

END TIMES



**CORE
CLASS**

Part of the *Bible Doctrine Series*

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Session 1 - Preliminary Considerations

Part 1

1. Background, Bias, and Hope

Tonight's goal is not to convince anyone of a particular end times system.

Bible Center's doctrinal statement aligns us with a particular view of the end times. Tonight is not about challenging or questioning that statement.



The goal of tonight, and the desire of the elders, is to take a broad and unbiased look at different points of view on interpreting prophecy in the Bible, provide an overview of various ways of outlining the end times within conservative Christianity, and to study the areas of agreement in evangelicalism.

Background – during my entire childhood, high school, and college career, I was almost exclusively taught and trained by Dallas Theological Seminary Pastors. I learned everything from a premillennial pre-trib dispensational point of view.

I likely have bias, and a “go-to” way of interpreting certain passages. In many passages, I have possibly only seen them from a singular perspective. I have had a system in place that I used for many years to guide my interpretation of Scripture.

Even in Seminary, I took my Systematic Theology class on the end times (at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary), with a professor who held to the same point of view.

My hope is to place Scripture above any particular system. Correct interpretation is the goal; not a clear, simple, and articulate system. Scripture must always be king!

There are many other deeply biblical and conservative churches that would hold to differing interpretations and points of view of the end times. Tonight, we will try to see things from their point of view as well.

We have to realize that for more than 1,800 years, no church held to a pre-trib dispensational way of interpreting and viewing Scripture or the end times. This is like a new born baby doctrine and way of systematizing the Bible. We will respectfully look at other points of view that have dominated much of church history.

So, as we move forward:

- » Scripture must be King.
- » Appropriate and correct interpretation must be the goal.
- » Bias and background does not speak to Scripture, Scripture speaks to them.
- » Humility, peace, and unity are clearly taught with more authority and clarity than the majority of difficult doctrines that we often discuss and debate about concerning the end times.
- » In the same way that the OT saints missed and misunderstood much of what God said and intended about the 1st coming of Christ, it is possible that we may also miss and misunderstand much of what He said and intended about the 2nd coming of Christ.
- » Every question will not be answered. In fact, you may have more questions by the end than what you had in the beginning.
- » Expect to be filled with both hope, joy, and mystery as we study and explore.

2. Correct Interpretation

If Scripture is king, then we must properly understand the Bible before we can possibly apply it. Correct interpretation is only possible when we understand the historical and literary context of a book.

Historical context – Each book has an author and an audience. The author wrote with an intention and a purpose in mind. The audience would have heard the contents of the letter or book in a particular way based upon their culture and situation. The better we can understand these things - the better chance we have at arriving at a correct interpretation.

Literary context – words have meanings in phrases, phrases in sentences, sentences in paragraphs... If we start by trying to dissect a word without first understanding the phrase, sentence, paragraph in which it is located, and if we also forget to connect it to the major themes of Scripture, we are destined to derive the wrong meaning and an incorrect interpretation. It is also necessary that we understand that everything written in Scripture has a particular genre—a genre that follows the rules of that day and helps guide the original readers to a correct understanding of the letter or book.

Even books of the Bible must be seen in light of the major themes of Scripture along with the historical context and stated purpose of the letter.

What are the major themes of Scripture?

It is helpful to see the purpose and use of eschatology in each of the testaments in light of these overall themes. It should be noted that eschatology is found in almost every kind of literary genre.

3. Defining Terms

End times - "is the modern equivalent for the scriptural expression the last days, which refers to the final period of history before the last day, which is the day of Jesus' second coming and the day of the last judgment" (Schnabel, 9).

Eschatology - "refers to the prophecies, events, and developments that are close to, and connected with, the last period of history before the end" (Ibid, 9).

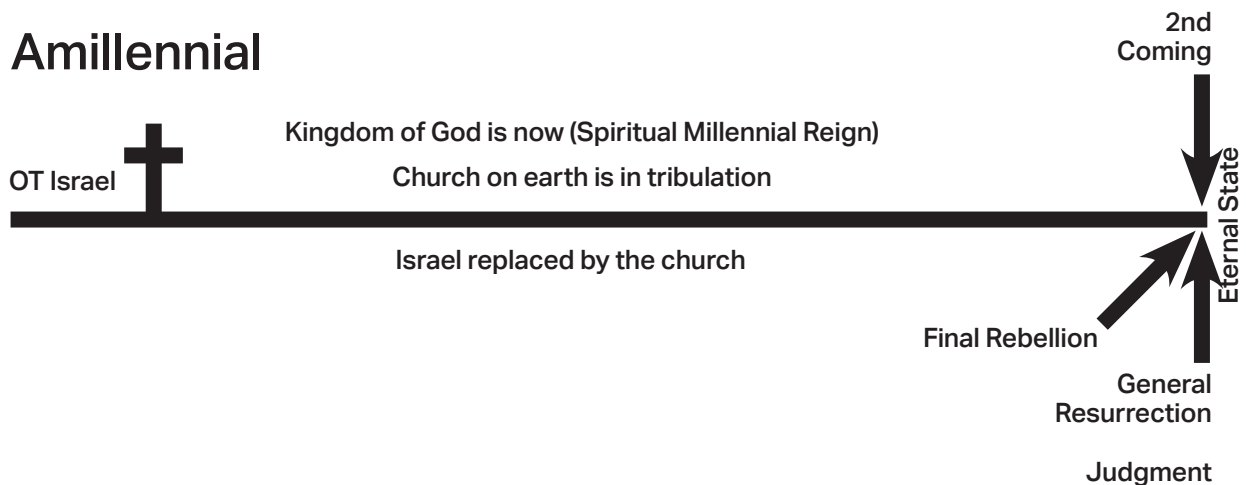
Apocalyptic - "describes events related more directly to the end of the world" (Ibid, 9).

The Great Tribulation - "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14).

There are multiple Eschatological Systems (ways of categorizing future events)

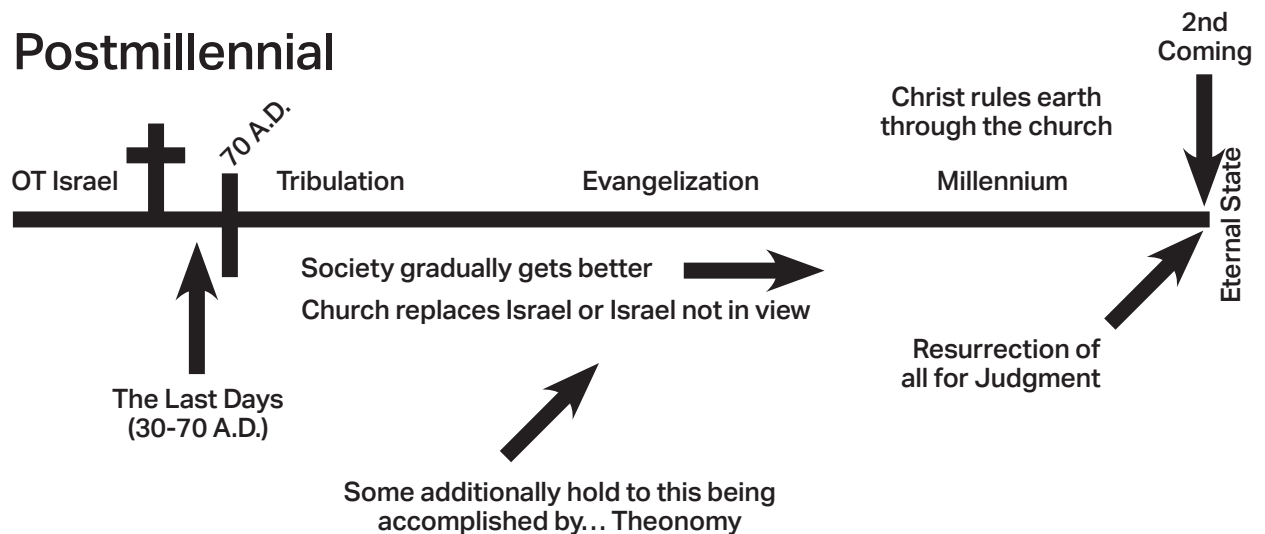
Amillennialism - the position that denies a literal 1,000-year reign of Jesus on the earth in the future. The 1,000 years is viewed as the reign of Christ through the church in the present age.

Postmillennialism - is the view that Jesus will return after a period of "millennial" conditions has been ushered in by the ministry of the church on earth.



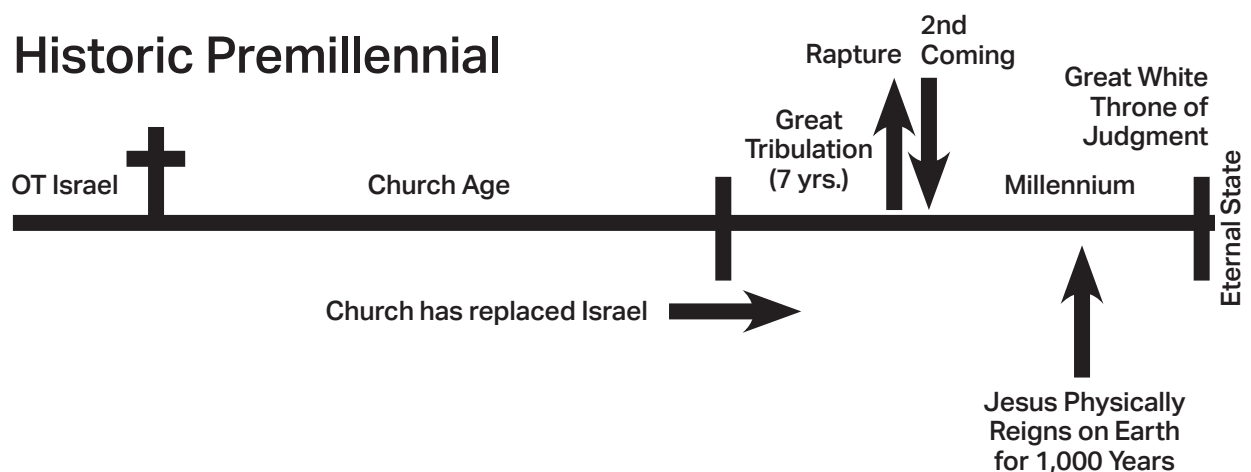
Premillennialism - is the view that Jesus will return and establish a 1,000-year reign of peace on the earth, foreshadowing the perfect world that will soon come after the judgment day and the restoration of all things.

Postmillennial

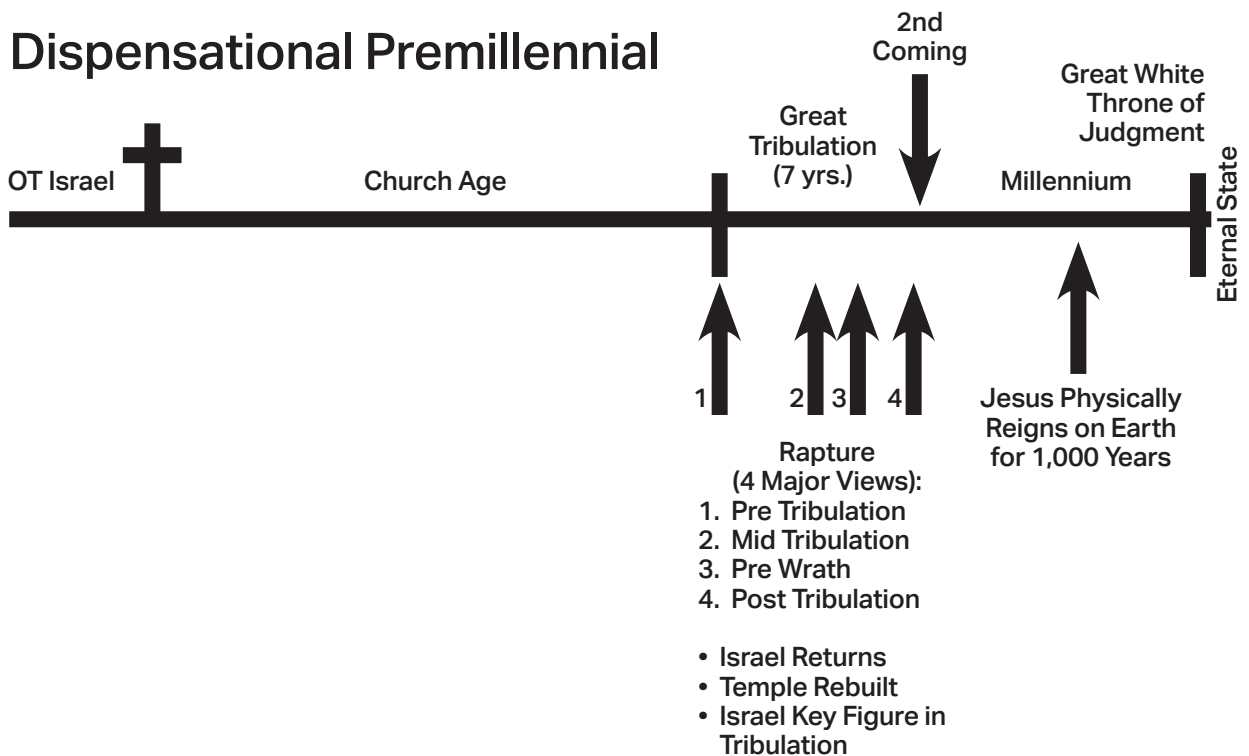


Historic Premillennialism - Historics, including many of the early church fathers, do not see so sharp a distinction between Israel and the church, rather all believers are united as one group – the Body of Christ. Historic premillennialists see no issue with the church going through the Great Tribulation. The rapture and the Second Coming can function as a single event.

Historic Premillennial



Dispensational Premillennialists – Propose a “secret rapture” where the true church is caught up with Christ. Timing of the rapture is debated, but those taken with Christ will return with Him to reign on earth in a literal 1,000-year millennium. Israel and the church are viewed as distinct.



PROPONENTS OF...

Historic Premillennialism	Dispensational Premillennialism	Postmillennialism	Amillennialism
Irenaeus (AD 140-203)	John N. Darby (1850)	Jonathan Edwards	Augustine (AD 354-430)
Justin Martyr (AD 100-165)	C. I. Scofield	Charles Hodge	J. I. Packer
Papias (AD 80-155)	Lewis Sperry Chafer	George Whitefield	R. C. Sproul
Charles Spurgeon*	John Walvoord	A. A. Hodge	Tim Keller
George Eldon Ladd	Charles Ryrie	B. B. Warfield	Anthony Hoekema
Albert Mohler (SBTS)	Dwight Pentecost	Loraine Boettner	Sam Storms
James M. Boice	Tim LaHaye	John Calvin*	Jay Adams
John Piper	John MacArthur	James H. Thornwell	John Calvin*
Francis Schaeffer	Jerry Falwell	Doug Wilson	Louis Berkhof
D. A. Carson	David Jeremiah	Kenneth Gentry	Herman Bavinck
Bryan Chapell	Dan Anderson	William Perkins	Geerhardus Vos

*Pastors Charles Spurgeon and John Calvin were notoriously non-committal toward any one view. They were accused of advocating more than one view depending on the text they were expositing at the time. Instead, they emphasized, "Jesus is coming again... Be ready!"

Rapture - the church (all true believers in Christ) are "caught up" to be with Christ in a single glorious moment.

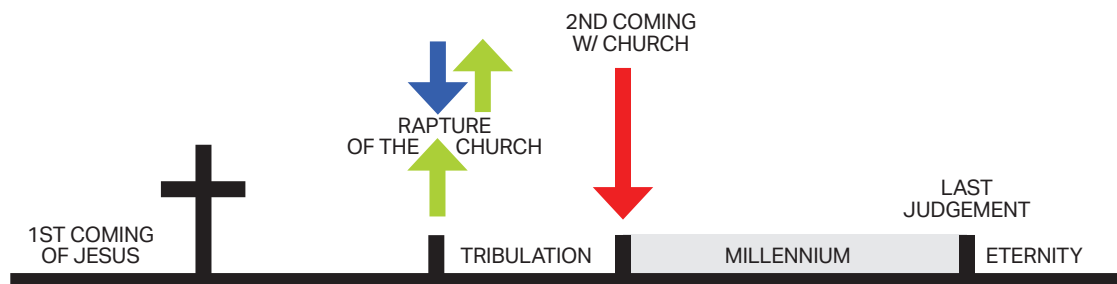
For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

— 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-17

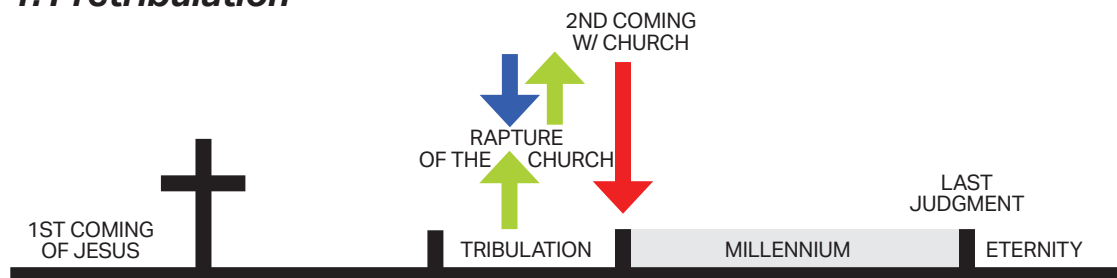
Rapture Timing - In the dispensational premillennial point of view, there are several differing positions held concerning the timing of the rapture and the tribulation.

- Pre-tribulation rapture - The church is raptured before the beginning of the tribulation.
- Mid-trib - The church is raptured midway through the tribulation.
- Post-trib - The church endures the tribulation and is raptured at the end.
- Pre-wrath - Popularized by Marvin Rosenthal, the church is raptured before the full brunt of God's wrath is released upon the earth in the tribulation.

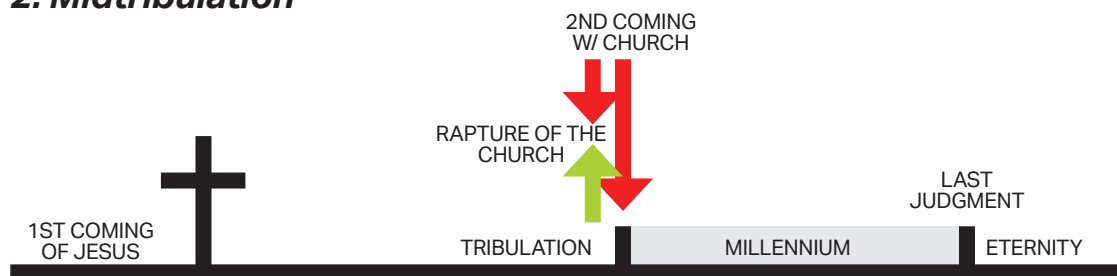
A larger discussion of these positions can be found in Appendix C.



