

Popular Interpretations of the End Times:

+ End Times Prophecy Study Part II

Secular Culture:

- + Hal Lindsey; "Late Great Planet Earth" (1970)
- + Tim LaHaye, Jerry Jenkins: "Left Behind" series (1995)
- + Christian Radio-
 - + "End Time Ministries"
 - + "Lamb and Lion Ministries"



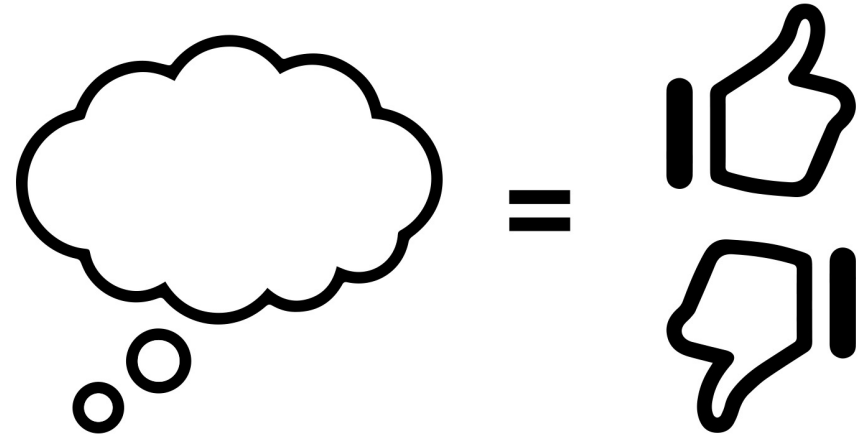
Why So Much Interest?

- + We live in uncertain times
- + These predictions of future events offer an anchor.
- + People are looking to these sources for answers
 - + Will there be an all-out worldwide nuclear war?
 - + COVID?
 - + Social changes?



Questions to Consider...

- +Are these popular views accurate?
- +Are they Biblical?
- +Are they what we believe as Lutherans?



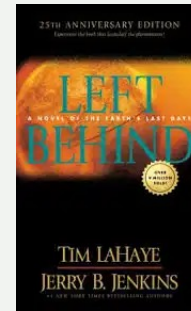
Recall From Last Time...

Prophetic Scriptures are sometimes written in literal historic narratives and sometimes in figurative apocryphal language.

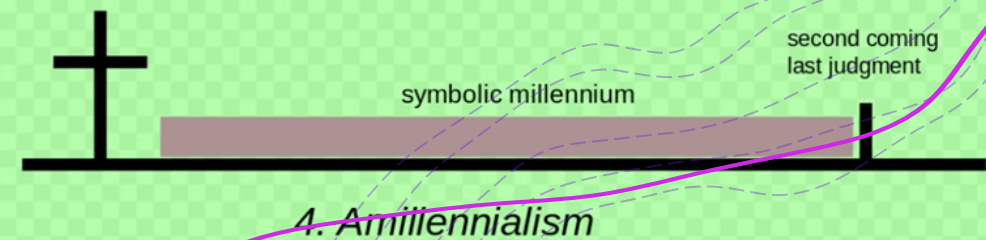
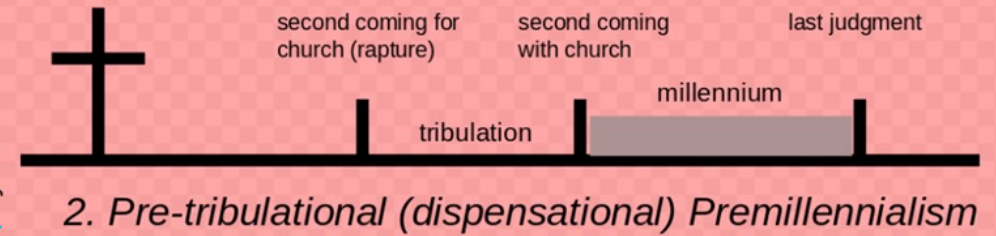
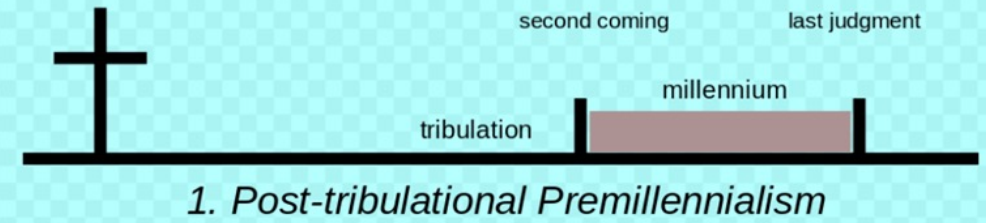
In both cases the intent is to provide the reader with an understanding of who God is, what God is doing and to create in us a saving faith.

