



Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative

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The second coming of Christ is a matter of sharp disagreement amongst Christians. Many hold to premillennialism: that Christ's return will be followed by 1,000 years before the final judgement, a belief popularised in the popular Left Behind novels. However, premillennialism is not the only option for Christians. In this important new book, Sam Storms provides a biblical rationale for amillennialism; the belief that 1,000 years mentioned in the book of Revelation is symbolic with the emphasis being the King and his Kingdom.

Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative Details

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From Reader Review Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative for online ebook

Pascal Denault says

Just excellent!

Mathew says

I have a smeared history with eschatology. I grew up in dispensational churches and honestly the topic of ends times never gave me much hope. I never had a longing for the end. I lived in fear and doubt. I was afraid of being left behind (ironically, that turn of phrase has made some authors a lot of money). After studying Scripture and finding myself reformed I knew I wasn't dispensational anymore but I was so turned off the topic of eschatology it was until recently, I gave any attention to read anything excluding Scripture on the topic. It didn't interest me because I had a bad taste in my mouth.

Sam Storms's Kingdom Come provides hope, longing, and points to Jesus Christ as the hero of all the story (pp. 6-30 are superb). That's what I took away most of all. The end times--all about Jesus. The OT promises--all about Jesus. Sam says,

Amillennialism best accounts for the many texts in which Israel's Old Testament prophetic hope is portrayed as being fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ and the believing remnant, his body, the Church We found amillennialism to be a superior scheme for understanding redemptive history. (p. 549, 550)

That's what sold me. Amillennialism isn't without its difficulties (all eschatological positions have them) but as I've read it fits more squarely with my understanding of the unfolding gospel story found from Genesis to Revelation. It makes Jesus Christ the central emphasis of that story (p. 39). It emphasizes his unique reign and rule. It doesn't minimize the significance of our adoption in Christ--which creates one family in God who receive one blessing, Christ himself. Sam says,

In sum, Jesus is himself the inspired interpreter of the Old Testament, His identity, life, and mission provide the framework within which we are to read and approach the Old Testament (p. 30).

A significant question which Sam brings up at the beginning of Kingdom Come and again at the end (p. 551) is "What does Scripture say happens after the second coming of Christ?" He systematically examines what all of Scripture says about the second coming of Christ and lays that at the table where the beast, false, prophet, death, the tribulation all eat. He rightly interprets Scripture by Scripture.

Significant for me and for many others, Sam Storms contrasts amillennialism with the other eschatological positions especially with dispensationalism. Significantly because dispensational is the most popular end time scheme among Christians today. As you would expect, Kingdom Come includes quite a bit of exegesis. Sam isn't afraid to admit when there's other possibilities or when he's unsure of the position he present. He exudes a humility in tackling these issues but he does tackle them nonetheless.

If you're serious about understanding all of Scripture, I would heartily recommend Kingdom Come. For a 600 page book, it's immensely readable and approachable. For that length the best I've read. Even if you don't intend to read all of it at once, you can read most chapters alone, although they certainly work together better as a whole.

Matthew says

I have thoroughly enjoyed some of Sam Storms other books, and this was no different. He presents a biblically-focused case for the amillennial eschatological position, showing why it is a very plausible alternative to premillennialism. Although not convinced, I appreciated his commitment to faithfulness to Scripture and his tone throughout most of the book.

I can do no better than Tom Schreiner's comment on this book: "Even those who remain unconvinced will need to reckon with the powerful case made for an amillennial reading."

William Dicks says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book by Sam Storms. To read a non-review read this.

Josh Davis says

Thorough. That is the word that first comes to mind when I think of this book. Storms has provided a wealth of information on the Bible's portrayal of the end times. He does a fantastic job of engaging all of the evidence and viewpoints. The book covers every significant Bible passage (and some less significant ones) that addresses the end times, including Old Testament prophecies from Daniel, Jesus' Olivet Discourse, Paul's writings on the salvation of Israel and the man of lawlessness, John's mention of the spirit of the Antichrist, and of course the book of Revelation. The author also engages with pre-millennial, post-millennial and amillennial views.

As the title states, a thread that carries through the entire book is Storms' defense of an amillennialist interpretation of Scripture. I happen to agree with his viewpoint, but am certain that even those who don't would find this book a worthwhile read. Storms doesn't dismiss other interpretations lightly; he presents the cases (in each scripture passage) from each viewpoint, addressing the pros and cons, and at some points even admitting his own uncertainty or unwillingness to "pick a side."