1. Pretribulation



2. Midtribulation



3. Posttribulation

4. Every Question Will Not Be Answered

Example - Jesus in the Old Testament

Genesis 3:15

Genesis 12:1-3

Both are referencing Jesus, but neither are fully understood until after He comes.

The New Testament speaks frequently about the end times, but it does not speak exhaustively and often does not speak clearly. A typical instructional manual or end times handbook has not been given to us.

Many conclusions are taken from difficult and often unclear passages. It is challenging at times to determine the nature and uses of the genres in which many of the end times passages are found.

A clear timeline is not outlined. Any outline that has been put together is a combination of passages from multiple books and from multiple genres. Verses are taken from epistles, visions, and apocalyptic literature. Apocalyptic literature is by nature intentionally unclear.

Many puzzle pieces are given, but no one has ever been able to see the final picture on the top of the puzzle box.

Debating various opinions and points of view on the end times is a very different situation than debating over differing positions on the person and work of Christ.

In great humility, pursuing peace and unity are necessary as we discuss topics that are still slightly beyond our grasp.

In the Old Testament, Jews who were hoping for a Messiah believed they knew what and who they were looking for (a great political ruler). Even with many clearly stated prophecies, few recognized Him when He came. Many are still looking. Let's not assume that we can perfectly see our future, when God's people in the Old Testament could not clearly see theirs.

If God wanted it to be clearly understood, He would have clearly stated it. Rather He chose one of the most difficult, symbolic, and allegorical genres in the history of the world.

Session 2: Preliminary Considerations

Part 2

5. There is Great Interpretive Difficulty

"No question facing the student of Eschatology is more important than the question of the method to be employed in the interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures" (Pentecost, 1).

A. Genre and Types of Speech

I spoke to the prophets, gave them visions and told parables through them.

— HOSEA 12:10

The genre and structure of a book plays a great deal into the interpretive nature of the book. Structure and purpose speaks to how we are to handle the words and details of the text. It should be noted that "many interpretations in the last one hundred years have not understood that while John is writing in Greek, this book follows the characteristics of the Hebrew prophets" (Gentry, 125) (in particular Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, and Joel).

There are 3 primary ways of looking at passages dealing with the distant future (Gentry, 74).

- **Literal** - plain speech. No symbolism or metaphor in use.
- **Apocalyptic** - heavy symbolism, metaphor, allegory, parable and a focus on pictures, not paragraphs.
- **Types** - events, people, and places that become a model for events, people, and places in the future.

Revelation is a mixture of epistle (a letter written from an author to an audience with a purpose and intent in mind), apocalypse, and prophecy.

Likely, interpretive extremism should be avoided on either side.

J. Dwight Pentecost aggressively states, "It would seem that the purpose of the allegorical method is not to interpret Scripture, but to pervert the true meaning of the Scripture, albeit under the guise of seeking a deeper or more spiritual meaning" (p. 2).

We should not rush to judge the hearts of those who have a different view from us. We must also remember that **Hosea 12:10** informs us about God's intention and use of prophecy includes visions and parables (symbolic and often allegorical in nature).

Walvoord (a literalist) himself identifies **over 25 uses of symbolism** self-identified in the book of Revelation (p. 29-30). Likewise, taking everything as allegorical and symbolic would also create a dangerous result.

Commentators agree that the numbers **3½ years, 42 months, and 1260 days** (Revelation 11:2, 12:6, 12:14) all refer to the same length of time (a reference to the book of Daniel). Yet 3½ years equals (365 x 3.5 =) 1277.5 literal days, which is inconsistent with 1260 days if details are pressed to be literal. Most would agree that the point is that God has a set period of time symbolized by these numbers. We may not know the exact number of days.

B. Popular Interpretive Methods

Several methods of interpreting Revelation have been suggested and used through the centuries. Some lean towards it being entirely symbolic, while others view it as a timeline of detailed literal events. Some view it as entirely future (dispensationalists), others view it as primarily fulfilled in the past (preterists), and others describe it as speaking to the entire church age, past, present, and future (historicists).

Preterist - holds that many of the OT prophecies are already fulfilled by the events of 66-70 A.D. in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple or soon thereafter. Therefore, they put the date of Revelation as before the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. The book was primarily written to the audience that received it.

Historicist - Revelation speaks to the entire church age, past, present, and future historical events. Tribulation is seen throughout church history, even in many places today. The church is growing in impact and Christ's Kingdom is also growing and expanding. Revelation is viewed with a newspaper approach – leading to large scale disagreement over events and fulfillment.

Idealist – Here, symbols do not relate to historical events. They are timeless spiritual truths. Pictures of judgment reference God's judgment on sinners at all times in the world. The victory of Christ is seen through the ages. The beast refers to all anti-Christian empires at all times in church history. The millennium is not a future event, but the final cycle of the book, describing the church age. Though the theology of this method may be consistent with Scripture as a whole, it disconnects Revelation from both history and the future.

Futuristic – Revelation, starting in chapter 4, is viewed as a discussion of the future. Revelation then outlines many things that are yet to come, at times literal, at times symbolic, and most everything is pointing towards the future. The futurist, at times, will push a hard-literal interpretation and create what seems to many a very forced and unintended outline of future events.

Eclectic – "Many scholars in the last few decades (Morris, Johnson, Geisen, Mounce, Beale) prefer to combine more than one of the views above" (Osborne, 21). "The solution is to allow preterist, idealist, and futurist methods to interact in such a way that the strengths are maximized and the weaknesses are minimized" (Ibid, 21).

No one can deny that there isn't some symbolism. Revelation begins by using symbolism and Revelation itself often identifies its own symbols. Stars represent angels (1:16, 20) (some would even say "angels" represent the pastors) and the lampstands represent churches (1:13, 20). The morning star (2:28) refers to Christ. The key of David (3:7) represents the power to open and close doors (Isaiah 22:22). The seven lamps of fire represent the Spirit of God (4:5), along with a large list of other symbols. The question is how much is symbolic and what is the nature and intent of the author and genre in the use of symbols.

There are entire interpretive systems that have been put in place. Covenant Theology and Dispensational Theology (Classic and Progressive) are briefly discussed in Appendix A.



A summary of these positions can be found on the *Interpretations of Revelation* chart on the following page.

Interpretations of Revelation

	1-3	4-19	20-22
Preterist	Historic churches	Symbolic of contemporary conditions	Symbolic of heaven and victory
Idealist	Historic churches	Symbolic of conflict of good and evil	Victory of good
Historicist	Historic churches	Symbolic of events of history: fall of Rome, Mohammedanism, papacy, Reformation	Final judgment, millennium (?), eternal state
Futurist	Historic churches and/or seven stages of church history	Future tribulation; concentrated judgments on apostate church and on antichrist; coming of Christ	Millennial kingdom; judgment of wicked dead; eternal state

Theological Perspectives on Revelation

	1-3	4-19	20-22
Postmillennial	Historic churches	Generally historicist	Victory of Christianity over the world
Amillennial	Historic churches	Generally historicist	Coming of Christ; judgment; eternal state
Premillennial	Historic churches representative of historical stages	Generally futurist	Literal millennial reign; judgment of great white throne; New Jerusalem
Apocalyptic	Historic churches	Generally preterist	Symbolic of heaven and victory

C. Commentators and theologians have differing interpretive points of view.

John Walvoord – holds to a futurist, literal view of Revelation. He interprets Revelation much like a timeline.



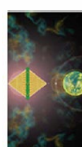


"In contrast to other approaches to the book of Revelation, the futuristic position allows a more literal interpretation of the specific prophecies of the book" (Walvoord, 21)

"Though recognizing the frequent symbolism in various prophecies, the events foreshadowed by these symbols and their interpretation are regarded as being fulfilled in a normal way" (Ibid, 21).

Walvoord's position does not stand against symbolism: "Symbolisms occur throughout Scripture as a vehicle for divine revelation, but it is undoubtedly true that the final book of the New Testament because of its apocalyptic character contains more symbols than any other book in the New Testament" (Ibid, 25).

Referencing all the numbers used in Revelation he states, "These numbers may often be understood literally, but even when understood in this way, they often carry with them also a symbolic meaning" (Ibid, 28).

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

<div>The Judgment Seat of Christ Rom 14:10 2 Cor 5:10</div> <div></div>		<div>Chapter 11 is Key to understanding the Book of Revelation Temple Outer Court Trampled By the Gentiles Forty and Two Months Two Witnesses prophecy 1260 Days</div> <div>created by www.bibledefended.com 2013 Artist creating chart is keeping this document public domain</div>		<div>The Marriage Of The Lamb Rev 19:7-9</div> <div></div>	<div>New Jerusalem New Heaven and New Earth</div> <div></div>
The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter					
The Vision		Heavenly Vision		The Seven Churches	
Chapter 1		Chapters 2 & 3		Chapters 4 & 5	
<div></div> <div></div>	The Church of Ephesus The Church of Smyrna The Church of Pergamos The Church of Thyatira The Church of Sardis The Church of Philadelphia The Church of Laodicea		The Harvest (THE RAPTURE) 1 Thes 4:13-18 1 Cor 15:51-58 John sees throne of God Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah		
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Leon Morris carefully reminds us that we must remember the original audience as we study Revelation. Revelation "was sent to a little, persecuted, frustrated church, one which did not know what to make of the situation in which it found itself. John writes to meet the needs of that church" (Morris, 22). "John's conclusion as to the location of ultimate power is just as relevant for us as for the little, persecuted church of the first century" (Morris, 23).

Morris is not a preterist or historian, but he sees symbolism throughout. Interestingly, he also spends time arguing that Revelation should be seen more as prophecy than as apocalypse (25-26). The book refers to itself as prophecy (1:3, 22:7, 10, 18-19), it does not take on the typical pessimistic nature of apocalyptic literature of the day, and it is not pseudonymous like all other apocalypses.

Grant Osborne - "The approach of this commentary is similar, but the futurist rather than the idealist position is primary. My study of ancient apocalyptic and of the Book of Revelation has led me to believe that John's visions (esp. Ch. 4-22) were primarily intended to describe events that will end world history" (Osborne, 22).

Osborne also holds that many of the symbols spoke to the people of the day (preterist) and to the people of our day (futurist) as the visions of the beast were certainly recognizable to the 1st century saints as the Roman Empire.

"The present is addressed through parallels with the future" (Osborne, 22). He will also highlight universal truths that are expressed in Revelation (idealist) while holding to the primary understanding to be futurist.

Tim Chester – "None of these approaches [preterist, historicist, futurist, or idealist] quite capture the sophistication of what John is doing. John is drawing on the Old Testament prophetic critique of economic injustice, imperial power and idolatrous claims, and reapplying that critique to his day. In so doing, he gives us a model we can and should follow in our day" (Chester, 12). He says it is not as simple as identifying the Pope, Napoleon, or the rise of Communism as a clear fulfillment of a passage.

"Revelation should not be read as a single sequence from beginning to end. Each set of seven ends with the final judgment and the triumph of God. So, it's impossible to read these sevens as consecutive periods in history.

The phrase 'it is done' in Revelation 16:17, for example is repeated in 21:6, which suggests we are revisiting the same event" (Chester, 13). These different stages should be understood as points of view (like the four Gospels or instant replay from several camera angles) rather than a timeline.

Peter Gentry (in *How to Read & Understand the Biblical Prophets*) turns to Old Testament prophecy to determine how to best interpret Revelation. Revelation references images from Ezekiel, Daniel, and Joel to name a few. "Repetition is at the heart of Hebrew discourse. The normal pattern in Hebrew literature is to consider topics in a recursive - in other words, a progressively - repetitive manner" (Gentry, 41).

As an example, Isaiah (an Old Testament prophet containing prophecy already fulfilled and some yet to be fulfilled) itself is not written as a timeline. Isaiah uses a recursive form of teaching, a progressive repetition through the book. Hearing this teaching once would be like listening to a song through a single speaker. Hearing these truths taught multiple times, in multiple ways is like listening to the same song through a 7.1 digital audio system: you hear new nuances, there is a greater distinction of instruments, and the sound is fuller and more beautiful.

In other words, Isaiah teaches the same primary truths repetitively throughout the book (Israel has been disloyal due to idolatry and lack of social justice – to a coming renewed, restored, transformed Zion in a new creation). Gentry (along with many commentators) identify seven cycles of teaching...

1. The Judgment and Transformation of Zion, Part 1 - 1:1-2:4
2. The Judgment and Transformation of Zion, Part 2 - 2:5-4:6
3. The Judgment of the Vineyard and the Coming King - 5:1-12:6
4. The City of Man vs. the City of God - 13:1-27:13
5. Trusting the Nations vs. Trusting the Word of YHWH - 28:1-37:38
6. Comfort and Redemption for Zion and the World - 38:1-55:13
7. The Servants of YHWH and the New Creation - 56:1-66:24

"We can divide the book of Isaiah into seven distinct conversations or discourses. In each one Isaiah is dealing with the topic of how we get from a corrupt Jerusalem in the first creation - a Jerusalem characterized by covenant disloyalty due to idolatry and lack of social justice - to a renewed, restored, transformed Zion in a new creation" (Gentry, 52). Understanding this is crucial to interpreting Isaiah. Many difficult passages will have parallel passages in the following cycles (similar to parallel passages in the Synoptic Gospels) to help gain a fuller grasp of the truth and point being taught.

This form of teaching is very common in Hebrew literature. Revelation has a deep connection to Old Testament prophecy (Ezekiel, Joel, Isaiah, Daniel...). Even though Revelation is written in Greek, it's roots are found in Hebrew thought, genre, and style. These realities lead Gentry and many others to the conclusion that Revelation likely reflects this Hebraic form of recursive teaching, using repetition (not a timeline) as the foundation for the book of Revelation. The chart found below shows how seven points are each taught seven times in seven different ways through the book of Revelation.

Revelation: Seven Sequences of Seven

Prologue: Vision of Jesus Christ among the candlesticks [1]

1. Seven Letters to the Churches [2 & 3]

2:1-7 Ephesus 	2:8-11 Smyrna 	2:12-17 Pergamum 	2:18-29 Thyatira 	3:1-6 Sardis 	3:7-13 Philadelphia 	3:14-22 Laodicea 
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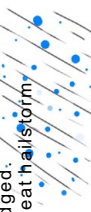
The First Scroll

Introduction: The Lamb is worthy to open the seals [4 & 5]

2. Seven Seals [6-8:1]

6:1-2 White horse: conqueror 	6:3-4 Red horse: war 	6:5-6 Black horse: famine & oppression 	6:7-8 Pale horse: death by sword, famine & disease 	6:9-11 Prayers of the Martyrs 	6:12-7:17 Day of Wrath has come, 144,000 sealed 	8:1 long pause 
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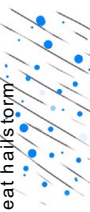
3. Seven Trumpets [8:2-11] Prologue [8:2-6] Offering up of the prayers of the faithful

8:7 Earth damaged 	8:8-9 Sea damaged 	8:10-11 Rivers damaged 	8:12 Sun damaged 	8:13-9:12 Abyss unlocked: darkness & pain 	13-11:14 Demonic army from Euphrates 7 thunders 2nd scroll The two Witnesses Great Battle 	11:15-19 The time has come for dead to be judged. Great hail storm 
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4. Seven Visions of Warfare [12-14]

12:1-2 Woman with crown of 12 stars 	12:3-6 Huge Red Dragon 	12:7-18 War in heaven: Dragon thrown down to earth 	13:1-10 Beast from the sea 	13:11-18 Beast from the land (False Prophet) 	14:1-13 the Lamb with the 144,000. The hour of judgement has arrived 	14:14-20 Judgement begins 
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5. Seven Final Plagues [15-16] Prologue [15:1-16:1] Offering up of the worship of the faithful

16:2 Earth plague 	16:3 Sea plague 	16:4-7 River plague 	16:8-9 Sun plague 	16:10-11 Throne of beast: darkness & pain 	16:12-16 Demonic army from Euphrates. Great Battle 	16:17-21 Start of judgement. Great hail storm 
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6. Seven Visions of Victory [17-19]

17 The Great Prostitute (Babylon) 	18 The Fall of Babylon 	19:1-5 Vast throng in heaven praise God for judgements 	19:6-10 Vast throng in heaven announce the wedding of the Lamb 	19:11-16 Christ appears with army dressed in white 	19:17-18 Announcement of battle 	19:19-21 Great battle: Beast and False Prophet thrown into lake of fire 
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7. Seven Visions of the End of the Age and the New Creation [20-22:5]

20:1-6 The Dragon: subdued for 1000 years 	20:7-10 The Dragon: released, fights, and is thrown into lake of fire 	20:11-15 Great white throne. The dead are judged 	21:1 A new heaven and a new earth 	21:2-8 A bride adorned for her husband. "Behold, I am making all things new!" 	21:9-27 The beauty of the city (the wife of the Lamb) 	22:1-5 The River of Life 
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Epilogue [22:6-21] I am coming soon!

6. Interpretive Guidelines - How then do we properly interpret prophecies?

- Old Testament prophecies must be integrated into the framework of New Testament prophecy.
- Old Testament audiences must be considered during interpretation - immediately jumping to the end times with every prophecy can be disingenuous to the author's intent and the audience's understanding of the prophecy.
- Many prophecies are given in a conditional format (If...then). Particular fulfillment is determined by particular actions (Isaiah 1:19-20).
- No one knows the hour or the day of the return of Christ (Matthew 24:36, Acts 1:7) and His return will be unexpected, like a thief in the night (Matthew 24:36-25:30).
- "Some interpreters work with the principle that the language of the prophecies should be interpreted literally as long as this can be reasonably followed. This is an illegitimate demand because it leaves the decision when to interpret literally and when to interpret symbolically up to the modern interpreter. It is the original author and his cultural and linguistic context that determine whether an expression or a statement should be interpreted literally or not" (Schnabel, 12).
 - » Examples - Revelation 3:12 - "those who are victorious I will make pillars in the temple of my God", of course this is not literal, even though Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt by God.
 - » Revelation 11:5 - Do we believe that fire will literally come out of the mouth of two literal evangelists?
- Again, we should use clear passages to shed light on unclear passages.
- We must always move from the larger picture to the details, we do not start with the details and work the other way around.
- Revelation is an apocalypse (Revelation 1:1). There were many apocalyptic books written during this time (from 2nd century B.C. through 1st century A.D.). They often used symbolic language, imagery to make their point, and pseudonymous authors. The original audience would have been aware of this genre and use of literature.
- There is typically a two-fold purpose to prophetic literature - the author intends to speak for the encouragement and correction of the audience and then may have a future purpose in mind (a near - far understanding).
- "The book of Revelation relates a series of visions, not a systematic account about the end times. A sequence of visions is not necessarily a chronological series of events" (Schnabel, 12).
- Daniel is told to seal up the vision because it concerns the distant future (Daniel 8:26, while John is told not to seal up the words of the prophecy because the time is near (Revelation 22:10).
- The construction of a timeline that inserts verses and events without Scripture itself clearly creating the outline can be dangerous and beyond the intention of Scripture.
- We can't use Newspaper Theology to interpret Revelation.
- We must first view and understand Revelation in light of the major themes of Scripture!

