9 (above). He "walks about seeking whom he may devour" (1Pet.5:8). He "takes men captive at his will" (2Tim.2:26). Satan is the "god of this world" who "blinds the minds" of those who are lost (2Cor.4:4). Paul's own gospel enterprise was hindered by Satanic opposition (1Th.2:18). In this "mystery" stage of the kingdom Satan is permitted to snatch away the gospel seed that is sown, as a bird taking seed from the wayside (Mt.13:4, 19). It is a strange hermeneutic which allows statements such as these to fit within the picture presented in Rev.20:1-3. And it is fair to say in criticism that it does not appear that the motivation behind it is an exegetical one.

The Resurrections

Then there is the issue of the resurrections (Rev.20:4-5). Amillennialists suggest that the first is spiritual (regeneration) and only the second is physical. But how can we know? Spiritual resurrection is clearly a reality for all who are Christ's (e.g., Jn.5:25). The question, however, is what the language of this passage (Rev.20:4-5) requires. Again we are at a loss to find any indication in the text itself that this "first resurrection" is a spiritual one. The Greek term here for "resurrection" (*anastasis*, vv.5-6) is never used in a spiritual sense anywhere in the NT. Nor is there any interpretive clue, such as the "now is" in Jn.5:25, which would indicate spiritual resurrection. Nor is there definition given which would point us in this direction. To the contrary, these who are raised to life are "those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands" (v.4). The stated contrast is physical death, and the very obvious indication is that the resurrection is a physical one also. It is equated with the resurrection of "the rest of the dead" (v.5), which all sides admit is physical. There is exactly no evidence within the text itself which would indicate a change in the meaning of words, no hint at all that the two resurrections spoken of are of a different nature. Much to the contrary, to shift in mid-stream without express warrant from the text is exegetical chaos. Further, the term *ezesan* (v.4, "they lived, they came to life," ingressive aorist) elsewhere in the book of Revelation refers only to bodily resurrection (2:8; 13:14), and never is it used in a spiritualized sense. Moreover, the resurrection of these in verse 4 is said to *follow*, not precede, their faithfulness -- a consideration which allows only a physical resurrection. Once again, the amillennial interpretation, here, rests on presuppositions imported to the passage and that against the most natural reading of the text; it is not grounded in exegesis. And again, if it is wrong at this point, we are left with premillennialism.

Reigning

Then there is the matter of "reigning" and the consideration that this period has a specific time of duration -- one thousand years. Premillennialists assert that the "reigning" of those of the first resurrection is one that

involves rule over the lost. It is an authority exercised over rebellious men. This fits well with Rev.2:25-27, where a "rod of iron" is promised to the faithful when Christ returns (cf. 19:15). An iron rod is necessary only in a world of sin. For the amillennialist, on the other hand, the reigning is a spiritual one only, in either of two senses: 1) in the sense of a heavenly vindication of some kind in the intermediate state, or 2) in the sense of the believer's spiritual reigning "in Christ." Neither idea, however, is allowed by the text. 1) The term translated "they came to life" (*ezesan*) is nowhere in the NT used to describe the continued life of the soul in heaven after the death of the body. Never. It speaks of life after death *only in resurrection*. It indicates the final state, not the intermediate. Furthermore, the picture presented in Rev.6:9-11 of the saints in heaven during the intermediate state is far from that of "reigning": they are crying out to the Lord for vengeance to be executed upon their oppressors still on earth. In response they are told to "rest" and be patient until the number of martyrs is complete. The situation in chapter 20, however, is the answer to this: when Christ comes in His kingdom, only then will they be raised to reign with Him. Finally, now, their time of vindication has come. And 2) while the term is used outside of the book of Revelation in a spiritual sense (e.g., Jn.5:25), we must ask, In what sense can spiritual reigning be said to last only a thousand years? Will that kind of reign not continue forever? And is it not so that we should expect suffering today and reigning only tomorrow (2Tim.2:12)? Again, the amillennialist suggestion seems neither to rise from nor fit the demands of the passage.