If you are studying what the Scriptures have to say about the end times; if you're looking for a resource for understanding the differences between post, pre and amillennialism; if you're studying a passage like Matthew 24, Daniel 7 or the book of Revelation, this book will be an invaluable resource for you. I know that it will have a prominent place on my shelf so that I can consult it again. Even if one doesn't agree with the book's every conclusion (and even I found places I could nitpick), the high quality of scholarship that went into it is well worth your time.

Josh Pannell says

First, I attribute Storm's repetition to his recapitulation view of the tribulation. Because of this I am able to turn a blind eye to his consistent use of the exact same sentence up to three times on a single page and his

constant "as I said earlier" comments to call the reader to remembrance of a statement made just a few pages prior.

Second, his chapter on dispensationalism is a terrible straw man. Storms simply proves Left Behind dispensationalism to have many problems, he addresses progressive dispensationalism for a half of a page. If he is going to attack a system he needs to attack the best version of it.

Third, this book mostly addresses why Amillennialism is true in contrast to premillennialism. He spends one chapter addressing postmillennialism. This is consistent with his upbringing in dispensationalism and apparent continuing bitterness against it as expressed in the introduction.

Fourth, many of the arguments are out of emotion and what seems like frustration because of his upbringing in dispensationalism.

With all of this being said, Storm's book is still really incredible!

His explanation of Christ as the fulfillment of the Law is awesome! His work in Daniel, Matthew 24, Romans 11, and Revelation is extensive. I wish he had dealt more with Ezekiel 40-48.

Any person who wants to study eschatology needs to at least read his final chapter.

His last chapter reviews his book with 30 reasons he is amillennial. I will list just a few of them here.

3. Amillennialism best accounts for the presence of typology in Scripture, according to which Old Testament persons and events and institutions find a deeper and intensified expression and consummation in the antitype.

8. Amillennialism alone is consistent with the New Testament teaching that the natural creation will be delivered from the curse and experience its "redemption" in conjunction with the "redemption" of our bodies, at the time of the second coming of Christ (Rom 8:18-23)

9. Amillennialism is more consistent with the New Testament teaching (2 Peter 3:8-13) that the new heavens and new earth will be inaugurated at the time of Christ's second coming, not 1,000 years thereafter.

10. It does not hold that unbelievers will still have the opportunity to come to saving faith in Christ for at least 1,000 years subsequent to his return.

11. The resurrection of unbelievers will happen at the second coming of Christ and not after 1,000 years. John 5:28-29

13. Amillennialism alone can account for Paul's declaration that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Corinthians 15:50-57

14. What happens to believers who die in a literal millionaire kingdom? Are they somehow not to be present with The Lord who is on earth? Or do they continue to live normal lives in a glorified body.

17. Amillennialism makes the best sense of Hebrews 11:110 where it is said that they looked forward to "the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God."

21. Amillennialism alone accounts for why Satan must be bound in the first place.

30. It is most consistent with the analogy of faith.

Jeremy Martinez says

It is a very well written book and worth the read. He is very clear and gracious towards other systems of eschatology. This book very clearly defines and refutes dispensational premillennialism and historical premillennialism. He makes a very compelling case for amillennialism, and for a while that is what I considered myself. After working through this book, I would say that I am, now, actually convinced of postmillennialism. With that said, he does interact with postmil., but it is not his primary focus. It seems as if he still had questions about this topic. Perhaps he should write a book on that specific topic. The bibliography is extensive and will be useful for further reading. Also, the cover design looks really cool.

Calvin says

I reserve 5 stars for a book I've enjoyed as much any other book I've read. That said, I did think I might give this one the top rating, and if it was for the number of 'light bulb' moments, it would win prizes. This is a great read and one that will be revisited again in the future. I have yet to meet someone who has their eschatology completely watertight from all challenges, and after reading this book I don't either. I am however more convinced that amillennialism best makes sense of the text.

Craig Hurst says

One of the topics I have always enjoyed is systematic theology but for many years I avoided eschatology (end times). I avoided it because I was confused. I didn't, like many other Christians, think eschatology did not matter, I was just scared of it. In seminary I realized I had turned my attention to the subject and began to study it seriously. It is wrongheaded for a Christian to think that eschatology does not matter and just claim the mantra, "In the end Christ comes back and wins and that's all that matters!" This was not the view of the writers of Scripture or Jesus and it should not be the view of any Christian who takes the Bible seriously. If we want to understand God, Christ, Scripture and our "so great salvation" more, we need to devote ourselves to the understanding of eschatology. The Bible is pointing not only to someone (Christ) but also somewhere – the future coming kingdom of Christ.

