

Overview of the Millennium

<https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/car-balk/>

This morning I want to start off on the topic of suffering. We will get to the Millennium in a few minutes. But in the past few weeks I have danced around the topic of suffering. And while I will not present a long drawn out doctrine of suffering, I want to address an aspect of suffering. That is why or for what purpose do we experience suffering.

There are many reasons for suffering in the world. We are in the midst of the Angelic Conflict. The world is imperfect under the curse because of Adam's sin. We are not in perfect environment. Perfect environment doesn't happen until Jesus Christ is reigning during the Millennium.

Suffering happens. The individual reasons why are not the topic here. The topic is can we learn from suffering? If we just sit in a pile of ashes and cry or ask "Why me Lord?", then we may not benefit from suffering. Yes, I said we can benefit from suffering. Several times now I have given you the story of the new believer who asked the pastor how she could grow quickly in the Christian life. His answer was to ask God for lots of suffering.

**James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren,
when you encounter various trials,**

**James 1:3 knowing that the testing of your
faith produces endurance.**

God doesn't allow suffering unless there is a reason, a purpose. Remember the blind man in John chapter 9?

**John 9:1 As He (Jesus) passed by, He saw a
man blind from birth.**

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John 9:2 And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?”

John 9:3 Jesus answered, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

As an aside but tangent to our discussion, archaeologists have recently uncovered the complete Pool of Siloam in Jerusalem where the blind man attained sight.

[<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2023/sep/8/ancient-pool-siloam-where-jesus-healed-blind-man-u/>]

The question becomes, will you respond in grace to suffering. Like Herman has said, will you just trust Him? Or be like Job’s wife:

Job 2:9 Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!”

If we suffer because of sin like David, the lesson is to admit to the sin and go back to faith dependence on the Holy Spirit. That is easy to say, but sometimes difficult to realize, especially if you don’t think you sinned.

There are other reasons, as Job found out, for suffering. He learned about humility toward God. It also gave us that wonderful statement:

Job 19:25 As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives,

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So, not only did Job benefit from his suffering by learning important life lessons, but we also benefit. Other people can benefit from your suffering.

So, when you are in suffering, at some point, you may ask “What happened as a result of this suffering that would not have happened otherwise?”

Take, for instance, something that happened to me recently. I had decided to visit Herman last week. I got in my car and turned the key to start the engine. Click. The engine did not start. It was obvious that my battery was degraded to the point it would not start the car.

I had never changed a car battery before. It was my decision to change the battery. After all, how difficult can it be? Take the old one out and put the new one in, right? It was more difficult than I at first realized. Without going into all the details, I learned how to change the battery without resetting all the electronics in the car. It wasn't just unplug the battery and replace it with a new battery and plug it back in. So, as a result of God's overriding will to not let me visit Herman, I learned how to change a car battery without resetting all the electronics which are more extensive than one might think because everything is now controlled by microprocessors. Knowing now how to change a battery, perhaps some time in the future, I will be able to help someone else change a battery. There was a purpose to my suffering.

Tomorrow is the anniversary of “9/11.” I sometimes listen to the R. B. Thieme Jr. lesson concerning “9/11” again and again. It is sobering to listen to. It is a powerful reminder that “as goes the Christian in the country, so goes the country.” As a Christian, you are either part of the problem or part of the solution. If there are not enough Christians who

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are walking by faith, then our fate could end up being the same as that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

This week, rather than take on additional verses from the book of Zephaniah, this lesson will be an overview of the Millennium. The last section of the book of Zephaniah deals with the Millennium. My understanding is that some or all of us will participate in the Millennium in our resurrection bodies as ministers of Christ's Kingdom. There is a very interesting book titled "The Coming Kingdom" by Andrew M. Woods. Much of the book deals with different interpretations of the Millennium. This lesson will focus on the literal interpretation of Bible passages that describe the Millennium. Andy Woods is a conservative theologian. He is currently the president of Chafer Theological Seminary and pastor of Sugar Land Bible Church in Houston, TX.¹ My impression of him is that he is very erudite and does not stray from the literal interpretation of Bible passages.

