

# Baptist Faith & Message

Article IX: The Kingdom

Article X: Last Things

## Article IX

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

# What is the Kingdom of God?

The Kingdom of God includes both **His general sovereignty over the universe** and **His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King**. Particularly **the Kingdom is the realm of salvation** into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

## General Sovereignty

- God's absolute rule and authority over the entire universe and all of creation.
- The “big-picture” view.
  - God generally rules over everything. Nothing happens without his permission.



# Particular Kingship

- God's rule over the individual and the individual's submission to Him
- The "small-picture" view.
  - God is YOUR king and YOU owe him fealty and submission.



# Parables of the Kingdom: Matthew 13

- The Weeds: Matthew v. 24-30
- The Mustard Seed: v. 31-32
- The Leaven: v. 33
- The Hidden Treasure: v. 44
- The Pearls: v. 45-46
- The Net: v. 47-50



# Implications of the Parables

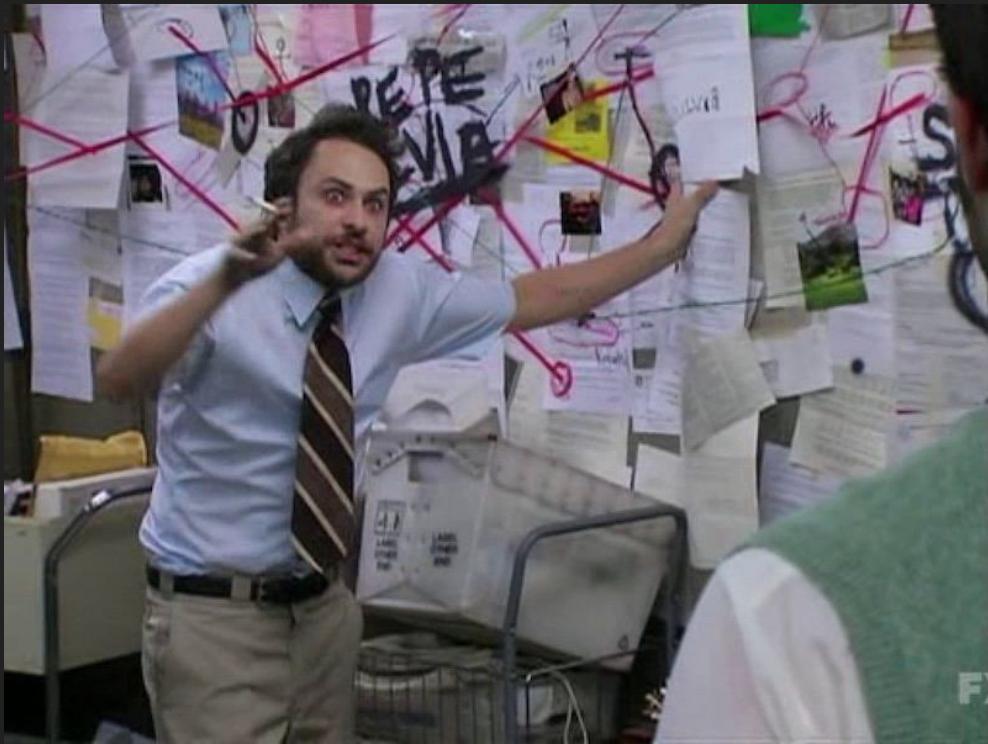
- Not all will enter the kingdom [weeds]
- The Kingdom will grow [mustard seed/leaven]
- The Kingdom is worth more than any earthly possession [treasure/pearl]
- The Kingdom will be full of different kinds of people [net]
- There will be an end of the age [explanation of the weeds]...



## Article X

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

# The Study of Eschatology in a Nutshell



## Major Topics of Eschatology

1. The Return of Christ
  - a. How/when?
2. The Tribulation
  - a. Before, During, After the Return?
3. The Millennium
  - a. Amillennialism
  - b. Premillennialism
  - c. Postmillennialism
4. View of End Time Prophecy
  - a. Idealism
  - b. Futurism
  - c. Preterism
5. Personal Eschatology
  - a. What happens when you die?

# What Affects Your Eschatological View?

- How much prophecy has already been fulfilled and how literal is it?
  - All? Some? None?
- Who is Israel?
  - The geopolitical nation of Israel?
  - Believers?
- What is your view of the Great Commission?
  - Will it be completely successful?
- What is the Rapture?
  - Will there be one or two returns of Christ?