The take home nugget: Like literal historic narratives figurative apocryphal scripture is TRUE although not necessarily literal.

Christian End-Time Teachings



Comparison of Christian millennial teachings



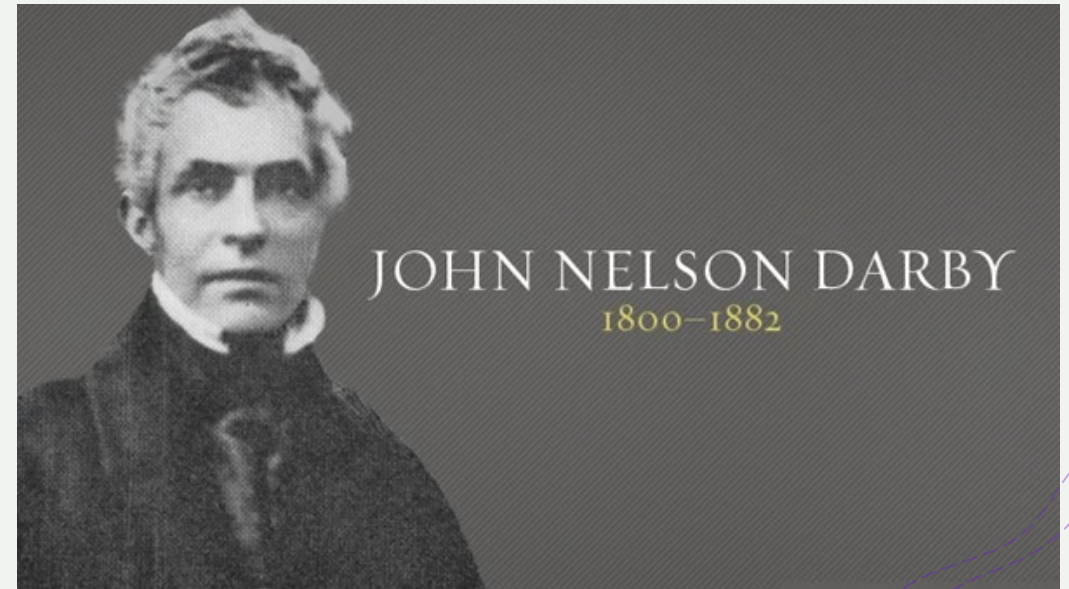
Dispensationalism Foundations

- + **Premillennial Dispensationalism:**
The “Left Behind” belief
- + Divides history into seven dispensations
- + Final era being a 1000-year earthly reign of Christ.



John Nelson Darby

- + The first person to propose this end time scenario in the 19th Century (1830s).
- + Darby arrived in the United States from England in 1862 for the first of seven visits,



Cyrus Scofield

- + Scofield's notes teach dispensationalism
- + Largely through Scofield's notes that dispensational premillennialism became influential in the United States
- + "Left Behind" basis



Dispensationalism:

- + This is a relatively “recent” belief structure, beginning in the 1830’s
- + Prior to Darby’s influence, most Christians understood the Second Coming as an event that would happen simultaneously with the final resurrection and the end of the age.



New But Not New...

- + When the first-century church was faced with uncertainty and confusion regarding the end times, the apostle Paul demonstrates his pastoral concern in these words,
- + "Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy ..."
(2 Thess 2:1–2).