Typically, some pastors provide an outline with verses to describe the Millennium without dealing with some of the details. I will follow the general outline of the Millennium provided by Dr. Woods in his book. I will provide texts of various passages as needed. As I read Dr. Woods description of the Millennium, I learned things I didn't know before. Some of these items from the Bible explained some difficulties I encountered previously. Have you read a Bible passage and questioned the so called conservative explanation? Say a passage says David will reign in the Millennium. A typical conservative explanation would say that it really means the son of David or Jesus Christ. Yet, the literal text says only David not the son of David.

As a map of this lesson, here are the topics to be covered based upon Dr. Woods' book.

¹ <https://www.andywoodsministries.org/about-andy-woods>

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1. An Eternal Kingdom
2. Christ's Direct Rule
3. An Earthly Kingdom
4. Land Promises Realized
5. Israel's Prominence
6. Millennial David
7. Righteousness
8. Curse Curtailed
9. Peace
10. Prosperity
11. Topographical Changes

As an introduction to the description of the Millennium, we need to pause and ask ourselves, where does the term “millennium” come from. It is only found in Revelation chapter 20. It is said six times in that chapter. This is just one of the verses that references “a thousand years.”

Revelation 20:4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Revelation chapter 20 is the only place in the Bible in which there is a reference to the period of one thousand years which people call the “Millennium.” It is not found in the Old Testament. This term comes from the Latin word for one thousand. There is a corresponding term

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based upon Greek as well. The predominant term used in the Bible, both Old Testament and New Testament is “the Kingdom.”

According to Robby Dean, the purpose of the Millennium is:

1. To fulfill God’s many promises to Israel
2. To demonstrate that God alone can rule His creation
3. To demonstrate that it is sin and volition, not environment, that is the cause of failure²

I. An Eternal Kingdom

There are passages in the Old Testament that indicate the kingdom will be an eternal kingdom, not just for one thousand years. Take for instance Daniel 2:

Daniel 2:44 In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

Daniel 7:27 Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.’³

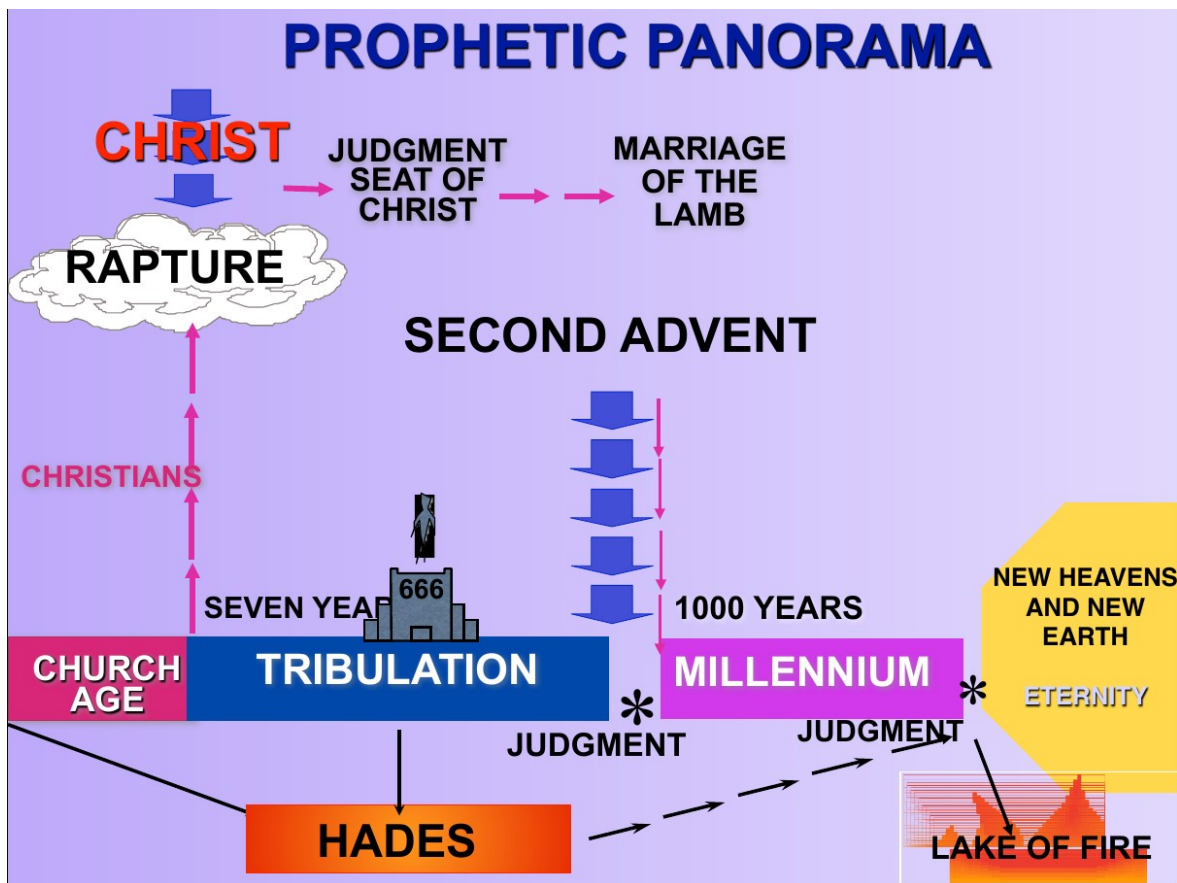
² <https://deanbible.org/dbmfiles/slides/2014-GPAges-033b.pdf>

³ Unless otherwise noted, all Bible verses are given from the NASB 1995 from BibleGateway.com

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As Dr. Woods points out, if the kingdom and the Millennium are the same how can they last forever? Millennium means 1,000, not forever. He quotes Mark Hitchcock's solution:

“Christ will rule over His kingdom on this present earth for one thousand years, *and* He will reign forever. The future kingdom of God has two parts or phases. Phase one is the millennial reign of Christ on this earth (Revelation 20:1-6), and phase two is the eternal state (Rev. 22:5). As I once heard it described, the Millennium is the front porch of eternity.⁴”



Robby Dean's illustration of the Prophetic Panorama⁵

So, as described, the Millennium is part of the eternal kingdom, not the whole kingdom, just the first part. It is the part prior to the Great White Throne Judgment. That was something new for me. But, it helped explain

⁴ Mark Hitchcock, 101:Answers to the Most Asked Questions About the End Times (Sisters: OR: Multnomah, 20010, 212

⁵ <https://deanbible.org/dbmfiles/slides/2014-GPAGES-032b.pdf>

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some of the “forever” statements I encountered in the Bible. Here is a chart from Dr. Woods website that identifies difference between the Millennium and the Eternal State:

Millennium & Eternal State Differences	
Millennium (Rev. 20:1-10)	Eternal State (Rev. 21-22)
Present earth (Gen. 13:17)	New Earth (Rev. 21:1)
Waters (Gen. 15:18-21)	No sea (Rev. 21:1)
Rebellion (Zech. 14:16-18)	No rebellion (Rev. 21:4)
Tribal land (Ezek. 47:13-23)	Tribal city gates (Rev. 21:12)
Sin exists (Ezek 45:22)	No sin (Rev. 21:4)
Temple (Ezek. 40-46)	No temple (Rev. 21:22)
Rod of iron (Ps. 2:6-8)	No rod needed (Rev. 21:8)
Death (Isa. 65:20)	No death (Rev. 21:4)
Sun exists (Isa. 30:26)	No sun (Rev. 21:23; 22:5)

Millennium versus Eternal State⁶

II. Christ’s Direct Rule

This fact is understood and accepted by many types of theologians, that Christ will reign in His Kingdom. Dr. Woods says, “God the Father will rule over the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, who, in turn, will govern the earth on God the Father’s behalf (Ps 2:6-9; Dan 7:13-14).⁷”

Dr. Woods provides two sets of verses. I will supply another from the book of Zephaniah.