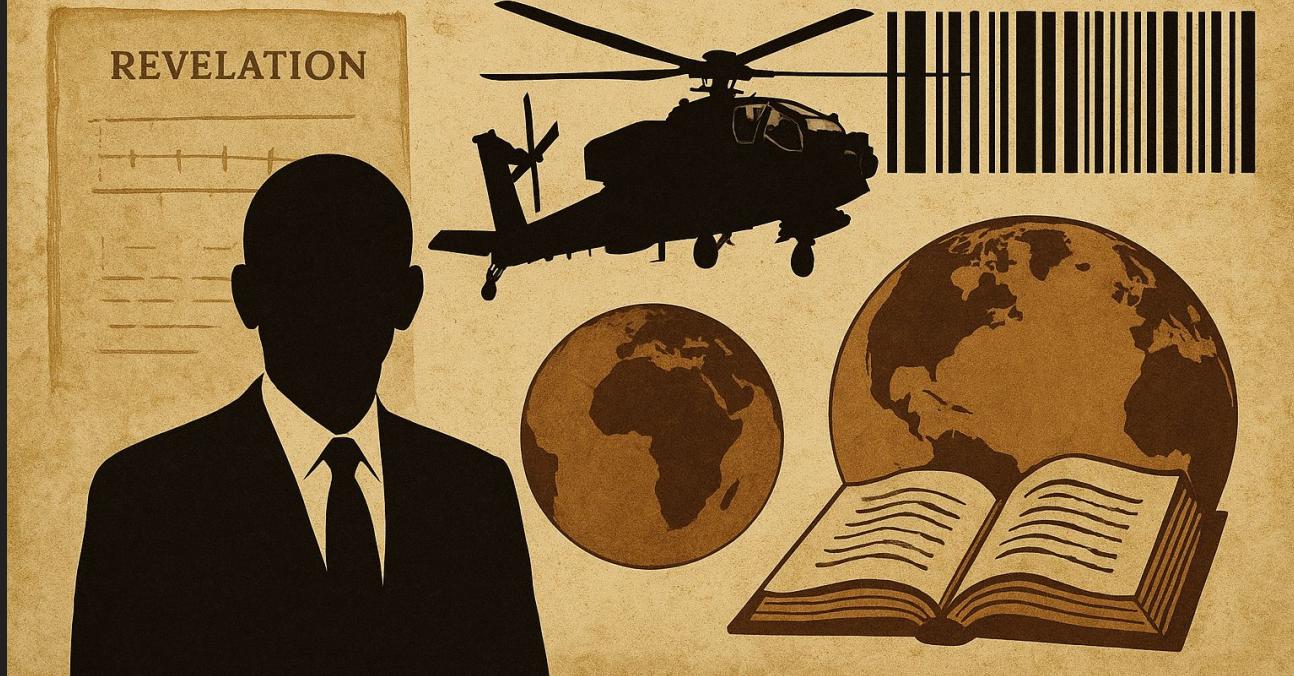


## The Millennium: Revelation 20:1-6

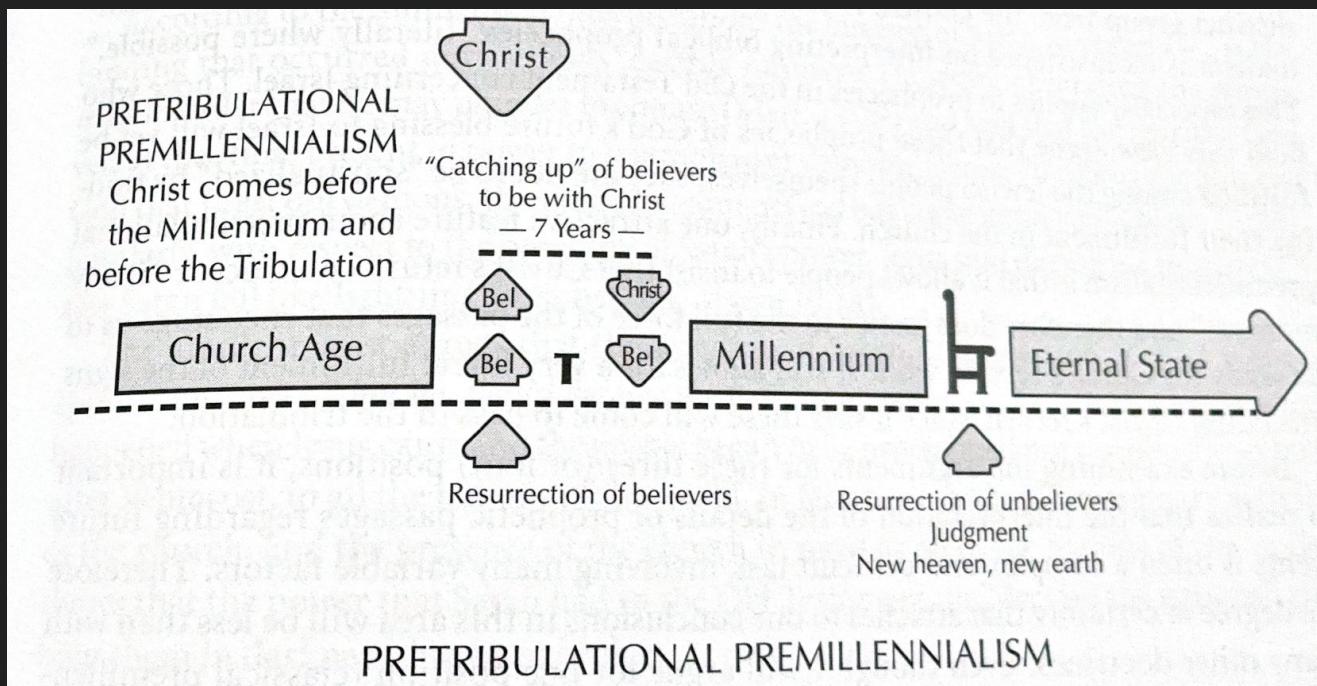
**20** Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. **2** And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, **3** and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over 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**.