Theories of Literary Structures of Revelation

LITERARY CONSTRUCTION: 6:1-17; 8:1-9:21 and 11:15-19; 15:1-16:12 and 16:17-21:27												
	SEALS			TRUMPETS				BOWLS				
	1-6	()	7	1-6	()	7	()	1-6	()	7	()	
A parenthesis between 6th and 7th judgments in each series:		7:1-17			10:1-11:14				16:13-16			
A parenthesis between the trumpet judgment and the bowl series:							12:1-14:20					
A parenthesis between the bowl series and the description of the second coming of Jesus											17:1-19:10	

SUGGESTED INTERRELATIONSHIPS OF THE SEALS, TRUMPETS, AND BOWLS:

Judgments are seen as occurring simultaneously, with repetition showing the intensification of the judgments.

This consecutive arrangement envisions a total of twenty-one judgments.

This telescopic arrangement has the seventh seal introducing the trumpet series and being explained by it, and the seventh trumpet introduces the bowl series and is explained by it. So, the seven bowls equal the seventh trumpet and the seven trumpets are the seventh seal.

SealsTrumpetsBowls

SealsTrumpetsBowls

SealsTrumpetsBowls

Adapted from Robert G. Gromacki, New Testament Survey (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), by permission.

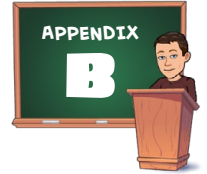
Content and Correlation of the Judgments of Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls

NUMBER	SEALS Opened by the Lamb	TRUMPETS Blown by seven angels	BOWLS Poured by seven angels
1.	White horse: conqueror	Hail and fire; 1/3 of vegetation burnt	Sores
2.	Red horse: war	Mountain of fire; 1/3 of creatures in sea destroyed	Sea becomes blood; all marine life dies
3.	Black horse: famine	Star called wormwood falls; 1/3 of fresh water poisoned	Fresh water turned to blood
4.	Pale horse: death	Partial darkness; 1/3 of sun, moon, and stars	Scorching sun burns men
HIATUS: Last three trumpets announced as woes			
5.	Martyrs reassured	Woe #1: Angel releases locusts from abyss	Darkness on beast's kingdom
6.	Great day of wrath: earthquake, signs in heaven	Woe #2: Four angels loosed at Euphrates; they slay 1/3 of earth's population	Euphrates dries up; kings assemble for war at Armageddon
HIATUS: Sealing of 144,000			
7.	1/2 hour of silence: introduction of trumpets	Announcement of the Lord's victory	Severe earthquake and great hail

Adapted from Robert G. Gromacki, New Testament Survey (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), by permission.

"Evangelicals who hold to these various [end times] positions all agree that Scripture is inerrant, and they have a commitment to believe whatever is taught by Scripture. Their differences concern the interpretation of various passages relating to these events, but their differences on these matters should be seen as matters of secondary importance, not as differences over primary doctrinal matters" (Grudem 1095).

A Broader Eschatological Outlook of the Old and New Testament – Appendix B



The Bible Project has two excellent videos on YouTube, walking through the book of Revelation. Go to:

- <https://youtu.be/5nvVVcYD-0w>
- <https://youtu.be/QpnIrbq2bKo>

An alternate way of finding these videos is by going to ***TheBibleProject.com*** > go to the **Menu** (upper right corner) > click on **Explore Videos** > click on the **New Testament** (left-side column) > click on **Revelation**.

Session 3: Cosmic Eschatology

Return of Christ • Resurrection • Judgment • New Creation

Where is there unity amongst all conservative Christians?

The Return of Christ

There will be a sudden (2 Peter 3:10), personal (1 Thessalonians 4:16), visible (Revelation 1:7), bodily (Acts 1:11) return of Christ (Grudem, 1092).

...so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

— HEBREWS 9:28

A. It will be Sudden

"the coming of the Lord is at hand"

James 5:8

"Surely I am coming soon" / "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"

Revelation 22:20

Titus 2:12-13 - "awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." (Philippians 3:20, 1 Corinthians 16:22)

"To some extent, then, the degree to which we actually long for Christ's return is a measure of the spiritual condition of our own lives at the moment" (Grudem, 1093).

"To 'be ready' for Christ's return (Matthew 24:44) is to be faithfully obeying him in the present, actively engaged in whatever work he has called us to" (Grudem, 1093).

B. It will be Soon

The timing of Christ's return is both unknown and perceived as imminent.

Matthew 24:44 - "Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matthew 24:50, Luke 12:40).

Matthew 25:13 - "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

Mark 13:32-33 - "But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch; for you do not know when the time will come."

Philippians 3:20 - "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:12-13, 1 Thessalonians 5:2, James 5:7-9)

1 Peter 4:7 - "The end of all things is at hand."

Revelation 1:3 - "The time is near" (Revelation 22:7, 12, 20).

"It is true that the early church lived in expectancy of the return of the Lord, and it is the nature of biblical prophecy to make it possible for every generation to live in expectancy of the end" (Ladd, 22).

1. Don't certain things still need to happen first?

Mark 13:10 - "And the gospel must first be preached to all nations."

Matthew 24:15-22 - wars, earthquakes, famines, "the beginning of birth pains", incredible tribulation that the Lord will shorten.

Mark 13:22, Matthew 24:23-24 - False Christs and false prophets will arise and show signs and wonders and lead many astray.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-10 - The coming of the man of sin, the lawless one.

Romans 11:12, 25-26 - The full inclusion of Israel. All of Israel will be saved.

2. Do these prove that Jesus' return is not imminent?

Louis Berkhof would say much still need to occur before the return of Christ (697).

The signs appear to be given so that Christians are not surprised by these remarkable events, or deceived by false teachers, but Jesus seems to use these descriptions to intensify our eager expectation.

Luke 21:28 - "Now when these things begin to take place, look and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Never does Jesus hint at these signs should reduce expectancy or cause us to assume Jesus will not return soon.

3. Some of the signs are not as easy to read as you would think.

Colossians 1:5-6 - "the gospel which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing." And Colossians 1:23 - "The gospel which you heard, which has been preached to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister."

Romans 16:26 - The gospel is "now manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to the obedience of faith."

The events of the early church could have certainly felt like the Great Tribulation to them, as Christians burned on wooden stakes for Christ by the hands of Nero (certainly an antichrist figure). Tribulation is described throughout Scripture for every believer. Many have been tortured and killed for their faith, how is this not a great tribulation for many?

Many today have wandered from the faith and have been deceived.

There have certainly been no lack of wars and rumors of wars.

There has been no lack of earthquakes, hurricanes, and natural disasters.

4. Is there a middle ground?

Most would say that it is possible that some of these signs have already been given, but also that several have yet to be fulfilled.

"It is to say that it is unlikely but possible that the signs have already been fulfilled, and therefore we simply cannot know with certainty at any point in history whether all the signs have been fulfilled or not" (Grudem, 1101).

This position holds that we should be expectant for the return of Christ, but it is unlikely that all the signs have been given. This point brings a balance between the passages that bring urgency and those that point to signs that must be fulfilled.

C. It will be Personal, Visible, and Bodily

"This return will be personal: Christ himself—not his influence, or his teaching, or his Spirit-mediated presence—will come to earth. He will return bodily, just as he left for earth when he ascended to heaven" (Allison, 366).

1 Thessalonians 4:16 -

Acts 1:11 - Christ will "come in the same way."

1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 -

John 14:3 -

Revelation 1:7 -

D. It will be Triumphant

Hebrews 9:28 - He appears the second time to save those who eagerly wait for Him.

Acts 3:20-21 - His return will be a time of restoration.

2 Thessalonians 1:7 – He grants relief from persecution.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 – He delivers from “the wrath to come.”

1 Thessalonians 4:16 – He comes “with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.”

Matthew 24:30 - He will come “with power and great glory.”

Philippians 3:21 – He will give resurrection bodies.

2 Timothy 4:8 – He will award believers “the crown of righteousness.”

Romans 8:29 – He will conform them fully to His image.

Resurrection of the Dead and Judgment

John 6:38-40 -

John 11:23-26 -

Colossians 1:18, Revelation 1:5 -

1 Corinthians 15:20-21 - "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead."

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 - "What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."

1 John 3:2 -

Philippians 3:21 - "who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself."

Believers who have died will raise first and be given their new bodies - 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

Believers who are living will receive their new bodies without suffering death - 2 Corinthians 5:1-5.

"The resurrection body of Jesus Christ is the prototype of the resurrection bodies of believers. As his body is in his resurrected and ascended state, so will be the bodies of believers" (Allison, 381).

Timing

Amillennialists and postmillennialists hold to a resurrection at the return of Christ, the final judgment and the new heaven and new earth. All these things are happening at the same time according to their timeline.

These positions would appeal to John 5:28-29 and Jesus' reference to a single resurrection ("when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment"). Therefore, a premillennial view of a resurrection of believers before the millennium and a resurrection of unbelievers after the millennium would be considered a wrong interpretation of Revelation 20:4-6.

Premillennialists hold to believers receiving their resurrected bodies at the 2nd coming, and then join Christ for His millennial reign. At the end of the millennium, unbelievers will experience their resurrection and then judgment (the Great White Throne Judgment).

Premillennialists holds to a literal interpretation of Revelation 20:4-6, and would say John simply puts both resurrections into a singular statement in John 5:28-29.

The New Creation and Final State

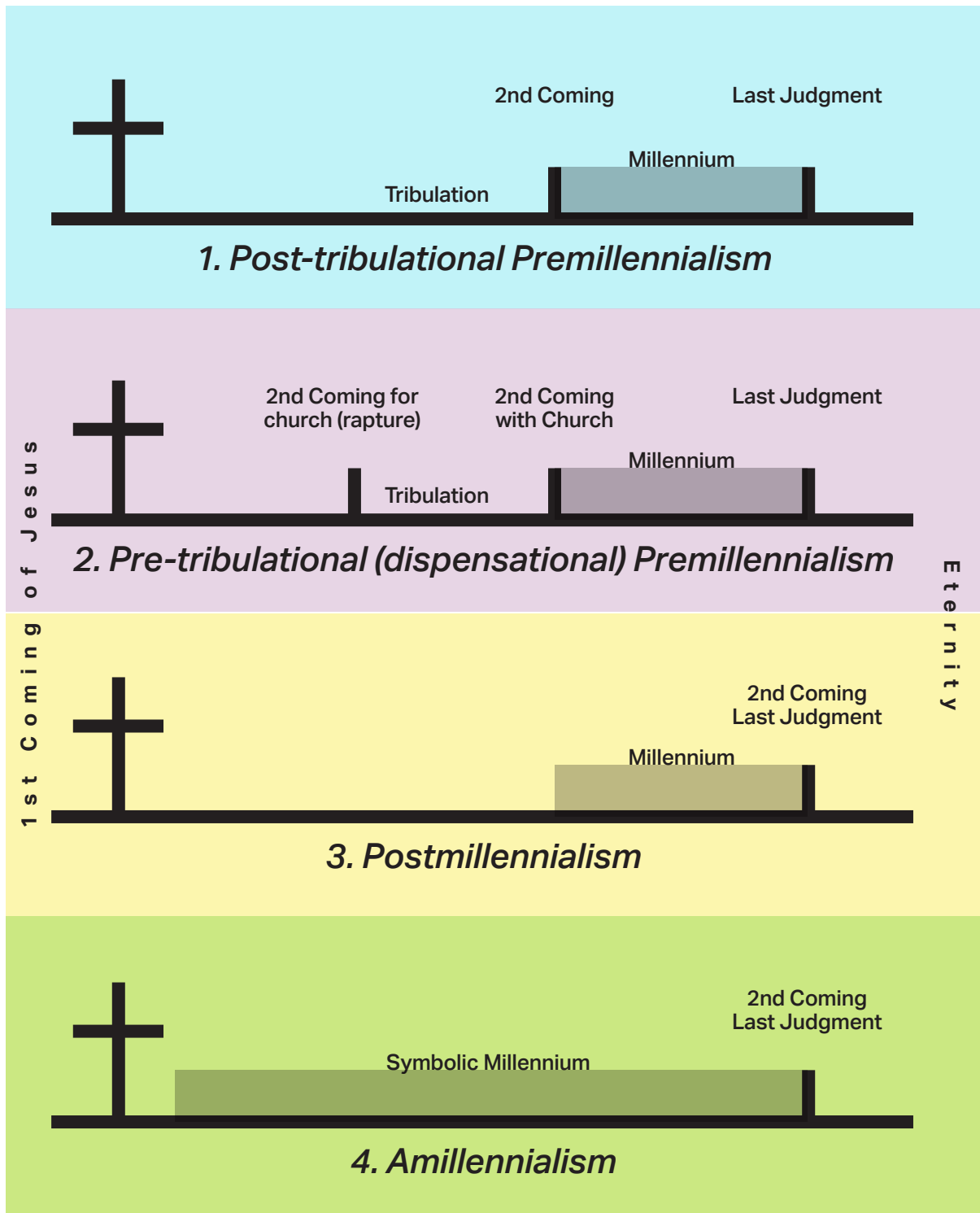
Unbelievers enter into the everlasting destruction of hell and, ultimately, in the Lake of Fire. *Daniel 12:2; Matthew 8:12; 25:31-46; Mark 9:42-49; Luke 16:19-31; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 14:11; 20:11-15*

In resurrected bodies, believers will live forever in the presence of God freed from sin, sorrow, and suffering. Tears are wiped away and an infinitely better life is enjoyed forever. *John 5:24; 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15; Philippians 1:23; Colossians 3:4; Hebrews 12:23; 1 Peter 5:4*

There will be a final and full consummation of the Kingdom of God in the New Creation. God will redeem, restore, and renew all things culminating in a New Heaven and a New Earth. *Isaiah 65:17-25; 66:22; Romans 8:18-25; 2 Peter 3:7-13; Revelation 21*

Session 4: Areas of Debate & Discussion (Not Death & Division!)

Comparison of Christian Millennial Teachings



A Little Historical Journey!



Summary

Historic Premillennialism (Early Church Fathers)

Amillennialism (Origen through Reformers)

Postmillennialism (Whitby, Edwards)

Resurgence of Premillennialism (Alstead, Mede, Irving)

Introduction of Dispensational Premillennialism (Darby, Scofield)

Multiple Camps all holding to Gospel Essentials

Historic Premillennialism

- The Early Church Fathers did not have a systematized approach to the end times.
- They did communicate multiple areas of agreement that they consistently upheld.
 - » Bodily resurrection (Ignatious and Clement)
 - » Imminent Return of Christ (Clement, Barnabas)
 - » Literal Earthly Kingdom (Clement, Barnabas, Papias)
 - » Israel and the Church are the Same (Martyr, Tertullian)
- They held to a Historical Premillennialism (Martyr, Ireneaus, Polycarp, Clement, Tertullian)

Amillennialism

- Origen and the Alexandrian shift from premil to amil position.
- Hermeneutical move to symbolism and allegory.
- Eusebius – there was an optimistic experience in the transition from persecution to power in the age of Constantine.
- Augustine believed they were in the millennium. Viewed the first resurrection as our salvation from moving from spiritual death to spiritual life. Taught the second resurrection as taking place at the return of Christ at the end of the age.
- Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and most of the Reformers held to an amillennial position. Luther viewed the Catholic church as the beast and believed they were in the tribulation.

Postmillennialism

- Daniel Whitby (1703) proposes a postmillennial point of view.
- John Cotton
- Johnathan Edwards – was a part of the North Hampton revivals. Entire towns were repenting of their sin and finding salvation and hope in Christ. In this optimistic experience, many believed and hoped that this was the beginning of a movement that would sweep the world leading to a golden age of Christianity = Jesus' reign on earth through His church.
- Charles Hodge

- A. H. Strong (a Baptist) held to this position.

Resurgence of Premillennialism

- It had become an age of pessimism in the late 18th century and early 19th century.
- There were a few premil glimmers along the way (Alsted, Irving, Mede)
- There was a major public premil failure. William Miller, a popular premillennialist, predicted the return of Christ occurring on Oct 22, 1844 (also did this on another occasion). Obviously, Jesus did not return and the movement took on a black eye.
- John Nelson Darby (1840) proposed a full system of understanding the Bible through multiple dispensations through the ages. His way of dividing and systematizing the Bible extended into his eschatology.
- He mentored a man named Brooks who then mentored a man named Scofield. Scofield produced a study Bible that became very popular and did much to popularize this new premillennial dispensational position.
- Darby also mentored D. L. Moody who also went on to have a very public and popular ministry.
- This system introduced the concept of a "secret rapture." Darby said he began holding this belief as early as 1827, but also questioned the belief as late as 1843.
- They adhered to a literal hermeneutic.
- In this system, camps began to disagree over the timing of this rapture.
- Robert Gundry and George Ladd were popular proponents of a post tribulation rapture. Gleason proposed a mid-trib position on the rapture (Discussed further in Appendix C).
- The system also promoted a strong distinction between Israel and the Church.



Today – Individuals, churches, and seminaries from all camps live together in conservative evangelical circles agreeing in the same essential beliefs of the Gospel.

A Deeper Look into Each System

Much disagreement between systems comes from their interpretations of Revelation 20:1-6. Removing this passage from the premillennial framework would topple their entire system of understanding the end times.

We will look at key points within this passage and compare the Amillennial way of seeing the passage along with the Premillennial counterpoints. Major areas of debate will be bolded in the text. These arguments make up several of the key points of view for each end time position. These arguments are outlined and taken from Grudem, chapter 55.