There are a lot of books defending the various end times positions. Most people hold to the eschatological view point they were taught by their parents, teachers or church when they were younger. Systems of belief are hard to change and when it comes to Christian theology, eschatology is among the hardest. But it does happen and it happened to well regarded pastor and author Sam Storms. In 1977 Storms graduated with his Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary which has been the flagship seminary for Premillennial Dispensational theology for decades. He was taught by some of the greatest Dispensational theologians such as Walvoord, Ryrie and Pentecost.

After graduation, having become enamored with all things eschatology, Storms read the highly influential book *The Presence of the Future* by George Eldon Ladd. For Storms, like many others before and after him

who have read Ladd's work, this book became the catalyst to setting him on a journey from Premillennial Dispensationalism to Amillennialism. After years of reading, writing and teaching on the subject, Storms has written his own contribution to the eschatological discussion in *Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative* which was published last year with Mentor.

This is not a complete critical review of the book as it is not warranted given Storms is not necessarily presenting a different case for amillennialism though he does present the case differently. Though Storms work will stand along side others who champion his view such as Anthony Hoekema's *The Bible and the Future* or more recently Kim Riddlebarger's *A Case for Amillennialism*, what sets Storms book apart from these and others is that he makes his case for Amillennialism along with presenting the Dispensational view and what he believes to be its weaknesses and failings. While others try to do this in their books to some extent, most of them do so from the outside looking into Dispensationalism and none to the extent of Storms. This does not mean they cannot do it sufficiently. However, Storms has the advantage of having been taught by some of Dispensationalism's best. He can do so as someone who once was but now is not. Simply dismissing Storms' change under the rubric of "he must have never really understood Dispensationalism or else he would not have changed," will not do. It is simplistically dismissive and naive. Rather, contrary to the opinion of some, Storms unique contribution needs to be heard and taken seriously, even for die in the wool Dispensationalist's who will not change.

Of particular interest to Dispensationalist's will be chapter two *Defining Dispensationalism* and chapter five *Problems with Dispensationalism* in which Storms offers some devastating critiques of Dispensationalism which reveal weaknesses, that, some of which, cannot be overcome. For instance, regarding Dispensationalism's interpretation of Ezekiel's vision of the rebuilt temple, Storms says, "It would be an egregious expression of the worst imaginable redemptive regression to suggest that God would ever sanction the rebuilding of the temple." (21, emphasis author) Though admittedly a strongly worded statement, I was jarred when I read it and paused for awhile to mull it over. Or, in response to the Dispensational view that there are two people's of God Storms states that

"Not one single ethnic Jew who believes in Jesus Christ as the Messiah has been 'replaced' or lost his/her inheritance in the blessings of the covenant. Rather, every single ethnic Gentile who believes in Jesus Christ as the Messiah has been 'included' in the commonwealth of Israel and grafted into the one olive tree. Thus, the true Israel, the true 'seed' of Abraham, which is to say, any and all who are 'in Christ' by faith, regardless of ethnicity, will together inherit the blessings of the covenant." (207)

I myself was brought up under the same teaching as Storms regarding eschatology. On the highway of eschatological views I have exited onto Historic Premillennialism and I am not sure when, if ever, I will get off and move on. As such I am in agreement with a number of Storms interpretations, hermeneutical principles and Dispensational critiques, such as his understanding of Daniel 9, the relationship between Jesus and the OT prophecies, much of his understanding of the seal, trumpet and bowl judgments and the relationship between Israel and the Church. On the other hand, amidst several points of disagreement I have with Amillennialism the greatest that remains is its interpretation of Revelation 20 and the 1,000 years and its attending events. Storms wants to read the 1,000 years in light of the rest of preceding Scriptural understanding of eschatology instead of the other way around. He also points out the symbolic nature of numbers in the rest of Revelation as support for why the 1,000 years does not have to be taken "literalistically". I am sympathetic to his concerns but I still cannot shake myself of a future millennial kingdom preceding eternity, rather than one that is coexistent with present history.

All in all, *Kingdom Come* is a worthy read for anyone interested in eschatology and I suspect it will be a go-to-book in defense of Amillennialism and in response to Premillennial Dispensationalism. The writing is

clear and well organized. Storms critiques can come across strong and passionate at times but his tone should not distract one from the force of the arguments he advances. Eschatology can be daunting and confusing but Storms has brought some more clarity that will surely help many to come. This is a good book for those interested in eschatology in general and for those who want a contemporary defense of Amillennialism. This is as much a book for Dispensationalist's who are looking to refine their position in the face of critique and for those who have doubts about their position and are looking for someone who can better articulate what they are thinking.

