

The Anomaly of Amillennialism – Chapter 3

The best way to summarize the Amillennial view is that it thinks that the Old Testament promises of a glorious future pertain only to the Church, the deceased saints now in heaven, and to the Eternal state, but not to any sort of earthly paradise.

They contend that the OT kingdom of God did have a localized form (ie. Jerusalem, the Temple, the priests and sacrifices, etc.). It was in a sense an *earthly* kingdom. But the New Covenant's blessed kingdom is not, nor will it be, an earthly and physical kingdom, but a heavenly and invisible one.

(See pages 30-31.)

Here are some distinguishing views of Amillennialism.

1. Amillennial means no millennium. At least no glorious earthly paradise period (a time of godly peace and prosperity as Sandlin puts it). p.25
2. Revelation 20 must refer to something happening while Jesus is ruling and the devil is bound and while believers and non-believers are living together.
3. They contend that Scripture's predictive passages which speak of widespread evil and apostasy, do not allow for a godly peace and glorious period of prosperity on earth before Jesus 2nd Coming. (See page 30.)
4. Amillennialists rightly believe that the New Testament helps us to rightly understand the Old Testament writers – including their use of *figures of speech* and *symbolism*, etc. They do not hyper-literalize the Old Testament texts.

However, there are clearly Old Testament passages which foretell of a future golden age. And both Premillennialist and Postmillennialists agree that such a time exists for the earth and its inhabitants. (Although, they very much disagree on how Jesus brings it to pass.)

Amillennialists, on the other hand, disagree that such a golden age exists for the earth and its inhabitants, at all. They think Jesus fulfills those future golden age promises differently - in the Church, for the deceased saints now in heaven, and at the time of the Eternity.

Let's consider a couple Old Testament passages:

Isaiah 11:1-10

1There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

2And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,

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the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

3And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,

4but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

5Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

6The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.

7The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

9They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

10In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

Here, of course we have mentioned of the “Stump of Jesse”(v1) *judging the poor righteously, and deciding with equity for the meek of the earth (v4)*. It says *he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth (v4)*.

Certainly, an Amillennialist might say this happens at the Second Coming and it is when Jesus executes His justice at the Final Judgment of the wicked and the righteous, that it is Jesus putting things upright. And though he speaks of the poor and the meek and striking the earth, it all has to do with the end of the world and the beginning of the eternal state.

Yet there does seem to be a glorious earth and not just a glorious heaven in this prophecy. It is an earth in which peace is found in nature too: the wolf shall dwell with the lamb; the cow and the bear shall graze; the lion shall eat straw like the ox (v 6-7). Furthermore, the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea (v9). And, the nations shall inquire of the root of Jesse (v10). Are we supposed to understand those promises figuratively?

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How are those prophecies fulfilled according to the Amillennial scheme, if one thinks this glorious and prosperous state of affairs doesn't occur in the earth?

Another, and maybe more difficult passage for the Amillennial position is Isaiah 65. We will focus in on verses twenty thru twenty-five:

20No more shall there be in it (Jerusalem)
an infant who lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not fill out his days,
for the young man shall die a hundred years old,
and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.

21They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

22They shall not build and another inhabit;
they shall not plant and another eat;
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23They shall not labor in vain
or bear children for calamity,
for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD,
and their descendants with them.

24Before they call I will answer;
while they are yet speaking I will hear.

25The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,
and dust shall be the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain," LORD.

Here we find the same peaceful language of the wolf and the lamb, etc. (v25) but we also find people building houses and planting gardens (v21). On top of that, we are told, "No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed." This suggests that people will live hundreds of years old again. And still there will be death.

If the Amillennialist is correct, that these golden age prophecies do not apply to the earth, then where does housebuilding, garden planting, death and curse fit into "the church, those deceased saints now in heaven, and to the Eternal state"? If the prosperity of these verses are only for a spiritual experience and a heavenly age, then how is it that men can still die? And be considered accursed?

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Sandlin condemns Amillennialism's future only understanding of these sorts of passages, saying, "To bring up even the possibility of conflict, poverty, or injustice in eternity is impertinent." p. 32 (This must also be said of death and curse.)

P. Andrew Sandlin disagrees with Amillennialism. He believes Amillennialists make a mistake by re-locating the kingdom of God, from earth to heaven. Sandlin, and Postmillenialists, contend that the Kingdom of God encompasses and engulfs all of heaven and all of earth: it is both spiritual and material. (Again, see pages 30-31.) And therefore, during a very, very, very long millennial reign by Jesus from the right hand of the Heavenly Father, we begin to experience a peace and prosperity (on earth as it is in heaven) just as the prophets' foretold.