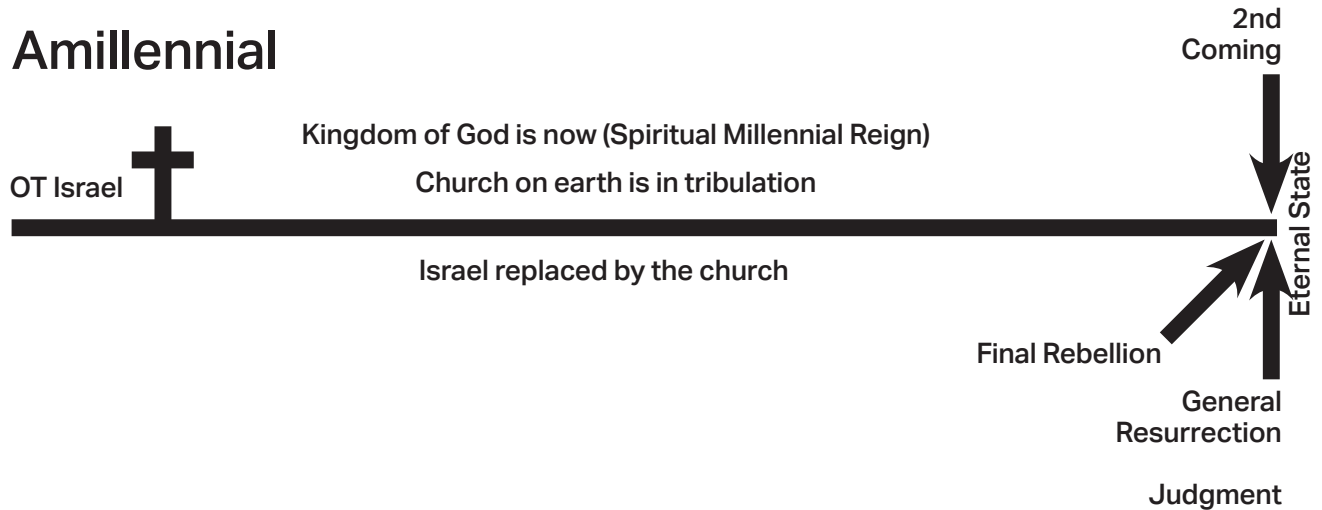
And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

— REVELATION 20:1-6

	Amillennialism	Premillennialism
1,000-Year Literal, Earthly Reign	This is the only place where there seems to be a concept of a literal 1,000-year earthly reign of Christ.	<p>The Bible only needs to say something once for it to be true. The 1st coming of Christ was not made clear in the OT, we should not expect the 2nd coming of Christ to be clearly stated in the OT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It makes sense that Revelation is where God would state the details of the end times. • The premil interpretation is the most natural way and straight forward way of understanding this passage. • We do receive hints throughout the OT and elsewhere (Is. 11:2-9, 65:20, Zech. 14:6-21, 1 Cor. 15:24).
Binding of Satan	In Jesus' earthly ministry (Mt. 12:28-9, Lk. 10:18) Jesus sees Satan fall like lightning and Jesus talks of binding the strong man. These are descriptions of Jesus decreasing Satan's power in this age.	1 Pet. 5:8, 2 Cor. 4:4, Eph. 2:2, 1 John 4:3, 5:19 – Satan is still alive, well, active, and powerful on planet earth. He does not appear to be sealed in a pit.
Deceives the Nations No More	The church takes the Gospel to all nations, beginning with Pentecost, to make this true in the here and now.	Same arguments as above. Satan seems to still have extreme power as the "prince of the power of the air" both in the lives of individuals and over nations (Ephesians 2:2).
I Saw the "Souls"	This must be a scene from heaven, not a literal experience on earth.	The angel was "coming down from heaven" (20:1), meaning he was descending to the earth – the location of this scene.
They Came To Life	Not necessarily with resurrected bodies. Just in the presence of Christ. <i>Ezesan</i> = they lived (aorist tense).	Souls who "came to life" could certainly be people who have their resurrected bodies
First Resurrection	<p>Going to heaven after death to be with the Lord is likely this "first resurrection," not a full bodily resurrection. Or this is a reference to the bodily resurrection of Christ.</p> <p>Elsewhere there is only one resurrection mentioned – John 5:28-29, Acts 24:15, Dan. 12:2.</p>	<p>Seems clear in this passages that there are implications, "blessed are those [not everyone] who shares in the first resurrection." Not everyone participates in this resurrection (meaning there must be more than one) and it must be talking about more than just the resurrection of Christ.</p> <p>The "one resurrection" verses do not actually exclude the idea of more than one. Even John 5:28-29 refers to a resurrection to life and to judgment—a possible reference to two resurrections. If a principal announces to a group of high school students from different grades that their graduation day is coming, the statement is still true even though they will experience graduation on different days.</p>

Amillennialism



In this position, the millennium is now. Jesus came and proclaimed that the Kingdom is here.

Matthew 28:18 - Jesus says He has all authority and His very presence is already presently with His people.

Kingdoms are ruled with power and authority. Jesus is clear that He does not lack any authority or power right now during this age. He has a very real adversary, but Satan has no power over Christ and death itself has been castrated in the wake of the victorious resurrection of Christ.

The church represents the Body of Christ and His presence is real and actual in the work and presence of the Holy Spirit, also referred to as the "Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9-10).

The millennium is figurative in length. A figure of speech (2 Peter 3:8).

Great Tribulation and destruction can be found throughout history and all over the earth. From the early church and the persecution of Nero to brothers and sisters today in Muslim countries being tortured and killed for their faith.

At the end of the age of the church, Jesus will return, unbelievers will be resurrected to judgment, believers will be resurrected to receive new bodies and a life with God in the New heavens and new earth.

This position would hold that we are in the last days and many of the prophecies of the Old Testament have already been fulfilled.

Acts 2:16-21 - Peter references the prophecy from Joel 2. Joel references the "last days." There will be visions, prophesy, dreams. There will be great wonders in the sky and signs on the earth. Blood, fire, smoke, and the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon to blood. "Before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come."

- » Peter refers to all of these things as being fulfilled in Christ's coming and this moment of Pentecost.
- » Tongues of fire have come from heaven, men are speaking other languages.

- » Wonders and signs had been fulfilled in the miracles of Jesus and more would continue with the Apostles.
- » At the death of Jesus, the sky was darkened (Luke 23:45). At that same time Jesus had bled and died, a possible reference to the moon turning to blood.

Paul alerts the Romans to recognize the moment, "Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now, salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.

The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore, let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Romans 13:11-2).

Tribulation is already upon them, "persevering in tribulation" (Romans 12:12). Hebrews 1:1 - "in these last days" refers to 2000 years ago.

James 5:7-10 - present day patience is based upon knowing the Lord will come soon. "For the coming of our Lord is near."

Jesus, the judge, is standing at the door. A pull of the handle and He is here.

1 Peter 1:20 - The coming of Christ has ushered in the last days.

2 Peter 3:3, Jude 18 - "In the last days" scoffers will say that Jesus will not return. Peter is alerting his readers to the scoffers of their day.

Matthew 24:24 - Jesus announced that antichrists would come, and 1 John 2:18 alerts us to the fact that many have already come. Between Jesus and John this pattern of antichrists has already been set.

Revelation 20:1-6 - "Amillennialism takes a non-literal approach: Satan's binding is God's current restraint of him, enabling the gospel to advance everywhere. Saints who rule are Christians who have died and are now with Christ in heaven. Their first resurrection is a spiritual reality (they become Christians), while the second resurrection will be a bodily reality. At the end of this present area, Christ will defeat a loosed Satan. Thus, the millennium is the current church age" (Allison, 375).

How then can we still be waiting 2000 years later? Peter teaches us that the Lord's perspective is different than ours. To Him, a thousand years is like a day (2 Peter 3:8). Peter not only gives us a perspective on our transcendent God's understanding of time, he also reminds us of the heart of our God, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Things will unfold in His timing even though every generation is to live with eager expectation.

Arguments against Amillennialism

Most are already addressed in Revelation 20:1-6 discussion.

Leaves no room for Israel and a viable interpretation of Romans 11.

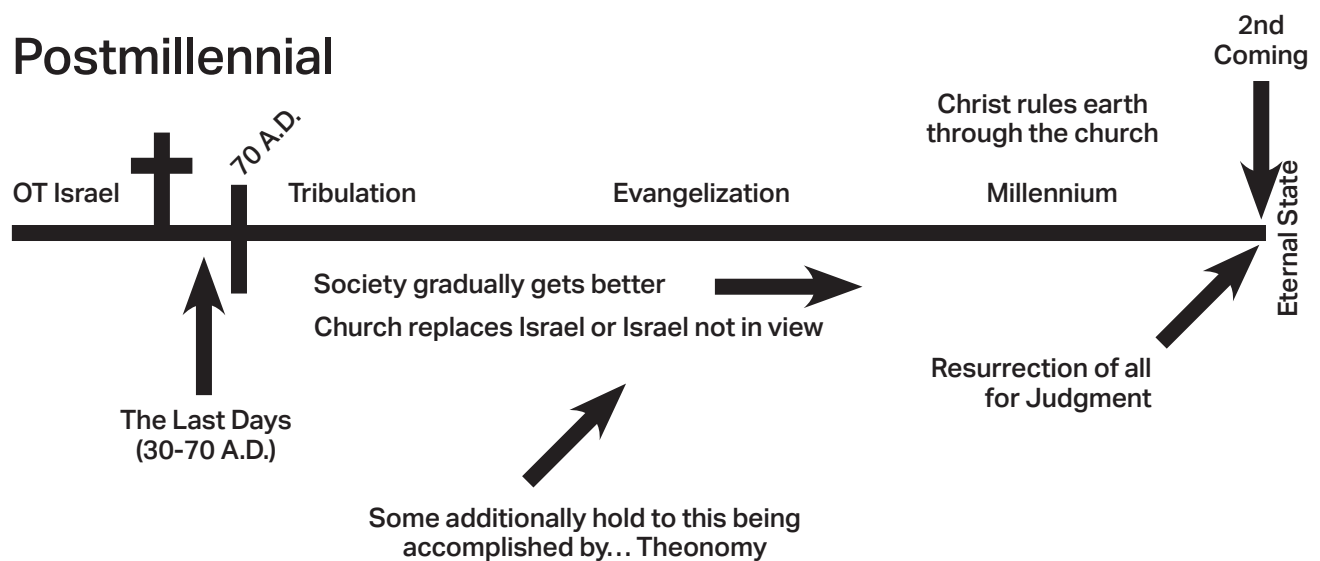
There is a lack of interpretive consistency throughout Scripture.

The chronology of Revelation 19-20 events is simply discredited.

Amillennialists take a difficult and unnatural view of Revelation 20.

The nation of Israel and the church are not treated as distinct though they are mentioned with distinction in the New Testament (Romans 9:2-3, 10:1, 11, Ephesians 2:12).

Postmillennialism



"Postmillennialism also interprets Revelation 20:1-6 in a non-literal way. The millennium is not the present church age, nor is it a future period of Christ's earthly reign. Rather, it will be a golden age emerging out of the current period as the gospel exerts its might impact.

Satan's binding paves the way for the expansion of the gospel throughout the entire world.

Several of Jesus' parables portray the gradual development of the kingdom of God: it is like a mustard seed, "the smallest of all seeds" which, as it grows, eventually "becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and makes nests in its branches" (Matthew 13:31-2).

Similarly, it 'is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened' (13:33). These parables emphasize the gradual growth of the Gospel until it impacts the entire world. Thus, the millennium is this future age of peace and prosperity, after which Christ will return" (Allison, 375).

The Great Commission tells us that Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. If He has all authority, if He is present with us, why would we not accomplish His mission in the world? The millennium is simply a time of might growth through the church. Jesus is the head of the church and fills His church—Jesus reigns through His church on earth. This concept makes more sense than Jesus physically reigning with His church filled with believers of all ages in their glorified bodies.

An alternate understanding of post-mil = Jesus reigns through His church and then Jesus still comes later physically and personally reigns on earth for 1,000 years.

The believer certainly has the freedom to disagree with this point of view, but it should be remembered that the Jews misread all the signs for Jesus. They believed they knew who and what to look for: a mighty ruling king to save the people from their godless rulers. Yet, Jesus surprised them in His manner, means, and purpose for coming. Perhaps we should not assume that we will be able to perfectly predict future events with accuracy.

Arguments against Postmillennialism

Premils agree that Jesus has all authority, but it does not mean that He will use it in this way. His rule and authority remain true whether the mission gets completed by a certain time or not.

The parables teach us that the kingdom will grow, but we are not told to what extent. The mustard seed plant does not grow as big as the whole world.

The church does have some influence in most of the world, but are we told how much of the bread is leaven—5%? 40%? 100%?

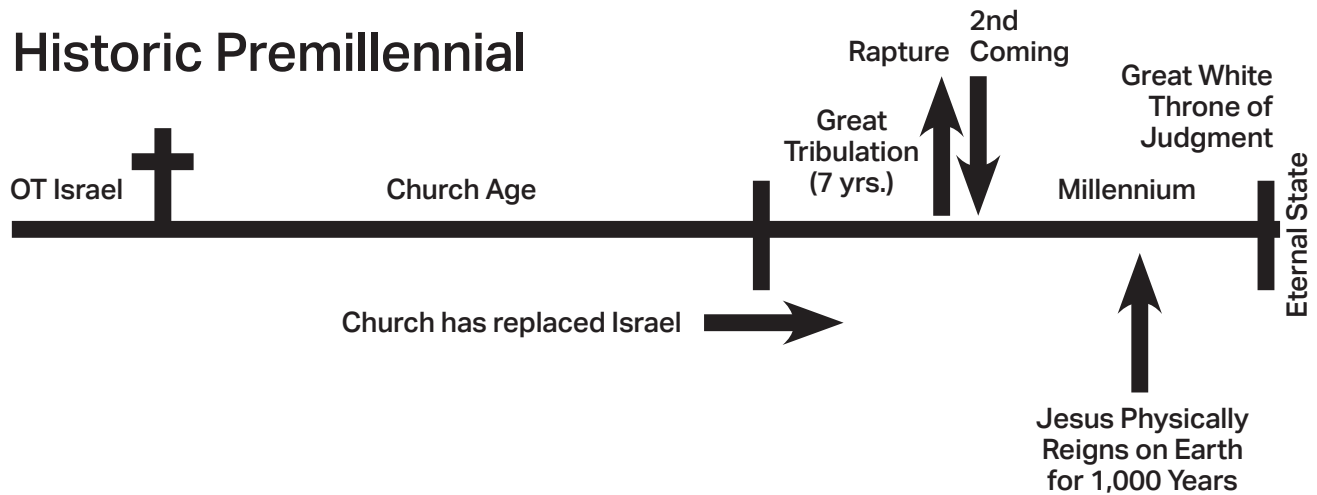
History does not teach us that the world is becoming less wicked, but more wicked. Johnathan Edwards had a very unique perspective and experience in the 1750s.

Scripture seems to paint a different picture than the postmils:

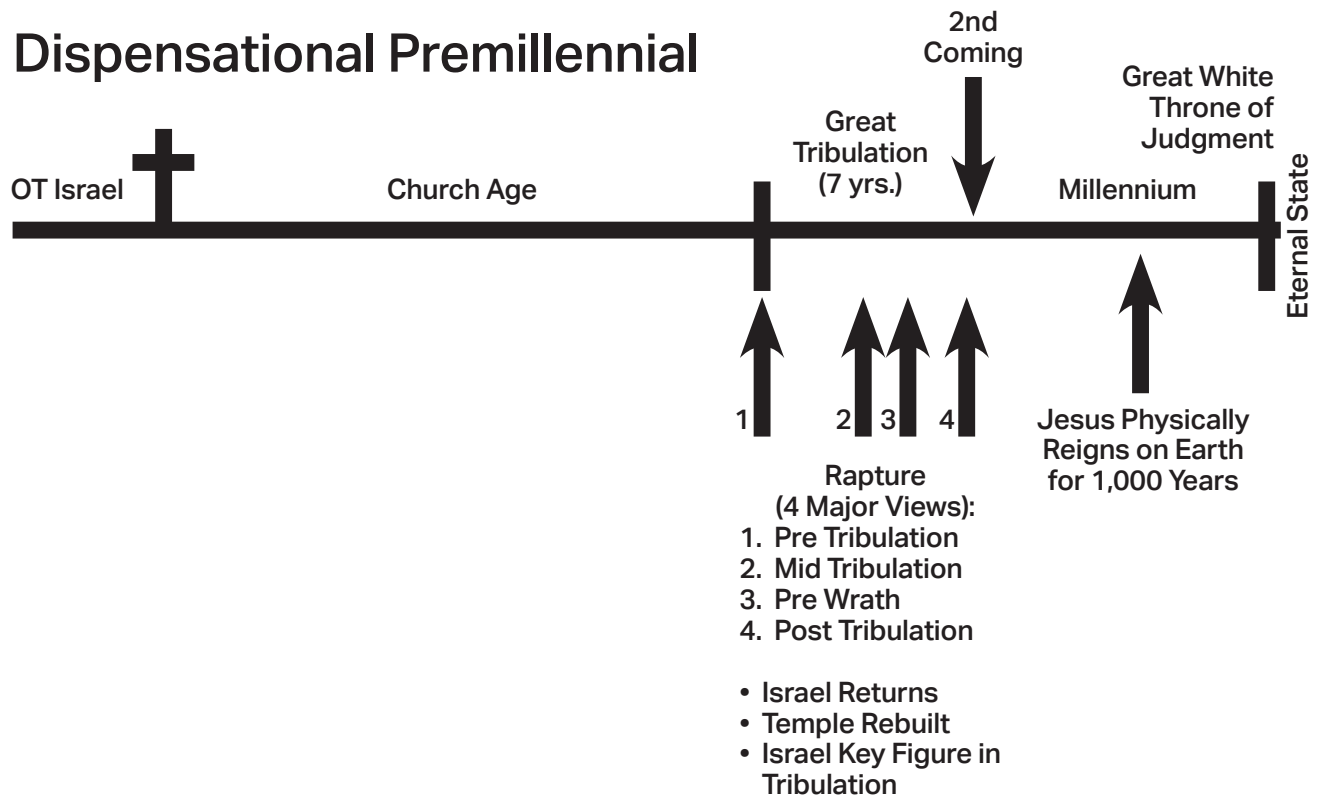
- Matthew 7:13-14 – teaches us that the gate is narrow and few will find it.
- Luke 18:8 – when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 – It seems like things get worse, not better.
- 2 Timothy 3:1-5 – Men will become more wicked in the last days.

Premillennialism

Historic Premillennial



Dispensational Premillennial



Many of the arguments listed above against Amil and Postmil function as positive arguments for Premil (as well as the section clarifying the premil interpretation of Revelation 20). In addition to those:

Several OT passages don't seem to fit into this age or into the New Creation (Isaiah 65:20, 11:6-9, 11:10-11, Psalm 72:8-14, Zechariah 14:5-17).

There are New Testament passages that may reference the millennium (Revelation 2:26-27, 1 Corinthians 15:23-25 – sounds like several possible events to come).

Revelation 20 – We are with Christ, but not yet reigning with Him as pictured in Revelation 6:9-10.

Arguments about the tribulation does not negate or dissuade from the premil position.

Romans 11:26 is clarified. Israel as a nation will see a massive renewal and conversion in the future.

Chronology of Revelation 10-20 occurs after the 2nd coming of Christ. Premil position maintains a consistent hermeneutic and outlines the events that take place after His return.

Arguments against Premillennialism

Majority of against arguments are found in the “pro” sections and in the discussion of amil and postmil position (and are referenced in the amil interpretations of Revelation 20:1-6).

How can glorified saints live on earth with Jesus in a world still filled with sin and suffering? This sounds like the opposite of being freed from sadness, grief, and pain. How will we not be broken over the sin, rebellion, and rejection of Jesus?

Would sinners deny a glorified Christ with all of His glorified children reigning on earth?

There seems to be no clear purpose for the millennium, why not start the eternal state immediately?

Most passages seem to point to a single final moment, a Day of the Lord.