John's Use of the OT

Finally, there is the observation which concerns John's use of the OT. It is often alleged that premillennialists derive their doctrine from the OT and not the NT, and that the NT writers treat the OT kingdom prophecies only in a spiritual way. Yet John's description of the kingdom here is clearly informed by the prophet Ezekiel. And his treatment of the older prophet is not at all a spiritualized one; it is, rather, strikingly parallel. In Ezek.36-37 there is the resurrection of Israel and her restoration to the land under the leadership of the Davidic king (cf. Rev.20:4-6). In chapters 38-39 there is the rebellion of Gog and Magog (cf. Rev.20:7-9). And in chapters 40-48 there is the new Jerusalem dwelling safely and enjoying its restored temple (cf. Rev.21-22). John's handling of the Ezekiel passage is remarkably literal.

So also is his treatment of Dan.7. The multiplicity of "thrones" given to the saints, "seated" thereupon in "judgment" and sharing in the rule of the Son of Man (Dan.7:9, 10, 22) are for John matters of very real expectation.³

Conclusion

The famous admonition of Henry Alford concerning arbitrary interpretation in Rev.20 merits repeating here:

As regards the text itself, no legitimate treatments of it will extort what is known as the spiritual interpretation now in fashion. If, in a passage where *two resurrections* are mentioned, where certain *psychai ezesan* ["souls came to life"] at the first, and the rest of the *nekroi ezesan* ["dead came to life"] only at the end of a specified period after the first, -- if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean *spiritual* rising with Christ, while the second means literal rising from the grave; -- then there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything.⁴

Alford's criticism is a valid one. It is demonstrably evident that the interpreter who admits no inter-regnum period prior to the eternal state in Rev.20 approaches the passage with preconceived notions and leaves with the same; he gains from the text "neither the exact sense nor the value."⁵

First Corinthians 15:20-28

1 Cor.15:20-28 is another passage which provides a chronological framework for the end times. Here Paul asserts that Christ's resurrection is the first of the eschatological resurrections. This is more of our now/not yet hermeneutic: Christ's resurrection is part and parcel of the resurrection of the last day, the "firstfruits" (vv.20, 23). His resurrection is not a mere resuscitation to mortal life; it is the resurrection that is yet to come.

Analysis

But it is the order of subsequent events that is significant for our question. There is an "order" to the resurrections: "Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming" (v.23). That is, first there is the resurrection of Christ, then there is the resurrection of the just when Christ returns. So far the parallel to Rev.19-20 is exact.

Verse 24 continues: "Then comes the end." At this point many amillennialists have pronounced the matter settled. "Christ comes, then the end! That's it." But we must insist that Paul does not end his sentence at this point. He continues,

Then (*eita*) comes the end *when* (*hotan*) he delivers the kingdom to God the Father, *when* (*hotan*) He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. . . . Now *when* (*hotan*) all things are made subject to Him, *then* (*tote*) the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (vv.24-28, italics added).

Paul's language here is not difficult, although it is complex. And we must be careful to understand the meanings of the terms as he used them. The first word of eschatological significance and which provides a chronological indicator is the word which in verse 24 is translated "then" (*eita*). Interestingly, in Paul's usage this word does not speak in terms of immediate succession (cf. *tote*, "at that time"). This is evident from its use in verses 5 and 7, as well as the use of the related term, *epeita*, in verses 6, 7, and 23; a simple examination of any standard Greek concordance will bear this out further. The word is sometimes translated "afterward." It implies an intervening period of time. It speaks to the next in an order of specified events but does not specify the issue of lapses of time between. Nineteen hundred years have already elapsed between the resurrection of Christ and His return (*epeita*, "afterward," v.23), but this is the elasticity of the term -- a common phenomenon in the prophetic Scriptures. So three distinct stages are put forward: 1) the resurrection of Christ; after that (*epeita*, how long after?) 2) the resurrection of the just at Christ's return; and after that (*eita*; how long after? A thousand years, perhaps?) 3) the end.

Further, the apostle outlines an order of coming events. Christ's kingdom, Paul specifies (v.24), is subsequent to His return (v.23). Moreover, this "rule" will involve some period of time (*basileuein*, present tense; "until," v.25) -- a time marked by the systematic destruction of His enemies.⁶ The "end" (*telos*) will come only "when" (*hotan*, "whenever") Christ personally brings His kingdom to its full consummation. Plainly put, Christ's "reign" or "kingdom" will be marked by the gradual destruction of His enemies. This, in turn, is specifically said to *follow* His return and *precede* the consummation. This is premillennialism.

