

# QUANTOCK MINISTRIES

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*A Bible teaching and preaching ministry  
for the Christian community*

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## SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

Many people feel confused by the different schools of thought when it comes to the Lord's Return. I hold to the premillennial position because it is the original understanding of the apostles, fits in far better than any other position with the whole of literal scriptural revelation, and brings far more glory to God, especially in His redemptive purposes. This short study is offered in the hope it sheds some light on the differing views held by evangelical Christians. While I have tried to describe the most common features of each school, there are many variations within each and this generalisation is inevitable.

### A. Premillennial

This view teaches that the golden age, or Millennium, is a literal period of one thousand years, which will follow the Lord's Return. Jesus will establish his worldwide reign from Jerusalem, occupying David's throne and fulfilling Jewish messianic expectations. The Church Age (which began at Pentecost) comes to an end amid a catastrophic deterioration in world affairs socially, politically, economically and environmentally. There will be clear signs of the approaching end, principally involving Israel and the return of the Jews to their ancient homeland. The seven years before the Lord's Return are known as the Tribulation period with the final three and a half years being known as the Great Tribulation. The whole Tribulation period marks the time of judgement at the end of the Church age. During the Tribulation a political leader referred to in Scripture as the Antichrist will dominate the world's affairs. Premillennialists differ as to the timing of the Rapture, the moment when all Christians are suddenly raised to life, changed into immortality and rise up to be with the Lord in the air. Some, including me, believe it will happen prior to the Tribulation (Pre-tribulationists). Some believe it will happen at the midpoint, before the Great Tribulation (Mid-tribulationists). Some believe it will happen at the same time as the Lord's physical return to reign (Post-tribulationists). Whatever view Premillennialists take as to the timing of the Rapture, they clearly distinguish between the Rapture - the Lord's Coming for His Bride (the true Church) - and His Second Advent with His Bride, when He returns to the earth "with power and great glory" to reign on David's throne - Isaiah 9 v 6 - 7, Zechariah 14 v 1 - 9, Matthew 24 v 30 - 31, Romans 8 v 19 - 23, Philippians 2 v 10 - 11, Revelation 1 v 7.

### B. Amillennial

This view teaches that there is no separate Millennium, or golden age. The Church is the new Israel and the Jewish people cannot expect any revival of their fortunes to the point where their king becomes a world ruler. All the Old Testament prophecies relating to the King and his reign refer to the present Church Age, which started at Pentecost and will finish when Jesus returns. We are in the full kingdom of Christ now. After that there will simply be the final judgement followed by Heaven and hell. The blessings promised under the reign of the Messiah are to be understood as the social, political, scientific and economic benefits that would come to societies in this age when they submit to the influence of the gospel. If nations and individuals follow the teaching of the Bible they will experience great blessings and improvements in their conditions here on earth. The advances in medicine, transport, education, etc. since the Reformation are seen as evidence of this. However, this view makes no attempt to differentiate between these great improvements that have certainly come about through the Gospel witness, and the vastly better world that the Old Testament states will exist under the reign of a literal king on David's throne. The amillennial view has been prominent in the older churches, before and after the Reformation, and has given rise to the concept of civilised "Christendom". Some would even argue we must take up political or even, in extreme cases, military action to protect Christendom, the kingdom of Christ.

### C. Postmillennial

This view teaches that there is a future golden age, but that Jesus will not return until after it arrives. It will come about through the activity of the Church. The Church will become progressively more and more influential in world affairs through the increasing power of the Holy Spirit. It will not happen through the historical Israel. Any revival of Jewish fortunes is by and large an historic accident. The Old Testament references are to be understood spiritually as referring to the Church and its influence, not Israel and its King. Postmillennialism emerged amongst the later Puritans and became prominent at the end of the eighteenth century. It led to the great missionary movement of the nineteenth century when Christians wanted not just to evangelise individuals but also to bring whole nations under the golden rule of Christ. Many hymns of the time reflect this thinking: "Onward Christian Soldiers", "Hail to the Lord's Anointed", "Jesus shall reign where'er the Sun", etc. The postmillennial view has had a great revival under the Charismatic Movement and is generally known as "Restoration" teaching. Groups that generally see prophecy in this way include Kingdom Now, Word of Faith, Manifest Sons of God, Dominion, Latter - Day Rain, and a whole succession of apostolic movements in recent years, especially in the United States. Songs such as "I hear the sound of rustling", "Rejoice, rejoice, Christ is in you", express this broad idea. There is much talk of new power, taking territory, winning the nations, Christian socialism, new wave, worldwide revival, etc. A renewed emphasis on healing, complete wholeness and spiritual authority underlies this movement because, it is believed, we are moving into the fullness of the kingdom now.

### D. Pan-millennial

This is a common reply often heard today, from church leaders and others, who do not wish to take sides and simply believe "it will all pan out in the end"!

## POSTSCRIPT

### The ages of history

The age of Innocence – Creation to the Fall  
The age of Conscience – the Fall to the Flood  
The age of Humanism – the Flood to Babel  
The age of Promise – Abram to Sinai  
The age of Law – Sinai to Pentecost  
The age of Grace – Pentecost to the Lord's Return (the Church age)  
The age of the Kingdom – the Millennial Reign

### The times of God's judgement

The age of Innocence – the Curse, Genesis 3 v 14 – 19  
The age of Conscience – the Flood, Genesis 6 5 – 8  
The age of Humanism – the division of languages, Genesis 11 v 5 – 9  
The age of Promise – the plagues and the Red Sea drowning  
The age of Law – the loss of the land and the temple after Pentecost  
The age of Grace – the Tribulation, Isaiah 24 & Revelation chapters 6 to 18  
The age of the Kingdom – the final rebellion, Revelation 20 v 7 – 10