⁶ <https://deanbible.org/dbmfiles/slides/2014-GPAGES-033b.pdf>

⁷ Andrew M. Woods, *The Coming Kingdom* (Duluth, Minnesota: Grace Gospel Press) 2016, p38

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Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Zechariah 9:10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.

Micah 5:2 “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.”

Micah 5:4 And He will arise and shepherd His flock In the strength of the Lord, In the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. And they will remain, Because at that time He will be great To the ends of the earth.

Zephaniah 3:14 Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

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Zephaniah 3:15 The Lord has taken away His judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; You will fear disaster no more.

Zephaniah 3:16 In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: “Do not be afraid, O Zion; Do not let your hands fall limp.

Zephaniah 3:17 “The Lord your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.

III. An Earthly Kingdom

“This coming Kingdom Age will be earthly in nature. After Christ returns and sets His feet upon the earth in general (Job 19:25) and the Mount of Olives in particular (Zech. 14:4), then He will reign over the whole earth. Zechariah 14:9 says, "And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one." Zechariah's prophecies should not be construed as finding their fulfillment in the Eternal State (Rev. 21-22), since they also portray a human unwillingness to submit to the Messiah's authority (Zech. 14:16-18). Such premature human rebellion will be a thing of the past in the Eternal State (Rev. 21:4).”

Zechariah 14:4 In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the

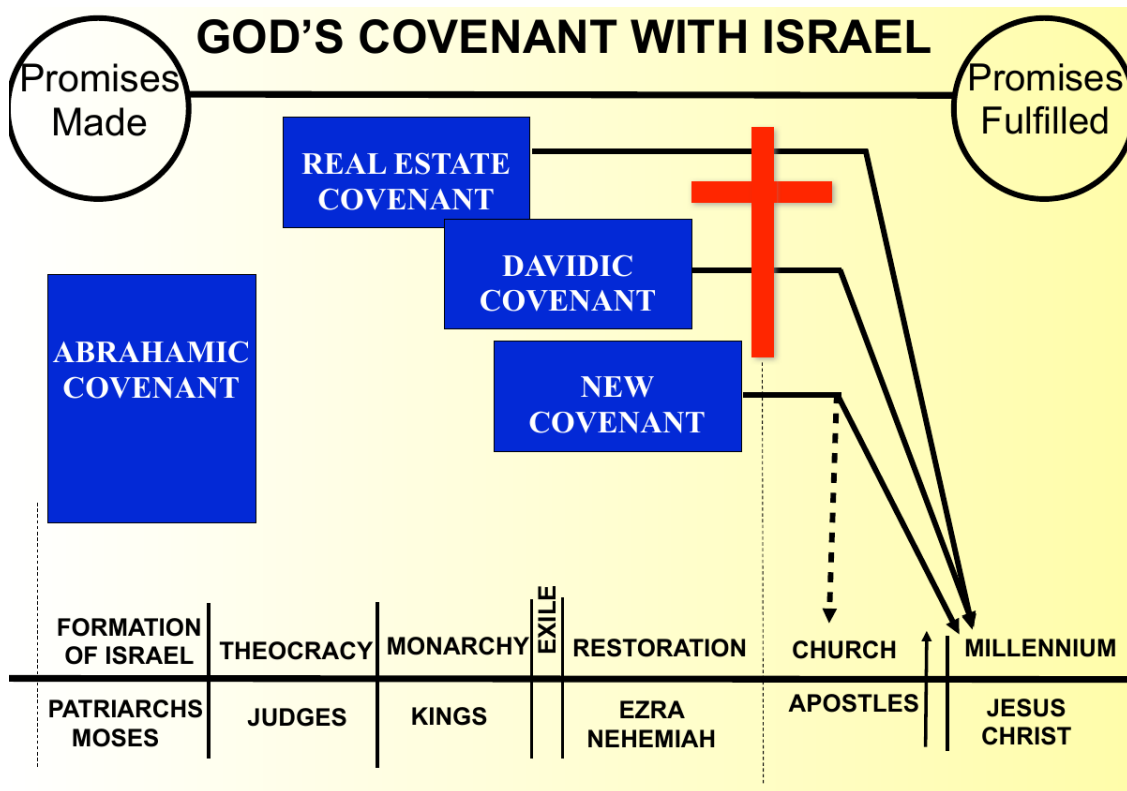
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mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

