

Matt Waymeyer, *Amillennialism and the Age to Come: A Premillennial Critique of the Two-Age Model* (The Woodlands, TX: Kress Biblical Resources, 2016). x + 325 pp. \$19.99 paperback.

In the preface, the author clearly articulates both what motivated this project, which began as his PhD dissertation, and his purpose in writing the book. With respect to the former, Waymeyer observes that concomitant to “the remarkable resurgence of reformed theology” within evangelicalism over the past few decades—which he regards as a very positive development—has been a trend toward an adoption of either eschatological agnosticism or amillennialism (vii). In response to the eschatological agnostic, Waymeyer rightly asserts, “Scripture reveals too much about the subject of eschatology for Christians to be content in the dark, especially those who preach the Word and shepherd the flock” (vii). In regard to amillennialism, Waymeyer observes that while those joining the ranks of reformed theology often spend several years studying the scriptural doctrine of predestination prior to self-identifying as Calvinists, they far too quickly embrace amillennialism without much study of the pertinent biblical texts “simply because they see it as an indispensable part of the reformed system” (vii). In response to such trends, Waymeyer calls for careful consideration of his “premillennial response to the most compelling arguments for amillennialism” (viii). He aims “not only to clarify the key differences between these two competing millennial views, but also to provide an exegetical critique of the two-age model of amillennialism” (viii).

Chapter 1 elucidates what exactly constitutes the two-age model of amillennialism. Succinctly put, amillennialism utilizes the two-age eschatological framework of the NT, which speaks of “this age” and the “age to come” (e.g., Matt. 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; 20:34–35; Eph. 1:21), as an interpretive grid that precludes the very possibility of an intermediate kingdom situated between the Second Coming and the eternal state. Thus, the premillennial interpretation of Revelation 20 is ruled out from the outset. Waymeyer traces the historical roots of this argument back to Geerhardus Vos and explains the importance of its full development as a central argument in the debate by Kim Riddlebarger in *A Case for Amillennialism*, published in 2003 and expanded in 2013 (1–2). In addition to clarifying how amillennialism employs this argument (1–7), Waymeyer articulates the need for a premillennial response that “takes seriously the need to engage with the case for amillennialism at its most compelling point by addressing the question of whether the two-age model precludes the possibility of an intermediate kingdom” (7–8, quote from 8). The author also explicates the hermeneutical problems linked to claims that Revelation 20 is “unclear” as well as the use of

interpretive grids like the two-age model that tend to predetermine conclusions rather than trace the development of the doctrine of the future kingdom throughout Scripture (8–11). Moreover, he argues that Revelation 20 not only supplements and clarifies previous revelation, but it also readily harmonizes with it (11–14). This chapter concludes by way of a brief summation of what follows in the remainder of the book, thus helpfully orienting the reader so as to facilitate his/her tracking with the argument as it progresses (14–16).

Following this introductory chapter, the book comprises three main parts. Part 1 covers passages in the OT related to the intermediate messianic kingdom. Chapter 2 covers Psalm 72:1–20; Isaiah 2:2–4/Micah 4:1–3; and Isaiah 11:1–9. Next, chapter 3 focuses on Isaiah 65:17–25. Then, chapter 4 deals with passages from Zechariah, including 8:4–5; and 14:16–19. Finally, chapter 5 considers the crucial contribution of Isaiah 24:21–23. A recurrent theme running throughout these texts is the existence of elements such as affliction, need, oppression, poverty, rebellion, sin, weakness due to old age, and death in contexts that patently refer to the future glorious reign of Messiah (cf., e.g., 21–22 on Ps. 72:1–20; 28–30 on Isa. 11:1–9; 32–34 on Isa. 65:20, 22; 48–50 on Zech. 8:4–5; 54–58 on Zech. 14:16–19). Consequently, these passages do not appear to describe either the present age or the eternal state; this is the crux of Waymeyer’s argument in this section: Such passages necessitate the existence of an intermediate stage of the future kingdom, which follows the Second Coming but precedes the eternal state. In fact, according to Waymeyer, Isaiah 24:21–23 explicitly affirms the existence of a temporal gap (the “many days” of v. 22) that “takes place between the Second Coming and the final state of immortality” (69). The entirety of chapter 5 substantially develops this claim.