The grammar is still more compelling. The aorist subjunctive (*katargese*, "puts an end, destroys," v.24) is the functional equivalent of a future perfect: "when He shall have put an end." Used as it is with the second *hotan* ("when") places Christ's destruction of all opposition prior to His "delivering the kingdom to God the Father" in the first *hotan* clause. We could even translate, "Then comes the end, when He delivers up the

kingdom to God and the Father, *after having* put an end to all rule and all authority and power." The "end" does not come immediately upon the return of Christ. It comes at some time *after (eita)* His return, "when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, *when he shall have put an end* to all rule and all authority and all power."

This is made even more plain by Paul's explanatory (*gar*) assertion that after Christ returns "He must reign until (*achri*) He has put all enemies under His feet" (v.25). Christ's reign is said to follow his return, and it is said to be in order to put down opposition. And this, he says, will take time.

More completely, Paul's picture of the future is as follows:

- 1) The resurrection of Christ (v.23a)
- 2) Christ's return, at which time the dead in Christ are raised (v.23b)
- 3) Christ's kingdom (vv.24-25, *ten basileian . . . basileuein*)
- 4) Christ's destruction of death (v.26 = second resurrection?)
- 5) The consummation / eternal state (vv.24a, 28)

It is significant, further, that the word for "then" which does indicate concurrent events (*tote*) is used by Paul in this passage only in verse 28. There he points out that at some time following Jesus' return (v.23), "when all things are made subject to Him, *then (tote)* the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." That is to say, the eternal state follows immediately not when Christ returns but when after His return He has brought His kingdom to its consummation. Again, it is the terminology itself which leaves us with premillennialism.

Further, Paul specifically states that all the dead will be raised, but "each one in his own order" (v.23). The word translated "order" is *tagma*, which is a sort of military term and means something like "detachment" or "division." That is, the dead will be raised selectively, according to some kind of rank or regiment. He then specifies that order: 1) the resurrection of Christ, 2) the resurrection of the just. This leaves only, 3) the resurrection of the unjust (cf. v.26). The plain statement is that the dead in Christ are raised separate from the rest (cf. Rev.20:4-6). The final "destruction of death" (v.26) implies 1) the rescue of all men from the domain of death. Death's prey must be loosed; hence, the universal resurrection of all men. And 2) Death will be rendered powerless, unable to again take new victims.⁷

Conclusion

So Rev.20 is not unique. It alone specifies the thousand years, but the basic framework is shared in common with Paul. The resurrection of the dead is in two stages, that of the righteous at His return and that of the wicked at the consummation of His rule. Christ returns in order to bring His kingdom to fruition by systematically destroying each and every enemy. And only then will He present His kingdom to the Father as finally accomplished. All this rules out the postmillennial scheme, which sees Christ as coming *after* this period of kingly rule. It also rules out the amillennial scheme, which sees Christ coming in order to immediately usher in the eternal state. But it describes the premillennial scheme exactly, which sees Christ as coming to bring His kingdom to consummation and then to usher in the eternal state.

Miscellany

Here are some other passages which provide some chronological data for us to consider.

Luke 19:11-27

Luke offers the interpretive clue to this familiar "parable of the pounds" at the outset. Jesus spoke it "because they thought the kingdom of God would immediately appear" (v.11). To correct such misguided thinking concerning the timing of the kingdom, Jesus tells them about a nobleman who went to another country far away in order to receive for himself a kingdom and then to return with his official power to reign. The reference to Archelaus, who had several years earlier travelled to Rome to receive his official power is unmistakable. But it is this that Jesus likens to His own return. Yes, there is a spiritual aspect to the kingdom; and this is precisely what these people had overlooked. We must "occupy until He comes" (v.13), and this is clearly the point of the parable. The fullness of the kingdom will not come immediately; it will come only after the King has gone away for a time. But until He comes" it will come. And when it does come, His faithful ones will share with Him, in greater or lesser capacities, in His rule over the world (vv.17, 19).