“Be sure to explain your church’s millennial view. If it does not take a stance, encourage participants to develop their own view while they are respectful of other positions. As all the views appeal to Revelation 20 for support, study this passage carefully. Noting its different interpretations by the four positions will underscore the fact at hand that all of them seek to be biblically well grounded” (Allison, 378).

Eschatology: Views of Millennialism

THE PREFIX BEFORE "MILLENNIUM" REFERS TO THE "TIME OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING AS IT RELATES TO THE MILLENNIUM"	PREMILLENNIALISM "SECOND COMING BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM"	POSTMILLENNIALISM "SECOND COMING AFTER THE MILLENNIUM"	AMILLENNIALISM "NO LITERAL MILLENNIUM"
Definition	Also referred to as CHILASTS, refers to the second coming of Jesus Christ to earth PRIOR TO the 1000 year reign – or the millennium.	Christ's second coming will occur after the millennium.	There will be no literal historical reign of Christ on earth for 1000 years.
Characteristics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Christ will return at the end of THIS AGE with His saints to the earth to reign for 1000 years as King. In the millennium the nation Israel will experience the blessing God promised to Abraham and David pertaining to Israel's Land, Nationality or (seed), and Throne. N.T. believers will likewise share in some measure in the covenant blessing having been engrafted into the one people of God (Romans 11). <p>Summary found in Rev. 20:4-6; cf. also Is. 11: 65.</p>	<p>The church is not the kingdom but it will bring in the kingdom (a utopian, Christianized condition) by the preaching of the gospel.</p> <p>Evolutionary process for some – "New age" idea that we are getting better and better and better! Christ does not return at all for these.</p> <p>Christ will not be on the earth during the kingdom. He will rule in the hearts of people, but will return after the millennium. (conservative postmill).</p> <p>Not a literal 1000 year millennium. The church – not Israel will receive the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham and David in a spiritual sense.</p>	<p>The kingdom reign of Christ and His saints is in existence for the period of time between Christ's two advents. (Actually is happening now.)</p> <p>The kingdom is either the church on earth (Augustine's view now perpetuated by the Roman Catholic Church) and/or the saints in heaven (Warfield's view).</p> <p>The promises to Israel about a land, seed and throne are thus completely fulfilled now in a spiritual sense in the church.</p>
Important Advocates	Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, Tertullian, Cyprian, Tyndale, some Anabaptists, Moravians, Mennonites, John Wesley, Ryrie, Walvoord, Graham, Criswell, Patterson, Erickson, Akin, Mohler, Swindoll, and MacArthur.	Daniel Whitby, Johnathan Edwards, Charles Wesley, Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge, Augustus Strong, B.H. Carroll, G.W. Truett.	Origen, Augustine, Roman Catholic Church, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, B.B. Warfield, L. Berkhof.

Views Concerning Last Things

Categories	Amillennialism	Postmillennialism	Historic Premillennialism	Dispensational Premillennialism
Second Coming of Christ	Single event; no distinction between Rapture and Second Coming; introduces eternal state.	Single event; no distinction between Rapture and Second Coming; Christ returns after Millennium.	Rapture and Second Coming simultaneous; Christ returns to reign on earth.	Second Coming in two phases; Rapture of church; second coming to earth 7 years later.
Resurrection	General resurrection of believers and unbelievers at second coming of Christ.	General resurrection of believers and unbelievers at second coming of Christ.	Resurrection of believers at beginning of Millennium. Resurrection of unbelievers at end of Millennium.	Distinction in two resurrections: 1. Church at Rapture; 2. Old Testament/Tribulation saints at Second Coming; 3. Unbelievers at end of Millennium.
Judgments	General judgment of all people.	General judgment of all people.	Judgment at Second Coming. Judgment at end of Tribulation.	Distinction in judgment: 1. Believers' works at Rapture; 2. Jews/Gentiles at end of Tribulation; 3. Unbelievers at end of Millennium.
Tribulation	Tribulation is experienced in this present age.	Tribulation is experienced in this present age.	Posttribulation view: church goes through the future Tribulation.	Pretribulation view: church is raptured prior to Tribulation.
Millennium	No literal Millennium on earth after second coming. Kingdom present in church age.	Present age blends into Millennium because of progress of gospel.	Millennium is both present and future. Christ is reigning in heaven. Millennium not necessarily 1,000 years.	At Second Coming Christ inaugurates literal 1,000-year Millennium on earth.
Israel and the Church	Church is the new Israel. No distinction between Israel and church.	Church is the new Israel. No distinction between Israel and church.	Some distinction between Israel and church. Future for Israel, but church is spiritual Israel.	Complete distinction between Israel and church. Distinct program for each.
Adherents	L. Berkhof; O. T. Allis; G. C. Berkhouwer	Charles Hodge; B. B. Warfield; W. G. T. Shedd; A.H. Strong	G. E. Ladd; A. Reese; M. J. Erickson	L. S. Chafer; J. D. Pentecost; C. C. Ryrie; J. F. Walvoord

Adapted from Paul Enns, *Evangelical Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), p. 383. Used by permission.

Views on the Millennium

Historic Premillennialism (Also called Classical and Nondispensational Premillennialism)	
Statement of View	Premillennialists hold that the return of Christ will be preceded by certain signs, then followed by a period of peace and righteousness in which Christ will reign on earth in person as King. Historic premillennialists understand the return of Christ and the Rapture as one and the same event. They see unity. Therefore they stand apart from the dispensational premillennialist who sees these as two events separated by the seven-year Tribulation. Premillennialism was the dominant eschatological interpretation in the first three centuries of the Christian church. Early fathers Papias, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and others held to this view.
Proponents	George E. Ladd, J. Barton Payne, Alexander Reese, Millard Erickson
Arguments for	Arguments Against
The chronology of Revelation 10-20 shows that immediately following the second coming of Christ the following will occur: the binding of Satan (20:1-3), the first resurrection (20:4-6), and the beginning of the reign of Christ (20:4-7) for a "thousand years." (17-18)*	The reign of Christ does not begin after the first resurrection for he now reigns at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 1:3). (178-79)
At the present time, the church is the spiritual Israel. God will return the nation of Israel to her rightful place to fulfill the promises of the kingdom (Rom. 11) in the millennial kingdom. This passage supports the teaching of verse 24: "How much more readily will these, who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?" (18-29)	While the church benefits spiritually from the promises made to Israel, Israel and the church are never specifically equated. (42-44) A kingdom composed of both glorified saints and people still in the flesh seems too unreal to be possible. (49)
The Old Testament and Christ predicted a kingdom in which the Anointed One would rule (Ps. 2; Matt. 25:24).	The kingdom is an overall teaching of the Bible. It now lies in the church (Matt. 12:28; Luke 17:20-21). Christ reigns now in heaven (Heb. 1:3; 2:7-8). (178-79)
As the prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled in the past, so those concerning the future will be too. This is an argument for consistency in hermeneutics. (27-29)	The interpretation of Revelation 20:1-7 does not necessitate literalism. These verses can be understood symbolically, since the book of Revelation employs many symbols. (161)
The church serves to fulfill some of the promises made to Israel. Christ made this clear after the Jews rejected him (Matt. 12:28; Luke 17:20-21). (20-26)	This view insists that the New Testament interprets the Old Testament prophecies in cases where the New Testament actually is applying a principle found in an Old Testament prophecy (Hos. 11:1 in Matt. 2:15; Hos. 1:10 & 2:23 in Rom. 9:24-26). (42-43) The understanding of "came to life" (Rev. 20:4) can be understood to mean "living," and not resurrection.
Many of the early church fathers held to this view of eschatology. (9)	It is not easy to place the church fathers definitely into one view of eschatology. Also, doctrine is not determined by a survey of church fathers, but by study of Scripture. (41)
A literal 1000-year earthly reign is referred to in only one passage (Rev. 20:1-6) and it is mentioned in apocalyptic literature. The Old Testament cannot be used to supply material on the Millennium. (32)	The Old Testament prophecies provide the basis for New Testament prophecies. The New Testament sets the place and duration of the Millennium (Rev. 20:1-6), and the Old Testament gives much of the nature of the Millennium. (43-46)
Romans 11:26 says that national Israel will be converted. (27-28)	Many passages in the New Testament dissolve distinctions between Israel and the church (Gal. 2:28-29; 3:7; Eph 2:14-16). (109)
God has made a special place for national Israel in his program. (27-28)	Israel was chosen as a nation through which the Messiah would come. Since Jesus finished his work, Israel's unique purpose has been fulfilled. (53)

*The numbers following each of the statements refers to pages in Robert G. Clouse, *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1977). Used by permission. Other statements are from a variety of writers.

Views on the Millennium (con't)

Dispensational Premillennialism	
Statement of View	Adherents of this school are represented by those who generally hold to the concept of two-stages in the coming of Christ. He will come <i>for</i> his church (Rapture) and then <i>with</i> his church (revelation). The two events are separated by a seven-year Tribulation. There is a consistent distinction between Israel and the church throughout history.
Proponents	J. N. Darby, C. I. Scofield, Lewis Sperry Chafer, John Walvoord, Charles Feinberg, Herman Hoyt, Harry Ironside, Alva McClain, Eric Sauer, Charles Ryrie
Arguments For	Arguments Against
This view maintains a consistent hermeneutic that allows Israel to fulfill promises given to them and the church to fulfill its promise. (66-68)	Israel fulfilled its land promises once in the conquest (Josh. 21:43, 45). Its purpose of bringing forth the Messiah has also been fulfilled. (101)
The "coming to life" (Rev. 20:4-5) being designated as the first resurrection supports this view. This resurrection precedes the millennial reign. (37-38)	This resurrection is not a bodily-resurrection because only one bodily resurrection occurs (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). This is a spiritual resurrection. (56-58; 168)
Scriptures reveal both a universal and a mediatorial kingdom which are two aspects of God's rule. The mediatorial kingdom is the Millennium, in which Christ will reign on earth. (72-73ff; 91)	God's rule over the creation has always been through a mediator. Thus his mediatorial rule cannot be restricted to the Millennium. (93)
A literal reading of Revelation 19-20 leads to a dispensational premillennial view. Other views must spiritualize the events.	Much of Revelation must be understood symbolically because of its apocalyptic nature.
The Abrahamic covenant will be completely fulfilled in Israel (Gen. 12:1-3). Its outworking is seen in the Palestinian, Davidic, and new covenants. The church shares the blessings of the new covenant, but does not fulfill its promises (Gal. 3:16).	The promises made to Old Testament Israel were always conditional, based on Israel's obedience and faithfulness. The new covenant is for the church, not for Israel. (100)
The concept of a literal earthly kingdom is an outgrowth of the overall kingdom teachings in both Old and New Testaments. (42-43)	The New Testament, which is the sole authority for the church, replaced the Old Testament and its promises. (97)
The Millennium is possible and necessary because not all of the promises given to Israel have been fulfilled. (Enns, 390)	Israel's disobedience negated their promises, which were based on their faithfulness (Jer. 18:9-10). (98)
The Old Testament describes the kingdom as a literal on-earth reign of Messiah over the whole world. (79-84)	The New Testament shows that Christ established a kingdom at his first coming and is now reigning over the whole world. (102)

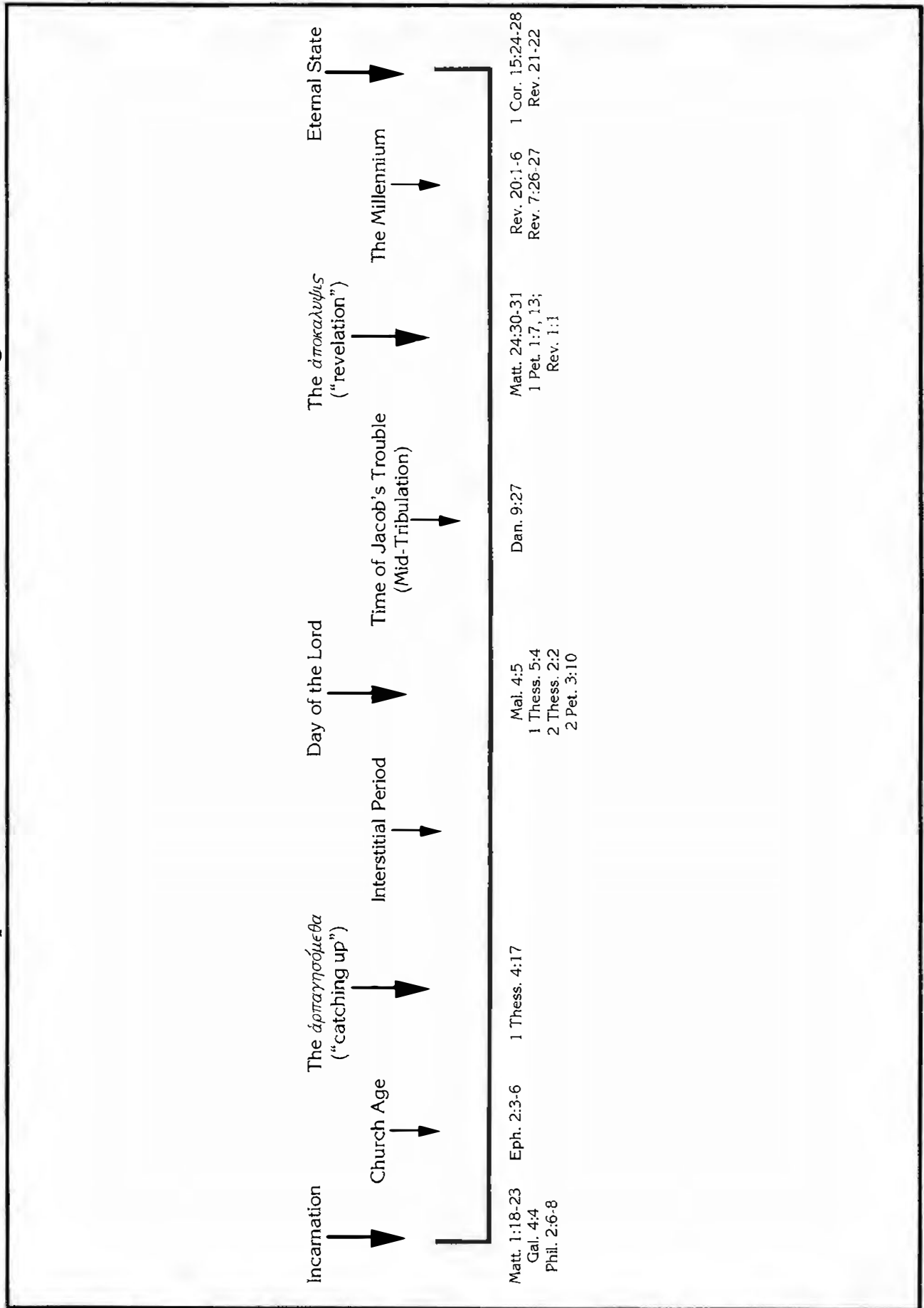
Views on the Millennium (con't)

Postmillennialism	
Statement of View	Postmillennialists believe that the kingdom of God is now extended through teaching, preaching, evangelization, and missionary activities. The world is to be Christianized, and the result will be a long period of peace and prosperity called the Millennium. This will be followed by Christ's return. This position is seemingly gaining more adherents in contemporary circles, such as the Christian Reconstruction Institute for Christian Studies. The leading proponent of traditional postmillennium was Loraine Boettner. See his book <i>The Millennium</i> (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1957).
Proponents	Augustine, Loraine Boettner, A. Hodge, Charles Hodge, W. G. T. Shedd, A. H. Strong, B. B. Warfield, Joachim of Fiore, Daniel Whitby, James Snowden, Christian Reconstructionists
Arguments For	Arguments Against
The rule of the Spirit of God in the heart of the believer is in one sense a millennium (John 14-16). (121)	This view fails to deal adequately with Revelation 20 in formulating and defining its concept of the Millennium. (Erickson, 1208)
The universal diffusion of the gospel is promised by Christ (Matt. 28:18-20).	The Great Commission does command universal gospel proclamation, but the world is characterized by spiritual decline, not spiritual growth.
Christ's throne is in heaven where he is now reigning and ruling (Ps. 47:2; 97:5). The church has the job of proclaiming that truth and seeing people come to faith in him. (118-119)	Neither of these statements necessitates postmillennialism or preclude a future earthly reign.
Salvation will come to all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues (Rev. 7:9-10).	While salvation will come to all nations, this does not mean that all, or nearly all, will be saved. Nor does the New Testament say the Gospel is designed to improve the social conditions in the world.
Christ's parable of the mustard seed shows how the gospel extends and expands slowly but surely until it covers the whole world (Matt. 13:31-32). The saved will far outnumber the lost in the world. (150-51)	A majority of saved people on earth does not guarantee the golden age that postmillennialism expects to come.
Many evidences exist that show that where the gospel is preached, social and moral conditions are being greatly improved.	The attitude of idealistic optimism overlooks the passages that reveal the distress and apostasy of the end times (Matt. 24:3-14; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; 2 Tim. 3:1-7). Also, just as many evidences can be gathered to prove that the world conditions are declining. (151)
Through the preaching of the gospel and the saving work of the Spirit, the world will be Christianized and Christ will return at the end of a long period of peace commonly called the Millennium. (118)	The use of an allegorical approach to the interpretation of Scripture in Revelation 20 is completely allegorizing the thousand year reign. There is a limited amount of scriptural support for this position.

Views on the Millennium (con't)

Amillennialism	
Statement of View	The Bible predicts a continuous parallel growth of good and evil in the world between the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ. The kingdom of God is now present in the world through his Word, his Spirit, his church. This position has also been called "realized millennialism."
Proponents	Oswald Allis, Louis Berkhof, G. Berkouwer, William Hendriksen, Abraham Kuyper, Leon Morris, Anthony Hoekema, other Reformed theologians, and the Roman Catholic Church.
Arguments for	Arguments Against
The conditional nature of the Abrahamic covenant (as well as the other covenants) indicates that fulfillment of it, or the lack of it, is transferred to the church through Jesus Christ (Gen. 12:1-3; Rom. 10; Gal. 3:16).	Many passages show that the Abrahamic Covenant was unconditional and was to be literally fulfilled by Israel.
The land promises of the Abrahamic covenant were expanded from Jews to all believers and from the land of Canaan to the new earth.	This position has problems in being hermeneutically consistent in the interpretation of the Scriptures. It spiritualizes passages that can clearly be understood literally.
Prophecy demands a symbolic approach to interpreting the Bible. Therefore, prophetic passages can be understood in the overall framework of God's outworking of his covenant (e.g., Rev. 20). (161)	The chronology of Revelation 19-20 is continuous and describes events that will occur in the end of the Tribulation and prior to the thousand- year reign of Christ.
The Old and New Testaments are bound together in unity under the covenant of grace. Israel and the church are not two distinct programs but one unified outworking of God's purposes and plans. (186)	Scripture does not clearly reveal a covenant of grace. This is a theological term coined to fit into the amillennial scheme of eschatology.
The kingdom of God is central in biblical history. It was central in the Old Testament, in Jesus' ministry, and in the church and will consummate with Christ's return. There is no need to call for a kingdom at a latter time, for the kingdom has always been. (177-79)	The position clearly does not see God's having a place for Israel in the future. Amillennialists have difficulty in explaining Romans 11.
History is moving toward the goal of the total redemption of the universe (Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:18). (187)	The total redemption of the universe is the goal of all millennial views. This does not specifically support an amillennial view.
Revelation 20:4-6 refers to the reign of souls with Christ in heaven as he reigns by his word and his spirit. (164-66)	Revelation 20:4-5 clearly refers to a resurrection, yet the amillennialists avoid the issue. Forms of the Greek word <i>zao</i> (ζῶω) "to live" are used this way for resurrection in John 5:25 and Revelation 2:8.
The New Testament often equates Israel and the church as a unity (Acts 13:32-39; Gal. 6:15; 1 Peter 2:9). (Hoekema, 197-98)	National Israel and the church are treated as distinct in the New Testament (Acts 3:12; 4:8-10; 21:28; Rom. 9:3-4; 10:1; 11; Eph. 2:12).