Part 2 more fully addresses the two-age eschatological framework articulated within the NT as it is utilized by amillennialism to preclude the possibility of an intermediate stage of the kingdom as taught by premillennialism. Topics treated include the following: the argument that the immediate succession of the two ages disallows the possibility of a gap in which to place an intermediate kingdom (chap. 6); the contention that the nontemporal nature of the qualities ascribed to the age to come leaves no room for the premillennial notion of an intermediate kingdom wherein temporal elements such as marriage, procreation, sin, and death continue to exist (chap. 7); and the argument that “The Resurrection and Judgment of All Mankind,” “The Destruction and Renewal of the Cosmos,” and “The Final Victory over Sin and Death” all occur at the Second Coming (chaps. 8–10 deal with these three topics seriatim as indicated by the chapter titles).

Part 3 probes various aspects of the debate as it directly relates to Revelation 20. More specifically, the author evaluates four significant exegetical issues in Revelation 20:1–6. First, chapter 11 analyzes “The Timing of Satan’s Binding,” arguing that this must be future because 20:1–3 vividly depicts the complete removal of satanic influence from the earth, and this is incompatible with NT teaching in regard to Satan’s continued influence during the present age (cf. 177–179 for a succinct summary of the premillennial view). Waymeyer compellingly argues that the “abyss” refers to “an actual location in the spiritual realm where evil spirits are confined and prevented from roaming free on earth” (183, italics removed; cf. 181–189). He also carefully unpacks the significance of both the purpose clause of v. 3b and the NT parallel passages (189–196 and 196–205, respectively). Second, chapter 12 addresses “The Nature of the First Resurrection,” contending that contextually it must be physical in nature just as the second resurrection (210–212), and offering a detailed critique of the two amillennial interpretations of the first resurrection as either regeneration or the believer’s entrance into heaven at the time of death (216–242). Third, chapter 13 discusses “The Duration of the Thousand years,” marshalling a strong argument that the thousand years should be literally interpreted. Fourth, chapter 14 seeks to clarify “The Chronology of John’s Visions,” supporting the idea that Revelation 19–21 are sequential, and refuting the amillennial argument for recapitulation, whereby Revelation 20:1–10 becomes a description of the present age between the first and second comings rather than a period subsequent to the Second Coming (Rev. 19).

There is much to commend in this volume. The author exhibits an exemplary irenic tone throughout yet nonetheless proffers a strong critique of amillennialism and a cogent defense of premillennialism, all of which is consistently based on careful and thorough exegetical analysis of the text. The evenhanded yet direct way in which Waymeyer interacts with amillennialist interlocutors such as Kim Riddlebarger, Sam Storms, Meredith Kline, G. K. Beale, Anthony Hoekema, Vern Poythress, Cornelis Venema, and others exemplifies the right balance of fairness and restraint coupled with clarity that a good scholar ought to demonstrate. The book helpfully includes a Scripture index, and the copious footnotes point the reader to a wealth of useful resources for further study. Also beneficial, the book includes an appendix on the intermediate kingdom in intertestamental Judaism. At the same time, a bibliography as well as author and subject indices would have greatly enhanced the usability of the book. Further, the organization of the volume does result in some repetitiousness due to overlap in the content treated in various chapters (e.g., the treatment of Rev. 20 in Part 3). Overall, Waymeyer has made an important contribution that demands

the consideration of any serious student of biblical eschatology. For those preaching or teaching on topics related to eschatology, the book certainly would serve as a useful resource or textbook.

Reviewed by Adrian P. Rosen