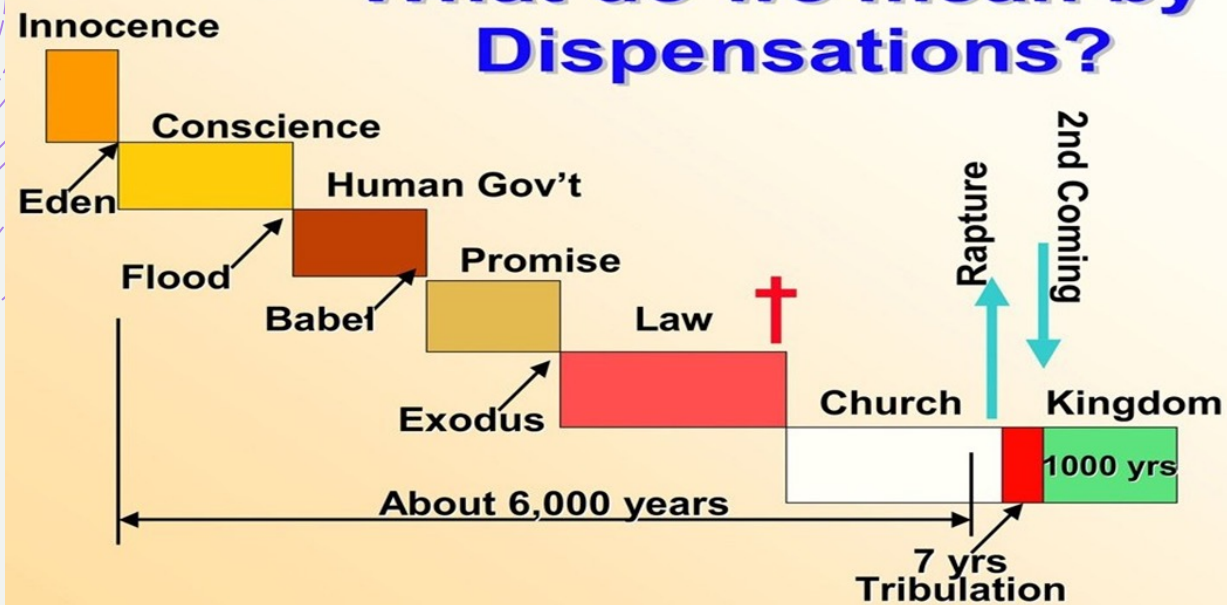


Dispensationalism

+ Divides God's relationship with humankind into seven ages, or "dispensations"

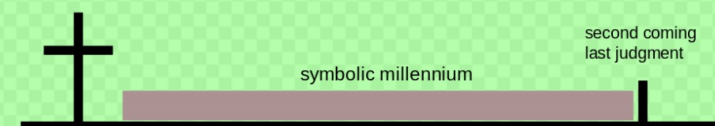
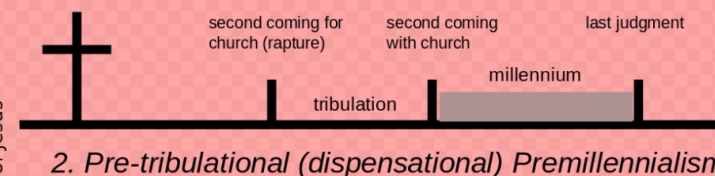
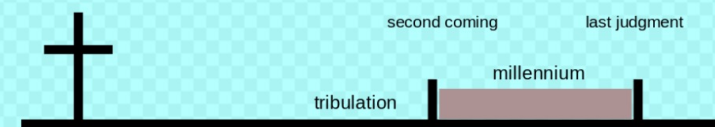


What do we mean by Dispensations?



SEVEN ADMINISTRATIONS

Comparison of Christian millennial teachings



First Coming of Jesus

Eternity

Basis for Dispensationalism

- + The Old Testament promises the Jewish people an earthly kingdom ruled by the Messiah.
- + When Christ came, He offered this kingdom to the Jews.
- + Jews rejected Him and the kingdom.
- + This kingdom was postponed until future.



Basis for Dispensationalism

- + Christ introduced the "mystery form" of the kingdom (Parables of Matthew 13) and established the church.
- + This Church Age is a "parenthesis" of God's program
- + The Church Age will end at the "**rapture**" when all believers will go to heaven to celebrate with Christ "the marriage feast of the Lamb" for **seven years**.
- + Then God's promised purpose for Israel resumes.

The Manifestation of God's Glory as the Purpose of History

- + Dispensationalists believe that we are reconciled to God by grace alone through the work of Christ in history, BUT....
- + The manifestation of God's glory, not salvation, is the main theme and broad purpose of His activity in human history in each of the dispensations.
- + This makes Christ's Sacrifice on the cross incomplete

Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*
(Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), 41-45.

Main Points of Dispensationalism

- + Literal Fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy
- + Rapture-Church Removed from end time suffering
- + Israel-special group as per Old Testament
- + Millennium-literal 1000- year reign of Christ on Earth



The Literal Fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy.