Dispensational Time Chart of Last Things



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Appendices

APPENDIX A:

Popular Systems of Interpretation

Dispensationalism - It is premillennial system that uses a futurist interpretation of Revelation. The system describes God's redemptive plan as taking place through clear periods, administrations, or "dispensations." Each period includes new revelation and distinction from the previous (The Fall, The Law, The Coming of Christ...). Each dispensation may have distinct rules of interpretation. The clear lines of distinction between dispensations leads to a conclusion that Israel and the Church have a high level of distinction from one another - now and maybe even eternally. Further study can be done by reading the Scofield Study Bible, Walvoord, Pentecost, Theissen, or Ryrie. Distinctions between Classical and Progressive Dispensationalism.

Covenant Theology - Many in this group lean more towards a heavy symbolic hermeneutic in the book of Revelation. This is a system based around progressive revelation of God and his redemptive plan through His Covenant with His people (Adam, Noah, Abraham...). God's covenant is ultimately with those who believe, so no clear distinction is made between Israel and the church. Covenant theologians do not view the Bible in distinct dispensations as much as the progressive growth of a single theme - the Redemptive Covenant of God. Deeper study can be done by reading O. Palmer Robertson, Geerhardus Vos, Louis Berkhof, Robert L. Reymond, or W. J. Dumbrell.

Classic Dispensationalism - This position describes a particular view of the end times developed by John Nelson Darby in the mid-nineteenth century. It was popularized by the Scofield Reference Bible and can be seen depicted fictionally in the Left Behind series. Clarifying characteristics include:

- Prophecies to Israel and to the Church need to be strictly distinct from one another.
- OT prophecies concerning the Jews have been fulfilled or will be fulfilled for ethnic Jews in the future.
- The church will be removed from the earth by a rapture (taken up to Christ) before the great tribulation begins.
- During this time, many Jews will receive Jesus as their Messiah.
- The appearance of the Antichrist will initiate the last phase of history.
- Jesus will return to earth and establish a literal 1,000-year reign, before the final judgment and restoration.
- In the end, there are two peoples of God - Israel and the Church.

Progressive Dispensationalists - Now held by many theologians (Blaising, Bock).

- The kingdom of God is initiated at the first coming of Christ and will consummated at his 2nd coming.
- There is no sharp distinction between Israel and the Church. Not necessarily two eternally distinct groups.
- Many OT prophecies are partially fulfilled by the church, while there is a future for ethnic Israel.
- Jesus is sitting on "David's throne" and rules in the here and now, but His rule will be completely realized by all in the end. They hold to an "already, not yet" hermeneutic.

APPENDIX B:

The Broad Eschatological Outlook of the Old and New Testaments

"Eschatology must not be thought of as something which is found only in, say, such Bible books as Daniel and Revelation, but as dominating and permeating the entire message of the Bible" (Hoekema, 3). The following discussion is primarily taken from *The Last Things*, by Anthony Hoekema.

Christianity is always forward looking. Paul makes this clear as he summarizes the Christian life as "faith, hope, and love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). To remove forward looking hope is to remove an essential component of our faith.

This was true of the Old Testament believer as well. "But we must say again that the faith of the Old Testament believer was eschatological through and through. He looked forward to God's intervention in history, both in the near future and in the distant future" (Hoekema, 12).

Hebrews 11:10 & 13 teach that Abraham looked forward to future city. He saw what was promised from a distance and trusted that God would make it so, and in doing so, God honors him for his forward-looking faith!

The Old Testament believer looked forward to:

A coming Messiah.

One who would:

- Crush the head of the serpent
- Bless the nations
- Be of Abraham's seed (his descendent)
- Sit on the throne of David
- Fulfill the roles of Prophet, Priest, and King (Deuteronomy 18:15, Psalm 110:4, Zechariah 9:9)
- Be with His people as Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14)
- Be a suffering servant (Isaiah 52-53)
- Be as the "son of man" (Daniel 7:13-14)

The Kingdom of God

God is described as King of both Israel and the whole earth (Deuteronomy 33:5, Psalm 84:3, Isaiah 43:15 & Psalm 29:10, 47:2, Isaiah 6:5, Jeremiah 46:18).

The New Covenant

Jeremiah 31:31-34 speaks of a new covenant. Hebrews 8:8-13 and 1 Corinthians 11:25 teaches that Jesus ushered in the new covenant spoken of in the Old Testament.

The Restoration of Israel

Isaiah 11:11 - Israel's return will be in repentance and faith (Ezekiel 36:24-28, Isaiah 24-27).

The language "yet a second time" in this passage points to the Exodus event in Israel's past.

God will work a great miracle to bring His people back and redeem them.

Joel also speaks of the day when God restores His people (Joel 2:28-31). He speaks of an outpouring of the Spirit and speaks of cosmic events such as the darkening of the sun and the moon turning to blood.

Prophetic Perspective - Joel's prophecy speaks of what feels like a singular event, but actually takes place thousands of years apart.

Joel 2:28-29 - speaks of an outpouring of the Spirit, which takes place in the book of Acts. Joel also then speaks of a great and terrible day of the Lord (2:30-31) that uses language similar to Jesus' language as He describes his Second Coming (Luke 21:25, Matthew 24:29).

The Old Testament reader would likely see all of this as a single event, but from New Testament eyes, it is clearly two distinct events.

The Day of the Lord

This is a very confusing and loaded phrase. It can speak of a day that is near (Obadiah 15-16) for the nation of Israel, or it can speak of a distant day.

Isaiah 13:6-22 speaks of both intertwined together. Babylon will be destroyed (6-8, 17-22), which takes place during these days (Persia). And it speaks of a distant day, again described by cosmic events (9-11), reflecting the words of Jesus describing His return.

"It would seem as if Isaiah is seeing the destruction of Babylon and the final, eschatological day of the Lord as if they were one day, one divine visitation" (Hoekema, 10).

The Day of the Lord was also carried differing expectations. Amos 5:18 spoke of it as a day of judgment (along with Isaiah 2:12, 17, and Zephaniah 1:14-15).

Yet Joel 2:32 views it as the day that will bring salvation.

Malachi 4:2, 5 - Judgment is in view, along with healing and joy for all those who fear God's name.

It appears that this future day will include both judgment for some and salvation for others.

It is crucial for the interpreter to see the complexity of these prophecies. Identifying the situation of the audience, the intention of the author, and understanding the nature of the prophetic fulfillment is essential at coming to the right conclusions about the text. We pray, we study, and we discuss - but we must be slow to assume that we have figured out all the answers (humility is our friend).

The New Heavens and the New Earth

The great eschatological hope of Israel included the restoration of creation (Isaiah 65:17).

"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind." Isaiah 66:22

Fruitful fields 32:15

Deserts shall blossom 35:1

Dry places will be springs of water 35:7

Peace will return to the animal world 11:6-8

The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea 11:9

The Eschatological Outlook of the New Testament

The greatest eschatological event has already happened in the person and work of Jesus in time space history.

According to Anna and Simeon, Jesus was the one they were looking for - the consolation and redemption of Israel (Luke 2:25, 2:38).

Jesus is the fulfillment of many of the Old Testament prophecies (Matthew 1:20-23). He is the single sacrifice for all time (Hebrews 10:12).

Jesus' coming announces that the kingdom of God / heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:2, Mark 1:15).

Jesus told the Pharisees that the kingdom of God has come upon them (Matthew 12:28).

We are living in the Last Days

Peter quotes Joel in Acts 2:16-17, declaring that they are in the last days.

"Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction upon whom **the ends of the ages have come.**" 1 Corinthians 10:11

"Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but **now once at the consummation of the ages** He has manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Hebrews 9:26

"Children it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that **it is the last hour.**" 1 John 2:18

Even now we are living in an inaugurated or realized eschatology.

Already, Not Yet Tension

Even though we are in the last days, much is yet to come. There are the last days (plural), but there is still a last day (singular) coming.

"He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the **last day.**" John 12:48

What looked like a single event from Old Testament eyes, is now shown to be multiple events.

The events have begun, yet many are yet to come. So we are indeed living in the last days, yet much is yet to be fulfilled.

From these basic biblical concepts, there can be a simple summary. More details are given and must be filled in, but we know this is the starting point of the eschatological conversation:

Creation	1st Coming of Christ	2nd Coming
The past age	This age	The age to come
	The last days	The last day
	The end of the ages	The end of the age

Great blessings have come, yet even greater are yet to come!

Hope reigns in the life of the believer.

A study of end times must finalize in a sense of encouragement (Revelation 1:3)

In the end, "blessed" are those who have believed in Christ (Revelation 22:14)

APPENDIX C: Views on the Rapture

Pretribulation	
Statement of View	Stated: Christ will come for his saints; afterward he will come with his saints. The first stage of Christ's coming is called the Rapture; the second is called the revelation. The older school emphasized the issue of "imminency." However, in recent days the crux of this position centers more around the aspect of God's wrath and whether the church is called to experience any or all of it during the Tribulation.
Proponents	John F. Walvoord, J. Dwight Pentecost, John Feinberg, Paul Feinberg, Herman Hoyt, Charles Ryrie, Rene Pache, Henry C. Thiessen, Leon Wood, Hal Lindsey, Alva McClain, John A. Sproul, Richard Mayhue.
Arguments For	Arguments Against
The Bible says that Christians (the church) are exempt from divine wrath (1 Thess. 1:10). This exemption does not mean that the church does not experience trials, persecution, or suffering.	Christians are exempt from God's wrath (ὀργή), but the majority of passages dealing with tribulation (θλίψις) refer to the tribulation that believers suffer. Exemption from wrath does not mean exemption from tribulation. Also, if Christians are exempt from wrath of the Tribulation, those who believe during the Tribulation would need to be raptured at conversion.
The believers are also exempt from the time of wrath recorded in Revelation 3:10. This is supported by the way the Greek preposition <i>ek</i> (ἐκ) is used in this passage.	Normative meaning of <i>ek</i> (ἐκ) is "out from the midst of" and does not require a snatching from trial. It can mean kept from tribulation without being taken from trial. The normal preposition for "keeping away from" is <i>ἀπο</i> .
All positions of tribulation rapture predict a millennial kingdom. The pre-tribulation position calls for living, nonglorified believers to enter the kingdom, thus to repopulate the kingdom (Zech. 12:10-13:1; Rom. 11:26).	144,000 of Revelation can populate the Earth during the time of the Millennium.
This position offers a clear distinction between the Rapture and the revelation, an interval of time. This is consistent with various Scriptures that discuss both these events. For the Rapture: John 14:1-14; 1 Cor. 15:51-58; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; for the revelation, or the second coming of Christ: Zech. 14; Matt. 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-27; Rev. 19.	The "blessed hope" and "glorious appearing" are the same events (Rapture and revelation). The New Testament speaks of one second coming, not of two comings or of a coming in two stages. The distinction may be in the nature of events not in time differences.
This position stresses imminency. Christ can return at any time; therefore believers have an attitude of expectancy (Titus 2:13). There are no preparatory warnings of an impending tribulation for the church-age believers (Acts 20:29-30; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1-3).	Imminency for the apostles and the early church during this time revolved around the second coming of Christ. Thus, the two events are coterminous, not separate (Matt. 24:3, 27, 37, 39; 2 Thess. 2:8; James 5:7-8; 1 John 2:28). Also, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10 may list events to be expected before the Rapture.
This position sees a literal Tribulation as given in Revelation 6-19. There is no mention of the church (argument from silence) in Revelation 4-18.	Much language in Revelation 6-19 is figurative, the tribulation may be as well. Argument from silence is inherently weak reasoning.
The Restrainer mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 is the Holy Spirit indwelling the church. He must remove her (the church) before the Tribulation begins.	Holy Spirit's indwelling ministry is not equivalent to his restraining work. Also, passage does not clearly equate the restrainer with the Holy Spirit, or the removal of the restraint with a rapture of the church.

Several portions of this chart from adapted from Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), pp. 1149-1224. Used by permission; also Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Paul D. Feinberg, Douglas J. Moo, and Richard R. Reiter, *The Rapture: Pre-, Mid-, Post-Tribulation?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984). Used by permission.

Views on the Rapture

Partial Rapture	
Statement of View	This position states that only believers who are watching and waiting for the Lord will be raptured at various times before and during the seven-year Tribulation. Those who are raptured are spiritually mature saints, both dead and living (1 Thess. 4:13-18).
Proponents	Joseph Seiss, G. H. Lang, Robert Govett, Witness Lee, G. H. Pember, Ira E. David, D. H. Panton
Arguments For	Arguments Against
New Testament often views the resurrection as a reward to be strived for (Matt. 19:28-29; Luke 9:62; 20:35; Phil. 3:10-14; Rev. 2:11; 3:5). Therefore, not all believers will gain the first resurrection, only those who are worthy.	Rapture is part of the culmination of salvation. God starts salvation by grace and will finish it by his grace, not by our works. (Eph. 2:8-9)
Other Scriptures indicate partial rapture of believers, or an idea similar to this (Matt. 24:40-51).	There is confusion between verses that apply to Israel and verses that apply to the church in the Gospel passages. This is not the Rapture, but a taking away to judgment as in the example of the Flood in Matthew 24:39. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 says all believers will be raptured.
There is an emphasis on watching, waiting, working, and the hope of rewards (Matt. 24:41-42; 25:1-13; 1 Thess. 5:6; Heb. 9:28).	The emphasis is on working for rewards (crowns, 2 Tim. 4:8) not for participation in the Rapture.
There are verses that emphasize the need to suffer in order to reign (Rom. 8:16-17; Luke 22:28-30; Acts 14:22; Col. 3:24; 2 Thess. 1:4-5). Therefore, believers must suffer now or during the Tribulation before they can reign with Christ.	Believers suffer in every age, and all believers will reign with Christ. The suffering and reigning of Christians is never linked to any supposed order of the rapture.
A believer, through sinning, can lose his right to enjoy the first resurrection and the kingdom (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Gal. 5:19-21; Heb. 12:14).	These passages speak of the unsaved not entering the kingdom. They do not apply to believers.
Worthy, watching believers will be rewarded by being raptured before the Tribulation (Rev. 3:10).	There is the division in the church, the body of Christ. It seems that those worthy of being translated will be raptured, while those not worthy will be left behind. Passages like John 14:1; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 obviously include all believers.
Since the baptism of the Spirit empowers to witness (Acts 1:8) and not all believers witness, not all believers are in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) and not all are raptured.	The baptism of the Spirit places all believers in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13).

Views on the Rapture

Midtribulation	
Statement of View	This position sees that the church, believers in Christ, are raptured in the middle of the tribulation period, prior to the Great Tribulation. This view offers the best of the pretribulation and posttribulation positions. It also has the mid-seventieth-week Rapture.
Proponents	Gleason L. Archer, Norman Harrison, J. Oliver Buswell, Merrill C. Tenney, G. H. Lang
Arguments For	Arguments Against
This position offers fewer problems than either the pre- or posttribulation views. It avoids the problems of the two extremes.	There is a loss of imminency in this position (as also in posttribulation). No longer are we called upon to wait and watch, but to look for preparatory signs, as given in the book of Revelation and in Matthew 24:1-14.
There is a great emphasis on the 3 1/2 years (42 months, 1,260 days) in the Scripture to divide the 7 years of Tribulation (Dan. 7; 9:27; 12:7; Rev. 11:23; 12:3, 6, 14).	The emphasis on the middle of the Tribulation is due to the breaking of the covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:27), not because of the Rapture.
The Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24-25) talks of the coming, appearing, and return of Christ. It coincides with the Rapture passage in 1 Thessalonians 4:15.	The only concrete link is the use of <i>parousia</i> in both passages. Many other differences in the contexts make this a weak link.
2 Thessalonians 2:14 clearly specifies preceding signs to the Rapture.	2 Thessalonians 2:1ff. refers to the two events preceding the Day of the Lord, not the rapture of the church.
Revelation 11:15-19 mentions the seventh trumpet, which is identical to the trumpet of God in 1 Thessalonians 4:16.	Does the Rapture truly occur in Revelation 11 just because there is a trumpet sound? The argument is weak and has no biblical basis.
This position keeps the distinction between the Rapture and revelation, thus two stages in the coming of Christ.	Pretribulation also maintains temporal distinction. Posttribulation maintains a distinction as well, though it is a difference in essence rather than time.
The church is delivered from the wrath of God but not from trials and testing, since the Rapture occurs in the middle of the Tribulation, just prior to the great outpouring of God's wrath.	Those who hold this view must devise a new concept of wrath in the book of Revelation. There is forced spiritualization of chapters 1-11 for contemporary purposes and not future fulfillment. The church can be delivered from wrath either by pretribulation rapture or by protection from wrath.
Just as there is overlapping in the book of Acts in terms of the program of God for the church and Israel, so there is overlapping in the program of God in the book of Revelation.	The church has both Jews and Gentiles in it. This does not necessitate, however, an overlapping of God's program for the church and for national Israel.
This view allows for the nonglorified saints at the end of the Tribulation to enter the millennial kingdom to repopulate the world.	Pretribulation also allows for repopulation. Also, it is possible that some unbelievers will enter the Millennium since the conversion of Israel will not take place until the Second Advent.