NOTE: I received this book for free from Christian Focus Publications in exchange for a review. I was under no obligation to provide a favorable review and the thoughts and words expressed are my own.

C.J. Moore says

I have a feeling that for quite some time this will become the standard book for Amillennialism. Not only does Storms cover it well and in detail, but he also spends a great deal of time on premillennialism, his former belief, and why he made the move. If you're trying to understand the position better (for whatever reason), this book is a great start!

Bill says

Very readable for a book largely made up of exegetical argument, generous in tone, thorough, convincing.

Etienne OMNES says

Je confirme qu'il s'agit bien du livre vers lequel se tourner pour quiconque veut savoir ce qu'est l'amillénarisme, et surtout ses fondations bibliques. Au delà de ça, Sam Storms m'a aidé à enfin comprendre le livre de l'apocalypse, et enfin je vois ce livre non comme un oracle effrayant, mais comme un encouragement vivace, et je prends plaisir à le lire à nouveau. Rien que pour cela, il vaut la peine d'être lu.

Ce livre aborde méthodiquement l'ensemble des prophéties eschatologiques, de Daniel à Apocalypse 21, et développe une exégèse rigoureuse sans pour autant cesser d'être un livre de théologie systématique (une alliance qui manque parfois). Il aborde aussi des sujets comme le statut d'Israël, la conversion finale des juifs, le postmillénarisme et les nouveaux cieux et la nouvelle terre. Un livre éclairant comme très peu.

Seul hic, mais c'est en partie dû au sujet et à la profondeur de réflexion: il n'est pas particulièrement facile à lire, et si vous n'avez pas une bible ouverte à côté de vous, vous risquez de perdre très vite le fil. ("Or, on le voit au verset 24b".... quel 24b?) Cependant, l'effort vaut le coup.

LaRosa Jr. says

After reading Kim Riddlebarger's book A Case of Amillennialism, I learned of Sam Storms' book Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative, which dealt with the same subject. The majority of the reviews I had

read were positive, and since I was still in the midst of learning more about amillennial eschatology, I decided to put this book on my must read list. I picked up the book from my church's bookstore and let it sit on my shelf for a few months. I finally decided to pick it up this month and give it a read.

At over 560 pages and over eighteen total chapters, this was no light read by any stretch of the imagination. I'll admit that it took me some time to get into the book. Having a fairly firm grasp on hermeneutics and dispensationalism (as a former dispensationalist, like Storms), I ended up glossing over the initial chapters since they only served as review for material that I was already quite familiar with. Once I got past that initial hurdle, my reading became much more engaged as I tried to think critically through Storms' exegesis of several key passages of Scripture that concern eschatology. Albeit good information, I didn't want to bog myself down with information that wasn't new to me.

As you would expect in a book that speaks on to the end times, Storms covers all of the key passages including: Daniel 9, Matthew 24, and Revelation 20. In terms of analyzing the arguments that Storms presents for each of the passages, overall I have mixed reviews. I was left unconvinced by his treatment of Daniel 9. While thorough, I don't quite agree with his understanding of Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy. That aside, his treatment there is quite good. If there is any exegesis given where Storms changed my mind, it would have to be Matthew 24. I thought his treatment of that passage (over the course of two chapters) was extremely coherent and has me rethinking Jesus' words in this passage. I now tend to believe, like Storms, that this is a prophecy that has already been fulfilled and is not still future. As for Revelation 20, it's practically what I thought it would be, and one where I admittedly need to spend more time studying. Yet, Storms didn't leave it at just those familiar passages, as he also brought in other passages to build his case for amillennialism: Romans 11, Revelation 13 and 17, as well as 2 Thessalonians 2.

While the book as a whole is worth the purchase price, it is not without its problems. One of the most glaring issues I had with *Kingdom Come* is that Storms likes to unnecessarily repeat himself. He does this constantly by restating his argument or understanding of another author, as if we, the reader, didn't quite get it the first time he stated it. While it's beneficial to do that on occasion, Storms makes it to be more of a distraction.

Another issue is the fact that in Storms' discussion of some passages/topics, he makes it clear that he is still not totally convinced in his own mind of a particular view. This is clearest in his chapter on 2 Thessalonians 2 and the Antichrist; it is here that he basically says at the end of the chapter that he's still not quite sure what exactly Paul means by this passage of it's already fulfilled or yet future. While I appreciate Storms' honesty in not being dogmatic in something he's unsure about, for someone looking to him to understand amillennialism, his indecisiveness leaves you feeling as if you're walking alongside him as he tries to figure this out, instead of speaking as an authority on the subject.