Zechariah 14:9 And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one.

IV. Land Promises Realized

There are existing covenants between God and Abraham and Isaac, Jacob and David that are yet to be fulfilled.



God's Covenants with Israel⁸

“Israel's foundational covenant is known as the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21). Here, God took the existing Abrahamic promises found in Genesis 12–13 and ratified them into the form of an official ancient Near Eastern covenant. In fact, in Genesis

⁸ <https://deanbible.org/dbmfiles/slides/2014-GPAges-033b.pdf>

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15:18, the Hebrew word berith translated "covenant" is used for the very first time in God's dealing with Abram and his descendants. God's covenantal obligations involve a specific group of people, namely Abram's physical descendants (Gen. 15:4-5). Here, God unconditionally promises three elements to Israel: land extending from modern day Egypt to Iraq (Gen. 15:18-21), seed or innumerable descendants (Gen. 15:4-5; 22:17), and blessing (Gen. 15:1).⁹

One of those is the so called "Real Estate Covenant" or "Land Covenant."

Deuteronomy 30:1 "So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the Lord your God has banished you,

Deuteronomy 30:2 and you return to the Lord your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons,

Deuteronomy 30:3 then the Lord your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you.

Deuteronomy 30:4 If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the Lord your

⁹ https://www.pre-trib.org/pretribfiles/pdfs/Woods-TheDoctrineOfTheMillenniumInThe_OldTestament.pdf There are other versions in various places on the internet.

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God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back.

Deuteronomy 30:5 The Lord your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

Ezekiel 37:21 Say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land;

Ezekiel 37:22 and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms.

V. Israel’s Prominence

Today, there is increasing anti-semitism. Jews are attacked throughout the world. As a result, many Jews who had tried to assimilate into local cultures are deciding to return to their homeland, Israel. In the future, in the Millennium, the Jews will be looked up to as a great people. There are several passages in which this is stated. I want to include more than one since this is not well-known or at least not emphasized in prophetic teachings.

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Isaiah 49:22 Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations And set up My standard to the peoples; And they will bring your sons in their bosom, And your daughters will be carried on their shoulders.

Isaiah 49:23 “Kings will be your guardians, And their princesses your nurses. They will bow down to you with their faces to the earth And lick the dust of your feet; And you will know that I am the Lord; Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame.

Zechariah 9: 23 Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”’

Zephaniah 3:20 “At that time I will bring you in, Even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I restore your fortunes before your eyes,” Says the Lord.