- + God will establish an earthly kingdom in Israel
- + Judgements described in Revelation 6-16 will literally happen in succession
- + A political figure known as the antichrist will rule on Earth
- + Christ will Rule on Earth from Jerusalem for 1000 years
- + Jews will remain separate as God's Chosen People

Rapture

- +The term “rapture” comes from the expression “caught up” in 1Thess 4:17:
- +“After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”



Rapture- Dispensationalism

- + The coming of Christ will occur in several phases
- + First: Christ's return for believers to "rapture" his church.
- + Christians will not be on earth for the Tribulation
- + The Church Age ends here, and God focuses on Israel



Tribulation

- + The Rapture begins the time of tribulation
- + 7 years comes from Daniel
 - + Dan 7:25 He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.
 - + Dan 9:27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week,[a] and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."



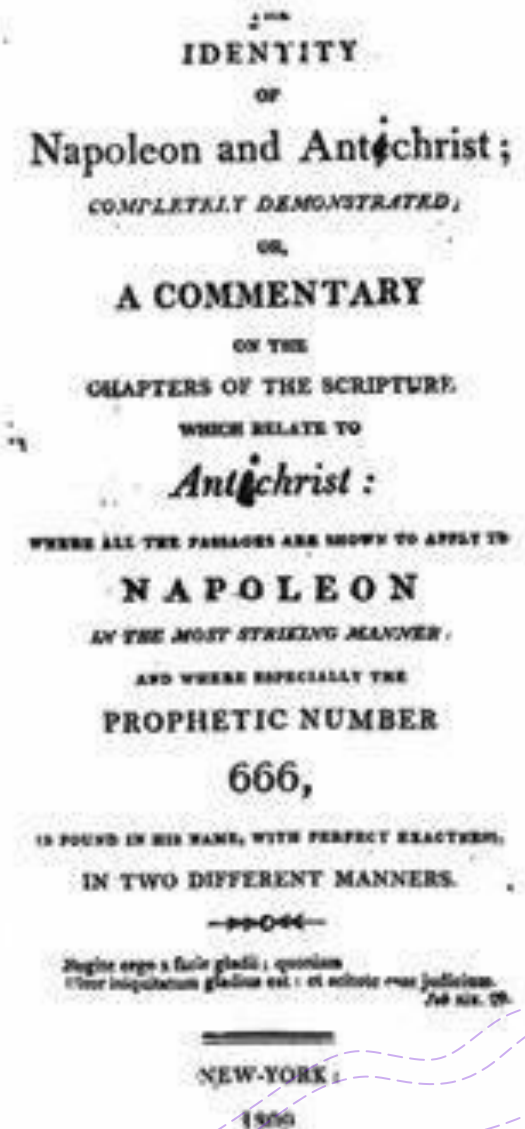
Tribulation

- + Rise of the Antichrist
 - + Dan 7:23 "Thus he said: 'As for the fourth beast, there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all the kingdoms, and it shall devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and break it to pieces.
 - + Dan 7:24 As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings.
- + Literal Judgements of Revelation