Views on the Rapture

Posttribulation	
Statement of View	This position asserts that the living believers are to be raptured at the second coming of Christ, which will occur at the end of the Tribulation. Within this camp, there are four views as categorized by Walvoord: (a) classic, (b) semiclassic, (c) futurist, (d) dispensational. The spectrum is broad, encompassing a period of time from the early church fathers to the present century.
Proponents	<p>Classic: J. Barton Payne</p> <p>Semiclassic: Alexander Reese, Norman MacPherson, George L. Rose, George H. Fromow</p> <p>Futurist: George Ladd, Dave MacPherson</p> <p>Dispensational: Robert H. Gundry, Douglas J. Moo</p> <p>Others: Harold Ockenga, J. Sidlow Baxter</p>
Arguments For	Arguments Against
The Rapture is preceded by unmistakable signs (Matt. 24:3-31). These signs are part of the tribulation period the saints must go through. The culmination will be the return of Christ, which involves the rapture of believers (Matt. 24:29-31, 40-41). In the Olivet Discourse Christ does talk of the Rapture with the revelation.	The position raises problems about the repopulation of the millennial kingdom by flesh and blood believers if they are all raptured and glorified.
The parable of the wheat and tares (Matt. 13:24) shows that separation takes place at the end of the age. At that time, the good (believers) are distinguished from the bad (unbelievers), and this occurs at the end of the Tribulation.	The view that the 144,000 in Revelation are the ones who populate the earth fails to take the context of this passage into consideration.
The order of resurrection demands that all believers of all ages be brought back in their glorified bodies at the end of the Tribulation (Rev. 20:4-6).	Their exegetical argument of Revelation 3:10 with <i>ek</i> ("from") is weak. To interpret "trial" as anything else but God's wrath is not doing justice to this word or the text.
The New Testament words on the return of Christ make no distinction of stages: epiphany, manifestation, revelation, parousia, the day, that day, the day of Jesus Christ, the day of the Lord Jesus, and the day of the Lord.	The sequence of events, connecting 1 Thessalonians 4 with the Rapture and 1 Thessalonians 5 with the Day of the Lord, is glossed over in determining chronological order of events.
The phrase "keep you from the hour of trial" in Revelation 3:10 can also refer to deliverance from the wrath of Satan as it operates in the Tribulation period.	Just as Scripture may be somewhat silent regarding a pretribulation rapture, so there is greater silence in a posttribulation rapture. This is especially true in John's prophetic letter of Revelation, where there is more emphasis on the return of Christ. A case in point is the vague mention of the church in Revelation 4-18.
The rise in apostasy is a sign that will precede the return of Christ (2 Thess. 2:8).	The argument that a posttribulation rapture was the belief of the historic Christian church falls apart when we see that what was believed in the early church is quite different from what is believed today. Nevertheless, the basis of a doctrinal truth is not the early church, but the Word of God.
Much of scriptural teaching to the church concerning the end times is meaningless if the church does not go through the Tribulation (Matt. 24:15-20).	This position conflicts with the teaching of the imminent return of Christ. Scripture teaches us to wait and watch, not for preparatory signs of Christ's coming but for the blessed hope of his return (Titus 2:13).

THE RAPTURE AND THE TRIBULATION

Posttribulation - The view that the rapture will coincide with the second coming of Christ at the end of the tribulation (Thus the church will go through the tribulation).

A. Types of posttribulationism.

1. Classic posttribulationism (ex. J. Barton Payne)
 - a. The tribulation is not literal.
 - b. The church is now at the end of the tribulation.
 - c. The rapture/second coming is imminent. → they try to hold to
2. Semiclassic posttribulationism (ex. A. Reese)
 - a. Not all of the tribulation is literal.
 - b. Part of the tribulation is future.
 - c. The church is presently in the (first part) of the tribulation.
 - d. The rapture/second coming is near but not imminent.
3. Futurist posttribulationism (ex. G. E. Ladd)
 - a. The tribulation is literal.
 - b. The tribulation is future.
 - c. The rapture/second coming is not imminent.
4. Dispensational posttribulationism (ex. R. Gundry)
 - a. The tribulation is literal.
 - b. The tribulation is future.
 - c. (The Day of the Lord begins at the end of the tribulation.)
 - d. The rapture takes place before Armageddon.
 - e. The second coming ends Armageddon.
 - f. Neither the rapture nor the second coming are imminent.

I. Posttribulational arguments

1. Argument: Nowhere does the Scripture teach that the rapture is pretribulational.

Response:

- 1) There is Scripture which implies a pretrib. rapture. (1 Thess 4:13-5:11)
- 2) There is no Scripture which denies a pretrib. rapture.
- 3) The reality of His imminent coming is only satisfied by a pretrib. position. (Titus 2:13)

2. Argument: Passages that teach a deliverance from wrath most likely refer to a deliverance through wrath (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Rev. 3:10; cf. 2 Tim. 4:17-18).

Response: - Though such interpretation(s) are possible, they, in context, are not the best interpretations.
-- Also, the overall development of Scripture points more to a pretrib. position.
-- Christians are said not to be destined for wrath. (1 Thess. 5:9)
-- One should distinguish between tribulations and The Tribulation.

- - - - - Excursis: Discussion of Revelation 3:10- - - - -

* A posttribulational view:

- a. "The hour of testing"
 - 1) In heaven and on earth (?)
 - 2) Does not imply a period of time but rather trials in that period
 - 3) cf. Jer. 30:7 and similar promise
 - 4) Some limit it to the Roman world of John's day
- b. "Out from within" "keep from" (tereo ek) -- kept thru, guarded and protected thru, preserved in (internal protection vs. external protection)
(yet many are martyred during this time!)
- c. Comparison with John 17:15

Post-trib. argue that this (like 3:10) is a prayer for preservation of the disciples in the moral sphere of Satan since they are left in the world. But tereo ek argues best here for preservation in an outside position.

- - - - - End of Excursis - - - - -

3. Argument: The removal of the restrainer in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8 does not teach a pretribulational rapture.

Response: - It does not deny it.

- Context affirms the Day of the Lord was not present and believers in error for thinking it was or that they would experience it.
- Holy Spirit is the restrainer; He indwells us; if He is removed as to His restraining influence, we can be removed with Him.

4. Argument: The rapture must be posttribulational since it is part of the first resurrection and the first resurrection is said to be after the tribulation (Dan. 12:1-3; Rev. 20:4-6; 1 Cor. 15:23-25).

Response: - 1st resurrection is not a time of resurrection but a kind of resurrection (to life! 2nd to death!)
-- Christ resurrection in 1 Cor. 15 precedes the 1st resurrection in time!

5. Argument: 1 Thessalonians 4-5 teaches a posttribulational rapture.

- a. Comfort is given that death does not diminish future hopes.
- b. These same believers look for the Day of the Lord.
- c. The Day of the Lord occurs at the end of the tribulation.
- d. Putting both chapters together leads to a posttribulational rapture.

Response: - Point C is incorrect

- The Day of the Lord contains all of the Tribulation (if not being equal to it).
- Chron. reading of 1 Thess. 4-5 implies pretribulationism.

6. Argument: Matthew 24:1-44 teaches a posttribulational rapture in that the rapture event of verses 39b-41 follows the signs of the tribulation in verses 4-39a.

Response: Rapture is not in view in Matt. 24-25. Matt. 24:39-41 refers to those taken in judgment not rapture.

7. Argument: 2 Thess. 1-2 teaches that the rapture occurs at the time of the 2nd coming after the Day of the Lord.

Response: - Rapture and coming of the Day of the Lord are associated together.

- Thess. did not expect (it seems) to be in the Day of the Lord and were troubled by this false teaching.
- Holy Spirit as restraining embodied in the church is problematic here.

8. Argument: Revelation favors a posttribulational rapture since no pretribulational rapture is mentioned and saints are explicitly said to be in the tribulation.

Response: - Rapture is not in view at all in Revelation, thus it supports no position.

- Word church (ekklesia) occurs 19 times in Rev. 1-3, once in Rev. 22, but not at all in 4-18. This must be accounted for.
- Word "saints" could easily apply to those converted during the tribulation, and does not prove the presence of the pre-tribulation church.
- Rev. 19 - Who is coming with Christ?

- II. Midtribulationism (also Pre-Wrath rapturism)- The view that the rapture will take place at the mid point of the tribulation period, but the second coming will occur at its end (thus the church will go through part of the tribulation.). Prewrath rapturism sees the rapture 3/4 of the way thru Daniel's 70th week.

A. Basic tenets of midtribulationism

1. The tribulation is future.
2. The wrath of God is poured out only in the second half of the tribulation.
3. Predictions that the church will go through tribulation are fulfilled by the first half of the tribulation.
4. Predictions of deliverance from wrath are fulfilled by the rapture preceding the second half.
5. Thus the rapture is not imminent.

B. Basic arguments of midtribulationism

1. Argument: The wrath of God is descriptive only of the second half of the tribulation.

Response: Revelation 6-19 will not allow this, esp. Rev. 6. The wrath of God is present throughout the 7 years, though intensifying no doubt in the last half (3 1/2 years).

2. Argument: The rapture can be clearly seen in Revelation 11.
 - a. Rev. 10:7 teaches that the mystery of God will be accomplished in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet. Note that the rapture in 1 Corinthians 15:51 is said to be a mystery accomplished at the sound of the trumpet (v. 52). 1 Thessalonians 4 also places this event at the sound of the trumpet.

- b. The rapture of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:11-12 occurs at the time of the rapture of the church said to be 1260 days into the tribulation (half way) at the time of the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

Response: - It is spiritualizing to see a rapture at 11:11-12, just as would be the case to see a rapture at 4:1. Rev. 10:7 ~~is~~ rapture. Mystery does not always refer to the rapture though it also is a mystery. Witnesses ~~is~~ rapture because the most essential element is missing: Translation of living people without death. These two are not necessarily or even probably symbols of the church.

III. Pretribulationism - The view that the rapture will take place in history without warning after which the tribulation will begin and be followed at its completion by the second coming of Christ (Thus the church will not go through the tribulation).

A. Some basic tenets

- 1. The tribulation is future.
- 2. The rapture is imminent; the second coming is not.
- 3. The rapture concerns the church (redeemed of all ages prior to the tribulation); the tribulation concerns Israel and the gentile nations.

B. Some basic arguments

- 1. I Thessalonians 4-5 favors a pretribulational rapture.
 - a. Comfort is given that the dead will be united with Christ at His coming.
 - b. These same believers are expecting the Day of the Lord.
 - c. The Day of the Lord describes (better "contains") the whole of the tribulation.
 - d. Believers are said to be separated from unbelievers at the beginning of this day.
 - e. Believers are said to be not appointed to the wrath of that day.
- 2. 2 Thessalonians 2 favors a pretribulational rapture.

- a. The rapture and the coming of the Day of the Lord are associated in 2:1-2. This fits the pretribulational view of the rapture as beginning or just prior to the Day of the Lord.
 - b. The Thessalonians were surprised and alarmed at the prospects of the Day of the Lord coming upon them. This should not be the case if they had been taught posttribulationism.
 - c. Paul's insistence that the Day of the Lord had not come upon them would reassure their pretribulational hope. But how could his words be of any comfort to them if Paul was confirming their posttribulationism?
(Is the church supposed to hope to not be the tribulation church? But how is it they are supposed to hope for Christ's coming?)
3. Revelation 3:10 favors a pretribulational rapture. (See detailed treatment in J. Townsend, "Revelation 3:10 and The Rapture of The Church," ThM Thesis, DTS, 1978.)
Note the Purpose
- a. The meaning of "keep from", tereo ek, i.e., "outside position" not "out from within"
Best interpretation is "exemption from"
(cf. John 12:27; Acts 15:29; Prov. 21:23 LXX)
-- Tereo ek does not describe the rapture, but the position and status of the church during the hour of testing. It thus describes the results of the rapture not the rapture itself.
 - b. The significance of "The Hour of Testing."
A reference of the whole time
(The time [hour] is in view, more than the testing only)
 - c. Comparison with John 17:15
Object of tereo ek in John is a person.
Object of tereo ek in Rev. is a time.
* But John may also have the idea of exclusion as well.
 - d. Conclusion
Rev. 3:10 fits best the pretrib. position.
4. There is no passage that cannot be harmonized with a pretribulational view.
5. Pretribulationism is necessary for a premillennialism in which old and New Testament promises are literally and harmoniously fulfilled.
- a. A posttribulational rapture does not allow easily/readily for a believing remnant in earthly

bodies at the time of the second coming to enter and populate the millennium.

- b. The mystery of the rapture is a fitting conclusion to the mystery of the church existing prior to the reinstitution of Israel's appointed history (the 70th week).
- c. The tribulation saints are distinguished between Jew and gentile. Furthermore, this distinction remains as these saints enter the millennium to populate it.
- d. The ultimate and primary destiny of the church is not the land of Israel or the nations but the new Jerusalem.
- e. A pretribulation view best harmonizes these expectations.

POSTTRIBULATIONISM

1. Rapture occurs after the Tribulation.
2. Church experiences Revelation 3:10 at end of Tribulation.
3. Day of the Lord begins at close of Tribulation.
4. 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 occurs near end of Tribulation.
5. 144,000 redeemed at conclusion of Tribulation.
6. Rapture and Second Coming are a single event.
7. No such judgment.
8. Living Gentiles judged after Millennium.
9. Parents of millennial population come from 144,000 Jews.
10. Believers of Church Age judged after Second Coming or at conclusion of Millennium.

PRETRIBULATIONISM

1. Rapture occurs before the Tribulation.
2. Church experiences Revelation 3:10 before the Tribulation.
3. Day of the Lord begins with the Tribulation.
4. 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 occurs at beginning of Tribulation.
5. 144,000 redeemed at start of Tribulation.
6. Rapture and Second Coming separated by seven years.
7. Living Israelites judged at Second Coming.
8. Living Gentiles judged at Second Coming.
9. Parents of millennial population come from survivors of judgments on living Jews and Gentiles.
10. Believers of Church Age judged in heaven between Rapture and Second Coming.

III. Support of the Pretribulation Position

- A. The tribulation of the church is the continuous attack of wicked men upon her in the present (John 15:18-20, II Tim. 3:12). However, the great tribulation is God's climactic judgment upon wicked men in the future.
- B. In Daniel 9:24, the prophecy of the 70 weeks or 490 years is concerning "Thy people [Jews] and upon the holy city [Jerusalem]." The N.T. church was not in the first 483 years before the crucifixion of Christ, and therefore, it should not be expected to be in the last seven years as the prophecy is a unit.
- C. The church is not to be brought into judgment. Its judgment is past [Calvary] (John 5:24; Rom. 5:1; 8:1, 8:33-34; I Cor. 11:31-32). The seven year Tribulation is, however, an incredible time of judgment.
- D. The church is not appointed to wrath (Rom. 8:9; I Thess. 1:9-10; 5:9). The context of this promise, especially in I Thess. 5:9, is the Great Tribulation. The church, therefore, cannot enter "The great day of the wrath" (Rev. 6:17).
- E. None of the Old or New Testament passages on the tribulation mention the church. Indeed, the church is completely absent in Revelation 6-18.
- F. It is characteristic to deliver believers before a divine judgment is inflicted upon the world as illustrated in the deliverance of Enoch, Noah, Lot, Israel in Egypt, Rahab, etc. (II Pet. 2:6-9).
- G. The New Testament emphasizes the imminent return of Christ. The exhortation to look for "The glorious appearing" of Christ to His own (Titus 2:13) loses its significance if the tribulation must come first. Believers in that case should look for signs.
- H. The chronology of the discussion in I Thess. 4:13-5:11 argues for a pretribulation rapture. The rapture discussion precedes the Day of the Lord discussion. In these verses, the believers are perplexed because they fear for the destiny of other believers who had died before the return of Christ. Paul comforts them by saying that both dead and living will be reunited at the return of Christ at the rapture. To illustrate that this takes place before the tribulation, Paul tells them that they will be separated from the unbelievers before the Day of the Lord (which is the Tribulation). He says that God has not destined them for the wrath of the Tribulation.

- I. In II Thessalonians 2, the believers were alarmed that the Day of the Lord was upon them, which doesn't appear to be consistent with the belief that they would not go through the Tribulation. By assuring them that they were not in the Day of the Lord and by associating the rapture with the beginning of the Day of the Lord, Paul encouraged them in their pretribulationism (2:1-2).
- J. In Rev. 1:19, John is told to write the things which "you have seen" and the things "which are" and the things which "shall take place after these things." In chapter 1, John records the things which he has seen, and in chapters 2 and 3, the things "which are." The church is mentioned 19 times in these chapters, "the things which are." However, after 4:1, when John is told to "come up here and I will show you what must take place 'after' these things," the church is not mentioned once in chapters 6-19, which cover the great tribulation period. The church is conspicuous by its absence. Therefore, it appears the church is in heaven until it returns as the bride of Christ in Rev. 19.
- K. In Rev. 19:11-21, the saints are viewed as "coming with" Christ at His Second Coming, not "waiting for" Him. Thus they must at some time have been gathered to Him prior to this event. This would be consistent with pretribulationism.
- L. In order for living people with non-glorified bodies to populate the kingdom after the second coming of Christ, the rapture must take place at the beginning and not the end of the tribulation. Otherwise, unbelieving people must be allowed to enter the millennial kingdom, which is inconsistent with Rev. 19:11-21.

There are numerous differences between the Rapture and Second Coming, which would argue for their being separate events (see accompanying chart).

- N. Though not all passages in the New Testament dealing with the rapture clearly state that it will be pretribulational, there are no passages that do not harmonize with this view and none that contradict it.

*Sufficient mystery still remains concerning the time of the rapture. One's position will be inferential and not by direct statement. Therefore, one's position concerning the time of the rapture should [not] be a test of fellowship with other believers. We should and must be able to disagree in a Christlike and gracious manner.

THE RAPTURE AND SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST COMPARED

PHASE ONE (THE RAPTURE)	PHASE TWO (THE SECOND COMING)
Christ comes to receive His church in the air.	Christ returns with His bride and angels to the earth.
The seven year tribulation begins shortly after the rapture of the church.	The millennial kingdom (1000 years) of Christ is established after the second coming.
The event is imminent; it could happen at any time.	Numerous signs precede this event (cf. Rev. 6-19).
This is a message of comfort for believers.	This is a message of judgment (and warning) for unbelievers.
The church is of primary importance.	Israel is of primary importance.
The rapture is a mystery.	The second coming is predicted in both the Old and New Testaments.
The judgment seat of Christ for believers occurs. (Rom. 14:10; I Cor. 3:10-15; II Cor. 5:10).	1) The sheep and goats' judgment occurs (Matt. 25:31-46). 2) Antichrist and the world are judged (Rev. 19:11-21)
Only believers are affected.	All people are affected.
The church is taken into the Lord's presence in heaven.	All believers are brought into the millennial kingdom to reign with Christ on earth.