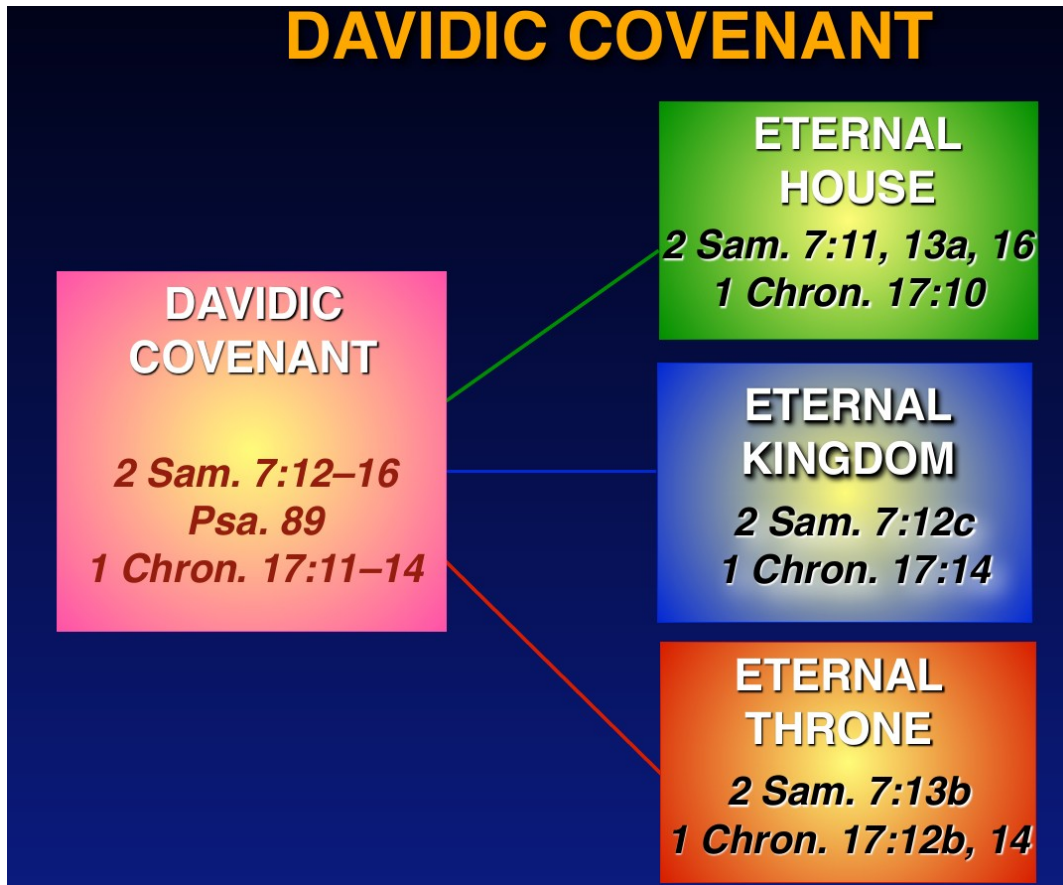
VI. Millennial David

Walvoord said:

“The covenant with David is not only given twice in its major content—namely, II Samuel 7 and I Chronicles 17—but it is also confirmed in

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Psalm 89. In this and other Old Testament references there is no allusion anywhere to the idea that these promises are to be understood in a spiritualized sense as referring to the church or to a reign of God in heaven. Rather, it is linked to the earth and to the seed of Israel, and to the land...There is no indication that this kingdom extended to a spiritual entity such as the church nor that the throne in view is the throne of God in heaven rather than the throne of David on earth...Such a situation does not prevail in this present age and is not related here or elsewhere to the reign of Christ from the throne of His Father in heaven.¹⁰



Paragraphs of the Davidic Covenant¹¹

Will the promises to David be fulfilled by Jesus Christ or will some of them be fulfilled by David himself. Listen to Dr. Woods on this topic:

¹⁰ John Walvoord, *Israel in Prophecy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962., 84-85, 87.

¹¹ <https://deanbible.org/dbmfiles/slides/2014-GPAges-033b.pdf>

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“It is common for interpreters to understand the reference to the resurrected millennial David (Hos. 3:5; Ezek. 34:23; 37:24; Isa. 55:3-4) as referring to David’s greater son Jesus Christ (Luke 1:32, 69; Acts 2:29-30; 13:22-23, 34). However, such an interpretation cannot be supported from Jeremiah 30:9 and constitutes an impermissible reading of the New Testament back into the Old. If Jeremiah wanted David to be understood in a symbolic sense, he would have said so. Fuchtenbaum explains:”

“[N]othing in the text indicates that *David* is to be taken symbolically. If the prophets wanted to refer to the messiah in connection with David, they used terms such as “Root of Jesse,” “Branch of David,” “Son of David,” or “Seed of David.” None of these expressions are used here. The text simply states, *David*. In keeping with literal interpretation, it is best to take the text as it reads, meaning the literal David, who, in his resurrected form, will function as the king over Israel and as a prince in subjection to the King of the world.¹²”

Dr. Wood goes on for another page on this topic quoting from Dr. Walvoord.