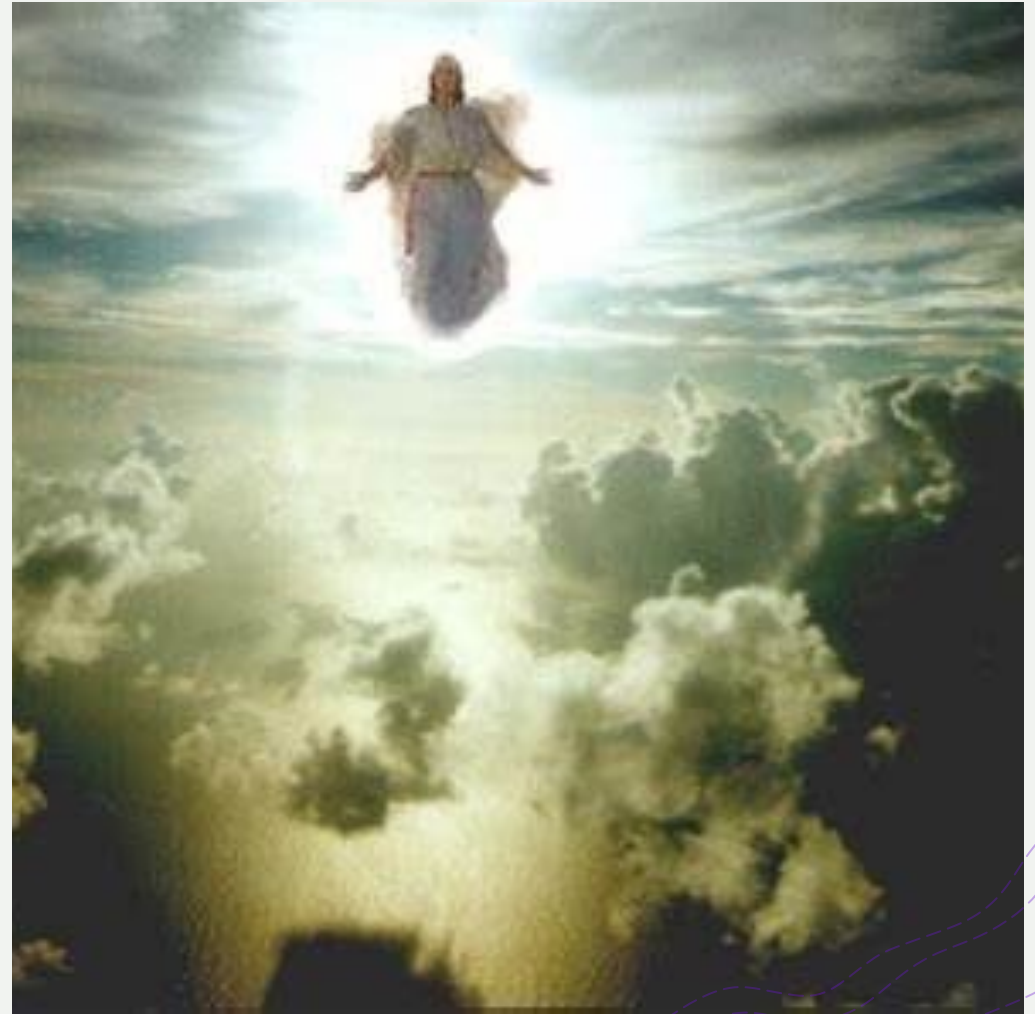
Tribulation

- + Antichrist in Scripture:
- + 1Jn_2:18 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.
- + 1Jn_2:22 Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.
- + 1Jn_4:3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.
- + 2Jn_1:7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.



Second Second Coming

- + After the seven-year tribulation Christ will come again to end the Tribulation and establish his 1000-year (Millennial) reign on Earth in which Christians will reign with Him from Jerusalem
- + Rapture="Blessed Hope"
- + Millenial Reign="Glorious Appearing"
- + Source: Tit 2:13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,



Rapture Concept: Things to Remember

- + Before 1830 no evidence that Christians believed in a multi-stage or “secret” return of Christ
- + Christians believed that Jesus would come again visibly at some undisclosed time to judge—once and for all—the living and the dead.



Rapture: Things to Remember

- + Dan 7:13 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him."
- + Act 1:11 and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."



Rapture: Things to Remember

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Rapture-Warning!

- + The Rapture view can promote a “wait and see” attitude.
- + Non- Christians might conclude that if millions of Christians suddenly disappear, then they will repent and believe in Jesus.
- + Before that they might “take their chances,” believing that they will get a second opportunity during the Tribulation.



Rapture-Warning!

- + Jesus states in Mt 25:10: "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut."
- + This "shut door" indicates that there will be no salvation offered after the one-time Second Advent of our Lord.



Israel

- + Israel important in the Dispensationalist belief system
- + Dispensationalists believe that God has forever promised the land of Israel to the Jews.
- + Many believe the establishment of the Nation of Israel in May of 1948 to be THE sign of the beginning of the last generation



Israel: Literal Fulfillment of Bible Prophecy

- + The central promise to Abraham was that Abraham's physical descendants would be given the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession. **Gen 17:8 And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."**
- + The covenant of Jer. 31 :31-33, is essentially a covenant for Israel. **Jer 31:33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.**

Israel

- + The land NEVER belonged to Israel-
God GAVE it to them to use
- + Jesus did not specifically refer to Israel
in His teachings-he did speak of the
land, but in terms of the entire Earth
- + Earth is the New Heaven and the New
Earth-not specifically Israel
- + With the Resurrection and following
Pentecost, the interpretation of the
Old Testament teachings of inheriting
the land apply to ALL believers, not
specifically the Jewish Nation



Israel in New Testament Interpretations

- + Rom 4:13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.
- + Rev 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.
- + 2Pe 3:13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.