At the end of the day, I'm not sure what I think about *Kingdom Come*. I'm not sure that I walk away any more confident in amillennialism than I was before I started reading the book. I don't know if my expectations for the book were too high or if my gut reaction is correct. Yes, I did glean some new insights on passages (like Matthew 24), but on others I'm left scratching my head more than before I started. Granted, eschatology is a difficult subject for any Bible teacher, so in that respect Sam Storms did a fair job. I am grateful for his detailed insights on the texts he does have a firm grasp on and his evenhanded criticism of premillennialism, and I can respect that he's not willing to speak dogmatically on texts that he is still unsure of himself. As a whole, this is a book worth having in my library and one that I may find myself turning to again at some point in the future. That said, I probably wouldn't recommend this book as the definitive source for understanding amillennialism, but it's one worth having in the discussion.

Nathan Brewer says

Wow. So much to be said.

First off, there are only a few books that handle their given topics as thoroughly as Kingdom Come handles its given topic- the Amillennial Approach to the end times. It handles well its subject as well as the subject of the competing perspectives.

I am grateful that Sam Storms serves as my pastor in this season, and this next point is something that not only paints the pages of his book but radiates from the pulpit from which he preaches. He consistently admits to the frailty of mere human interpretation and continually calls the listener to be a student and learner.

This is truly a remarkable work and one that will bear the standard in the conversation on the end times.

Cliff Kvidahl says

Recently, the kind folks at Christian Focus Publications sent over a review copy of Sam Storms new book on amillennialism, Kingdom Come. While mainstream evangelical eschatology would likely be some form of premillennialism—be it dispensational, progressive dispensational, or possibly classical/historical premillennialism—Sam stands relatively alone among popular pastors/preachers with his belief in amillennialism. I remember watching a panel discussion hosted by John Piper, which included three men discussing various eschatological views. This was my first encounter with Sam, and I remember thinking that he did a good job explaining his views.

In any case, when I heard that Sam was publishing a book on amillennialism I was eager to get my hands on it. As one who holds to amillennialism, I was eager to see how this book would be received within the larger evangelical community. While it is far too early to gauge the influence of this book, I nevertheless wanted to offer some early observations on what I have read thus far.

The Audience

What I appreciate most about this work is that it is written for the laity. While terms like amillennialism and premillennialism may seem foreign or strange to some believers, Sam has done an excellent job at making these words and other relevant terms accessible for the reader. Eschatology is not an easy field of theology to jump right into, and Sam has taken great care to make sure that the reader does not get lost.

The Critics

I would guess that most evangelicals in America are dispensational in their eschatology. Therefore, most of the readers who read this work would identify with the majority. Nevertheless, Sam is gracious towards dispensationalism, always trying to explain their viewpoints clearly and honestly. While I am sure that some would disagree with his critique of dispensationalism, Sam does come across as one who tries to fairly represent his opponents.

Some Observations

While there is much to commend, I still have a few areas I want to highlight. First, I noticed that some of the sources that he cites as support for his case are relatively old and somewhat dated. This is not necessarily a bad thing, I just was hoping for more engagement with modern works on the subject. Second, I did notice that on one occasion he makes an assertion but does not reference relevant data to support his claim:

My point is that “seventy years” is an approximate designation of length, such as we find in Jer 27.7 and Eze 4.6-8. In Mesopotamian culture, seventy years refers primarily to a certain period of desolation followed by the visitation of God.

Kingdom Come, 86 (emphasis mine).

I am not saying that Sam is incorrect in his claim regarding Mesopotamian culture—I would just like to see where his evidence for such a claim is based is all. Third, I found some parts to be a bit repetitious. For example, chapter four—Daniel’s Contribution to Biblical Eschatology—dragged on a bit too long and could have ended much earlier. Maybe because I am already convinced by most of his arguments that I felt this chapter repeated some of the main arguments, which in that case I may be too harsh with this criticism.

In the end, I commend Sam for writing a book that offers another perspective (the right perspective!) on eschatology and the end times. When it comes to eschatology, I have found that instead of reading the works of those who hold another views, most people read a critique instead. Therefore, it is my hope that people who are interested in what amillennialism is will pick up Sam’s book and find out firsthand what amillennialism is from one who is himself an amillennialist.