The Resurrections

Then there is the question of the number of future resurrections. Will the just and the unjust be raised together? Or are there separate resurrections for each? As we have seen, both Rev.20 and 1Cor.15 indicate a distinction. But there is more to consider. Dan.12:2 is generally considered the primary OT passage which speaks of the doctrine of resurrection. And here the prophet specifies plainly of distinction. "Many (rabbim) from (partitive min) those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, these ('elleh) to everlasting life, and those ('elleh) to shame and everlasting contempt" (my translation). Notice that Daniel specifically states that the resurrection of that day is but partial: "many." Further, it is selective: "many from those who sleep." And it is "these" who go into everlasting life. Granted, the prophet does not here provide any information as to how much time intervenes between the two resurrections, but his statement that the resurrections are separate is plain.

Phil.3:11 presents a similar picture. Paul speaks here of his ambition to "attain to the resurrection of the dead." It would seem on the face of it that if the apostle held to a general resurrection these words are meaningless; his ambition is to be part of the resurrection of the righteous dead.

But there is more. His terminology is precise. Very literally translated, Paul is seeking to attain "the out-resurrection out of the dead" (ten exanastasin ten ek nekron). The language is without meaning if the resurrection is to be merely a general one. Paul anticipates a selective resurrection, one in which he will be taken "out -- out from among the dead (ones)."¹¹ The idea of Rev.20:4 cannot be far away.

Conclusion

There are many secondary issues that remain unanswered: the place of Israel, the land, the temple and its sacrifices, etc. But the broad strokes of NT prophecy are clear enough. At Christ's return, He will raise to life those who are His. He will then proceed to bring His kingdom to glorious fruition. When all opposition is finally put down, He will present the perfected kingdom to the Father, and history then will give way to eternity.

Endnotes

1. For others see Mat.7:21, 8:11, 20:21, 26:29; Lk.14:15; 22:30; 23:42; Acts 1:3, 6; 1Cor.6:9-10; 15:24, 50; 2Tim.4:1, 18; 2Pet.1:11.

2. It is interesting to note in passing, here, that in the early centuries the book of Revelation had some difficulty making it in to the officially recognized canon of Scripture. The reason was not doubt over its apostolicity but its teaching of the "Jewish" idea of the kingdom. For many, this doctrine was unacceptable _ and so, then, was the book itself. Curiously today, when the book's place in the canon cannot be questioned, the theological heirs of this view merely deny that the book teaches such a kingdom! We may be forgiven for suspecting that the motivation is not exegetically driven.
3. The same could be said, of course, of many OT prophecies which are more or less parallel to Rev.20 in their presentation of a literal kingdom on earth (e.g., Zech.14:16ff).
4. Henry Alford, *Alford's Greek Testament: An Exegetical and Critical Commentary*. (1857; reprint, Grand Rapids: Guardian Press, 1976), Vol. IV, Part II; pp. 732-733.
5. K. L. Schmidt, *Le Probleme du Christianisme primitif*. Cited in George E. Ladd, *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952), p.150.
6. It is perhaps of hermeneutical significance here that Paul in verse 25b quotes the famous Messianic Psalm 110 (v.1), and in doing so he applies it to a reign of Christ that is subsequent to His second coming and prior to the eternal state.
7. Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on First Corinthians* (1889; reprint, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1979), p.791. Godet's exegesis of this passage is thorough and insightful. See pp.778- 809.
8. Contra John Calvin. *The Acts of the Apostles, 1-13* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), p.29.
9. Note also how it coincides with the same expectation reflected in Mt.20:20-23; Lk.1:74; 22:29-30; etc.
10. This, by the way, fits well with our Lord's prayer in Jn.17:21. Here Jesus prays that the unity of His people will be such that the world will by it be enticed to faith. Now plainly, this is not the case today. Whoever may be at fault for it, the unity of God's people is not so obvious as to impress the world. Now then, expecting as we do that our Lord's prayers will be answered, we must ask when it this will come to pass. Paul's scenario provides the clue. Note this anticipation also in Heb.12:8.
11. This expectation of a selective resurrection is implied elsewhere. See Luk.14:14; 20:35; Jn.6:40; and 1Th.4:16. It must be granted that there are passages which could, by themselves, be taken to imply a general resurrection only (e.g., Jn.5:28-29). But to speak in general terms at one point does not disallow more specificity at another. The more specific/clear must inform the less specific/clear. God's revelation of truth in Scripture is progressive.

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