Millennium

- + Most teachings on End Time Prophecy focus on a “1000 year” period described in Revelation 20: 1-6
- + Dispensational belief is 1000-year literal reign of Christ on Earth
- + Satan will be bound during that time.
- + After that time the final conflict (Armageddon) will happen
- + Judgement, New Heaven and New Earth

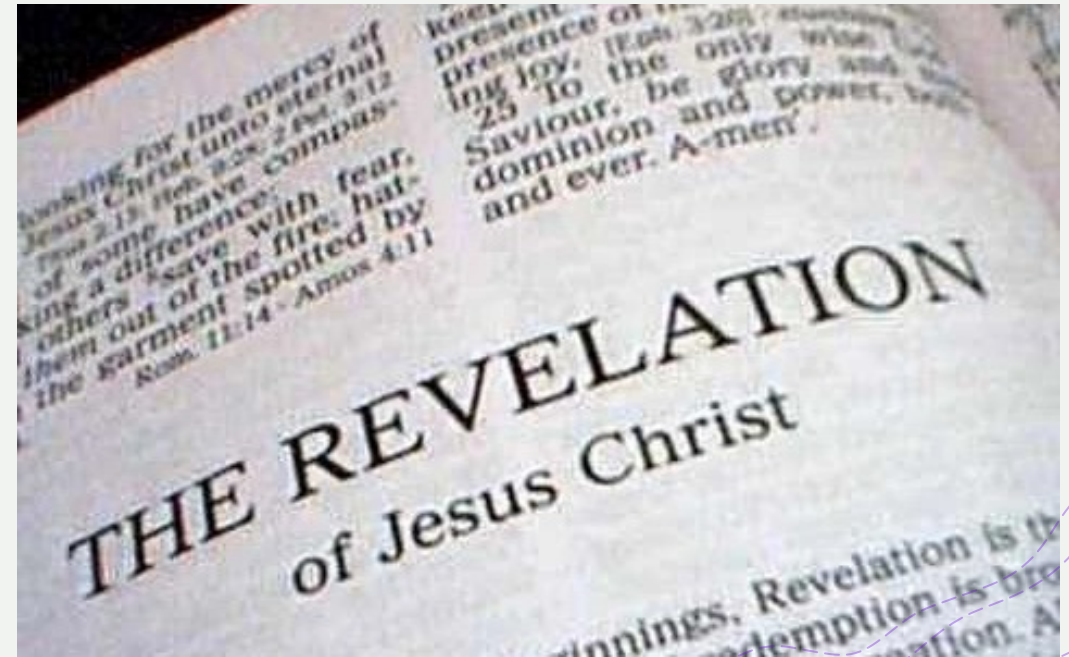


Revelation 20:1-6

+ Rev 20:1-6 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. (2) And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a **thousand years**, (3) and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the **thousand years** were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. (4) Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who 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 for a thousand years**. (5) The rest of the dead did not come to life until the **thousand years** were ended. This is the first resurrection. (6) Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a **thousand years**.

Millennial Interpretations: Caution!

- + Dispensationalists use the Revelation passage of the millennial time as the crux of their interpretation of end times-
- + This interpretation requires a literal interpretation of Revelation
- + Often viewed through the lens of current events



Millennial Interpretations: Caution!

- + Jesus does not teach of a physical Earthly Kingdom
- + In apocalyptic literature numbers are symbolic and represent completeness, not a video of future events!
- + The 1000 years represents the entire time needed for the church to complete its mission before Christ returns



Other Symbolic Millennial Interpretations

- + 2Pe 3:8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.
- + Psa 90:4 For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.



Dispensationalism

Summary: Remember

- + Dispensationalism is a relatively recent idea
- + Considers the nation of Israel in a literal Old Testament interpretation
- + The Church we have today is a parenthetical interruption of the timeline
- + Requires a literal interpretation of end time prophecy in Revelation



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Dispensationalism

Summary: Remember

- + Rapture theology promotes the return of Christ as a multi-stage event
- + Rapture can be misunderstood to provide a window to decide to believe before Jesus “actually” comes back.
- + Only later will Christ return bodily as described in Scripture



Millennium

- + Dispensationalists regard this as a literal 1000-year period
- + Dispensationalists see this as the physical ruling of Christ on Earth
- + There will still be non believers who will ultimately cause the final battle of Armageddon when Satan is released
- + Only after this will the final Judgement occur



Next Week: Amillennial End Time Prophecy

Lutheran Interpretation of End Times