APPENDIX D:

ESCHATOLOGY OF DANIEL: AN EXPANSION

1. Daniel is both prophetic and apocalyptic.
2. Daniel prophecies events which are both (near and far.)

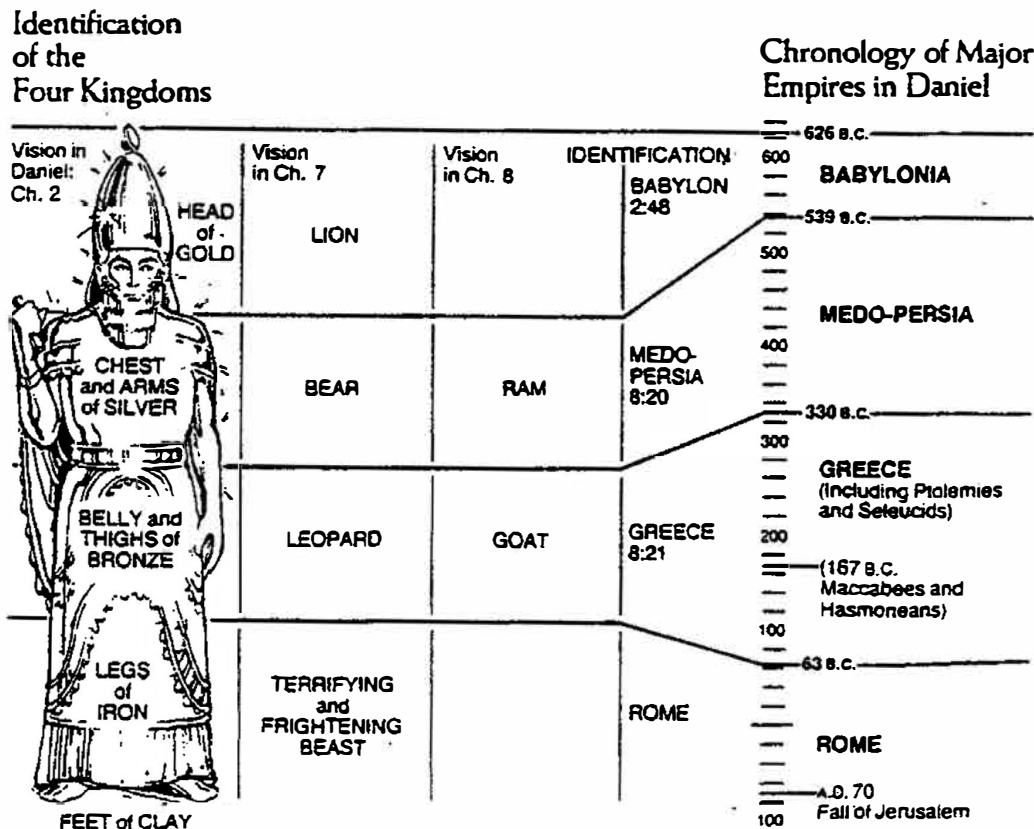
"In most respects, Daniel gave the most comprehensive and detailed picture of the times of the Gentiles of any book of the Bible as well as the future history of Israel from Daniel's time to the second coming of Christ. Accordingly, the Book of Daniel is the key to prophetic interpretation, and proper understanding of its revelation would do much to help the interpretation of other prophetic portions."

John Walvoord

3. Daniel is crucial to our understanding of the Book of Revelation.

II. Exposition

- A. In Chapters 2, 7 and 8, Daniel receives a number of visions. The three visions and their meaning is straightforward as the following comparative chart reveals:



In Chapter 7, the fourth kingdom is especially significant and the comments of Walvoord are again helpful:

The fourth kingdom was not named but was historically fulfilled by the Roman Empire. As described in 7:7 it crushed and devoured the countries which it conquered. The ten horns represented a future Roman Empire which will reappear in the end time.

The little horn represented a ruler who would come up last in the fourth kingdom who would be a world conqueror. Just as the image was destroyed in Daniel 2, so the fourth beast was destroyed by fire (7:11). The first three beasts were distinguished from the fourth in that instead of being cut off, they were allowed to continue for a time, that is, each was absorbed in the kingdom that followed in contrast to the fourth kingdom which will be suddenly destroyed (v. 12).

The coming of the Son of man. (v. 13) could be understood to refer to the coming of Jesus Christ as the Messiah in His second coming, as Christ Himself used this expression "a Son of man" in many references to Himself in the New Testament (Matt. 8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 11: 19; 12:8, 32, 40; etc.).

Daniel 7:23-28. Daniel was given this explanation, 'The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on the earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High and oppress His saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a "time, times and half a time" (vv. 23-25).

In this interpretation Daniel was told that the final kingdom described by the fourth beast will "devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it" (v. 23). This was an advance over anything that had been revealed before. In the vision in chapter 2 the stone destroyed the image but it did not go into detail concerning the end time form of the empire as this did.

Daniel was told that the ten horns represented ten kings (7:24). The little horn, representing "another king" (v. 24) will differ from the ten horns and will, in fact, conquer three of the horns (v. 24). He will not only be a world ruler who eventually will conquer the whole earth (v. 23), but he will also speak against God and will oppress His saints (v. 25). He will attempt to change long-accepted laws and times (v. 25), and for a time he will be able to persecute saints.

The time factor was represented as "time, times and half a time" (v. 25). Though this time factor was not transparent, by comparing this with other Scriptures it was evident that what he was talking about was a period of three-and-a-half years, a time representing one year, the plural "times" representing two, and then adding "half a time" (v. 25) representing a half a year. This will be seen to correspond to the last half of the seven-year period described in Daniel 9:27, the forty-two months described in Revelation 13:5, and the 1,260 days spoken of in Revelation 11:3. The fact that the word "time" represented a year was also illustrated in Daniel 4:16, 23, 25, 32. The

similar expression "a time, times and half a time" was indicated in Revelation 12:14, also representing three-and-a-half years. In all these cases the probability was that it referred to the last three-and-a-half years preceding the second coming of Christ to the earth.

The description of the final ruler as one that ruthlessly "crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left" (Dan. 7:19) was characteristic of the Roman Empire historically and was here applied to its final form when it comes to the status of a world dictatorship in the last three-and-a-half years before the Second Coming.

The minute description given here of the end time, the fourth beast, and the ten horns followed by the eleventh horn that gained control of three has never been fulfilled in history. Some expositors have attempted to find ten kings of the past and the eleventh king who would arise to somehow fulfill this prophecy, but there is nothing corresponding to this in the history of the Roman Empire. The ten horns do not reign one after the other, but they reign simultaneously. Further, they were not the world empire, but they were the forerunner to the little horn which after subduing three of the ten horns will go on to become a world ruler (v. 23; Rev. 13:7).

It is obvious to many expositors that the first three kingdoms have come and gone in history, represented by Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. The fourth empire, though not named here, has been identified as the Roman Empire as it was historically. The last stage of the Roman Empire, described here as the ten-horn stage and coming world empire, has never been fulfilled. In fact, the whole present age intervenes between the Roman Empire and this future world empire, a factor characteristic of the Old Testament in revealing the future. The present age is passed over in its foreview.

The Parade of Nations

1. In the Old Testament there are 6 great Gentile empires, each of which had a particular mission in relation to Israel:
 - a. Egypt: the cradle of the nation Israel.
 - b. Assyria: took the 10 tribes into captivity.
 - c. Babylon: captured Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, carried Daniel off.
 - d. Three remaining world empires preceding the empire of Christ are:
Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

2. Daniel 2:32-33 records Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a huge statue, revealing four kingdoms.
3. Daniel 7 presents God's viewpoint of the same governments as ravenous beasts:

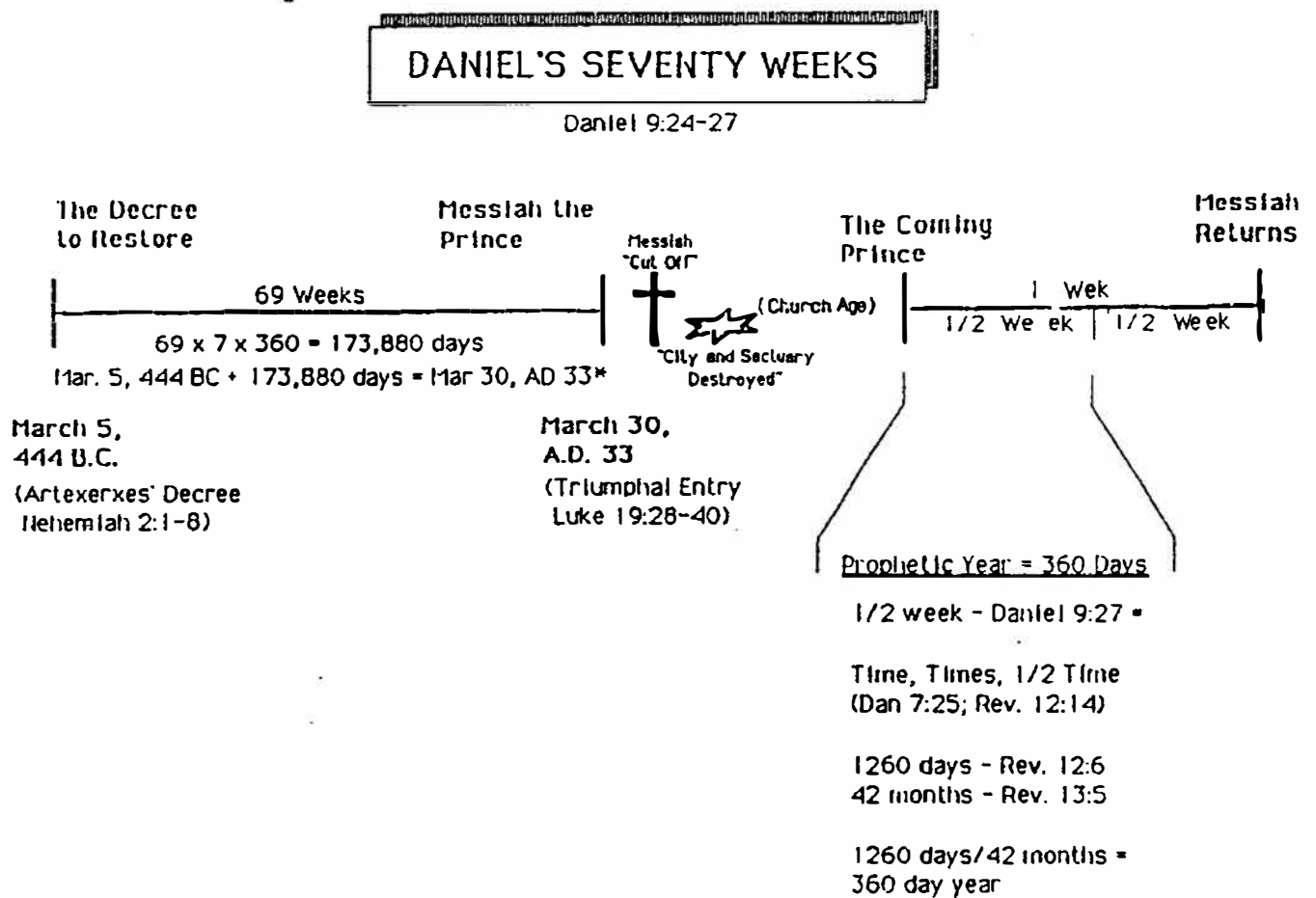
GOD'S VIEW (Dan. 7)	EMPIRE (fill in)	DANIEL'S VIEW (Dan. 2)
Winged lion	<u>Babylon</u>	Head of gold
Bear	<u>Medo-Persia</u>	Shoulders/arms of silver
Winged leopard with four heads	<u>Greece</u> (Alexander the Great)	Stomach/thighs of bronze or brass
Mongrel empire	<u>Rome</u>	Legs/feet of iron & clay

4. The final stage of the fourth empire is described in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 as a 10-horned beast, which indicates 10 Kings ruling simultaneously. Since this has not yet happened in the world, it is seen as being fulfilled by (a 10-nation confederacy, a revival of the Roman empire.)
5. Daniel 7:8 anticipates the rise of the little horn, called the beast in Revelation 13, and often called the Antichrist. (See also Daniel 8:23; 9:26; 11:36; 12:11).
6. This little horn, according to Revelation 17:13, will be given authority over the 10 nations, and eventually become a world dictator.
7. When Christ returns, Israel will be delivered as a nation by the Lord.

In Daniel 8:9-12 and 23-25 there may also be a foreshadowing of Antichrist. The reasons are as follows:

1. Verses 17-19 speak of the time of the end.
2. The characteristics of the man in chapter 7 with the man in chapter 8 are very similar.
3. 8:26 implies the distant future.
4. The description exceeds that of Antiochus Epiphanes.

B. Daniel's 70th Week (9:24-27)



In Daniel 9 three important segments are presented: first, the approaching fulfillment of Israel's return to the land (vv. 1-2); second, the remarkable prayer of Daniel in view of the approaching fulfillment of prophecy (w. 3-19); and third, the important prophecy concerning the seventy sevens of Israel's future, culminating in the Second Coming.

In trying to reconstruct the prophecy and fulfillment, it should be borne in mind that a prophetic year is 360 days, not 365 and, accordingly, the years were somewhat shorter than in the modern calendar. Though the seventy years were literal, it is obvious that the Bible does not attempt to prove that it was to the exact day or even to the exact year, but that it was approximately in round numbers seventy years, not an indefinite period of time.

Daniel is informed that God has appointed seventy weeks upon the Jewish people to finish all transgressions. After this, everlasting righteousness will follow. These "weeks," however, are not seven-day weeks, but rather each of the seventy weeks represents seven years. Seventy weeks of years (seventy times seven years) will equal 490 years.

From the time of the decree to restore and build Jerusalem until the coming of the Messiah will be seven weeks (49 years) and threescore and two weeks (62 weeks or 434 years). Adding 49 and 434, one arrives at a figure of 483 years, all but seven of the 490 years involved in the seventy weeks. Note the following table:

606 B.C.	Nebuchadnezzar takes the first captives from Jerusalem.
539 B.C.	The decree of Cyrus for the return of the Jews exactly seventy years after Daniel was taken captive (cf. Ezra 1:1-2).
538 B.C.	The taking of Babylon by Darius and Daniel's visitation by Gabriel.
457 B.C.	The decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus in the seventh year of his reign to build the city of Jerusalem (cf. Ezra 7:13-26).
444 B.C.	The decree of Artaxerxes to restore and build Jerusalem in the twentieth year of his reign (cf. Neh. 2:1-8).
4 B.C.	The birth of our Lord.
33 A.D.	The crucifixion of Christ.

Calculating from 444 B.C. to AD. 33, one arrives at 478 years rather than the 483 years required. However, this is due to our reckonings, which are based upon the solar year of 365 days; whereas the Jewish calendar was based upon lunar years of 360 days. When the two calendars are adjusted, and one must do so for accuracy, a difference of about eight years will be discovered. Allowing an additional year for the transition from B.C. to A.D., the date of A.D. 33 is the date at the end of the sixty-ninth week when Christ is cut off (v. 26).

According to Daniel 9:24, six major events characterize the "490 years" (1) "to finish transgression," (2) "to put an end to sin," (3) "to atone for wickedness," (4) "to bring in everlasting righteousness," (5) "to seal up vision and prophecy," and (6) "to anoint the Most Holy" (v. 24).

Verse 26 then discusses the cutting off of Messiah at week sixty-nine (as discussed above). Then the seventieth week is addressed. Contextually it should be noted that it is separated from the other sixty-nine weeks. Further a new personality is introduced: "The Prince," who should not be identified as Messiah. Note the comment of Dr. Paige Patterson:

The seventieth week is the subject of discussion here (vv. 26-27). The "prince that shall come" is the beast from the sea (cf. Rev. 13) and the "little horn" of 7:8, who is the Antichrist. After making a covenant with Israel for one week or seven years, he will break it in the midst of the week, cause sacrifice to cease, and reduce the city of Jerusalem and the temple to destruction. Between the

sixty-ninth and the seventieth week there is an uncharted lapse of time not revealed to Daniel or to any other of the O.T. prophets. This intervening time span incorporates the age of the Church in which we now live and work. The events of sixty-nine weeks, including the cutting off of Messiah are behind. The events of the seventieth week remain for the future and will be realized during the age of the Great Tribulation of seven years just prior to the bringing in of "everlasting righteousness" (v. 24).

The seventy weeks thus are a time of retribution, redemption, and restoration. Sixty-nine are past, the seventieth is yet to come and will primarily be related to Israel. Walvoord notes concerning the seventieth week and verse 27:

The interpretation of "he" which begins verse 27 is crucial to understanding this prophecy in its fulfillment. In normal laws of reference a pronoun refers back to the last preceding person mentioned. In this case it is the "ruler who will come" of verse 26 rather than "the Anointed One" of the earlier portion of that verse. Because the fulfillment was never literally accomplished by Christ in His first coming, and even the New Covenant which some claim is referred to here cannot be related to a seven-year covenant because it is eternal, leaves the identification of the covenantmaker as the future world ruler, or Antichrist of the end time, a Roman related to the people who destroyed the city.

This is in keeping with other prophecy which indicates that he will stop sacrifices in the middle of the last seven years, the conclusion confirmed later in Daniel 12:7 in reference to the last three and a half years and the revelation of daily sacrifices being abolished and the abomination set up in verse 11.

The concept that there is a time gap between 9:26 and verse 27, though opposed by many amillenarians, has a great deal of scriptural confirmation. One of the most important confirmations was the fact that the Old Testament presents the 1st and 2nd coming of Christ as occurring at the same time as Isaiah 61:1-2. If the entire Inter-advent Age can be interposed between references to the 1st and 2nd coming of Christ in the Old Testament, it certainly sets a precedent for having a time gap between the sixty-ninth "seven" and the seventieth "seven" of Daniel 9:24-27.

C. Daniel 11:36-12:9

This text is debated as to the identity of the King of the North. Some see him as a godless and evil Jewish ruler. Others again see Antichrist. Some of course, have argued Antichrist will be Jewish. It is our view that Antichrist is in view, but that his race is undetermined in Scripture. In this text, Antichrist and Israel in contrast stands out:

ANTICHRIST

Self willed, v. 36
Exalts and magnifies himself, v. 36
Blasphemes God, v. 36
Temporarily prospers, v. 36
Rejects God, v. 37
Materialistic, v. 38
Ultimately defeated, vv. 40-45

ISRAEL

Time of troubles, 12:1
Time of deliverance, 12:1
Resurrection, 12:2
A sealed revelation until the end, 12:4
A 3½-year period at the end will consummate, 12: 11

SEVENTY SEVENS OF DANIEL

DANIEL 9:24-27

Babylonian Captivity 605-444 B.C.	Decree to Build Jerusalem 444 B.C. Neh. 1:5-8	434 Years 62 Sevens Dan. 9:25	Messiah Cut Off Dan. 9:26	Church Age Pentecost to Rapture 1 Thes. 4:13-18	Rapture	Period of Preparation 10- Nation Kingdom	Seven-year Covenant Signed		Second Coming Resurrection Tribulation Saints Rev. 20:1-6	New Heaven New Earth New Jerusalem Rev. 21-22
							7 Years - 70th Seven Dan. 9:27	3½ Years of Peace		
	49 Years 7 Sevens Dan. 9:25		After 62 Sevens	Jerusalem Destroyed A.D. 70			3½ Years Great Tribulation Covenant Broken World Government Armageddon Rev. 16:16	Millennium Rev. 19:11-20 Judgment of Unbelievers	Judgment of Great White Throne	



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