VII. Righteousness

With the rule of Jesus Christ instead of Satan and the cosmos diabolicus, righteousness will prevail. Isaiah 2:4; 11:3-5; 16:5; 32:1; 42-3-4; Zech 14:17).

Isaiah 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

¹² Andrew M. Woods, *The Coming Kingdom* (Duluth, Minnesota: Grace Gospel Press) 2016, pages 42-43

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Isaiah 9:7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

He provides four categories within the “righteousness” of the Millennium.

A. Universal Knowledge of God

Isaiah 11:9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.

In the midst of the text of the “New Covenant” there is the declaration that “they will all know me.”

Jeremiah 31:33 “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Jeremiah 31:34 They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of

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them,” declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

B. Resurrection of the Old Testament Righteous Saints (Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2-3)

Isaiah 26:19 Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.

Daniel 12:2 Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

Daniel 12:3 Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

C. Believing Remnant will initially populate the Millennium (Ezekiel 20:34-38; Zechariah 13:8-9)

Ezekiel 20:34 I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out;

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Ezekiel 20:35 and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face.

Ezekiel 20:36 As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you,” declares the Lord God.

Ezekiel 20:37 “I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant;

Ezekiel 20:38 and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the Lord.

Zechariah 13:8 “It will come about in all the land,” Declares the Lord, “That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; But the third will be left in it.

Zechariah 13:9 “And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are My people,’ And they will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’”

D. Sin Nature Kept in Check

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Psalm 2:6 “But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain.”

Psalm 2:7 “I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

Psalm 2:8 ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.

Psalm 2:9 ‘You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.’”

VIII. Curse Curtailed

Lifespans will be similar to the pre-flood days.

Isaiah 65:20 “No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Will be thought accursed.

IX. Peace

Isaiah 2:4 And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning

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hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.

This is in contrast to passages in the Old Testament that told Israel they must learn war:

In the book of Judges, Israel was to learn about war in order to defend the nation. At that time they did a poor job of doing that.

Judges 3:1 Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to test Israel by them (that is, all who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan;

Judges 3:2 only in order that the generations of the sons of Israel might be taught war, those who had not experienced it formerly).

During the Tribulation, war will be everywhere.

**Joel 3:10 Beat your plowshares into swords
And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, "I am a mighty man."**

But, in the Millennium, Jesus Christ will keep the peace. Disarmament will be OK then. But that is then and not now.

X. Prosperity

Amos 9:13 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "When the plowman will overtake the reaper And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; When the mountains will

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drip sweet wine And all the hills will be dissolved.

Amos 9:14 “Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them; They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, And make gardens and eat their fruit.

XI. Topographical Changes

Isaiah 30:23 Then He will give you rain for the seed which you will sow in the ground, and bread from the yield of the ground, and it will be rich and plenteous; on that day your livestock will graze in a roomy pasture.

Isaiah 35:6 Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah.

Isaiah 35:7 The scorched land will become a pool And the thirsty ground springs of water; In the haunt of jackals, its resting place, Grass becomes reeds and rushes.

It is surprising how many descriptions of the future kingdom there are in the Old Testament. These descriptions are of things that are not true today so must be future. And these are not just one sentence descriptions. In some cases a whole chapter is devoted to the blessings for the Jews in the kingdom.

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In order to arrive in the Kingdom, it is necessary for the human race to suffer in order to learn that all true blessings come from God. Amen.