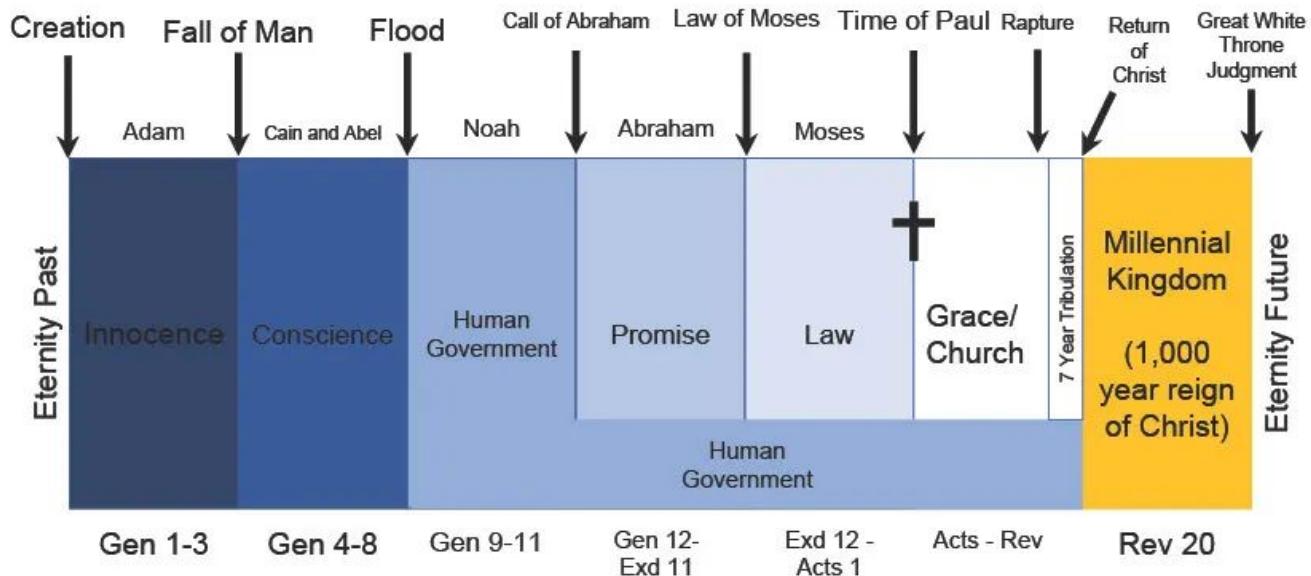
# DISPENSATIONALISM



## Dispensationalism aka Pretribulational Premillennialism



# The Seven Dispensations of the Bible



**Dispensationalism** is a system of biblical interpretation that divides history into distinct periods or “dispensations” in which God deals with humanity in different ways, according to specific divine arrangements or covenants.

Dispensationalists Whenever Israel is in the Headlines



# Why the Study of Eschatology is Relevant



## Who is Israel?

- Some say the modern nation-state of Israel
  - Genesis 12:2-3 **2** And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. **3** I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."<sup>[a]</sup>
- Others say believers
  - Romans 9:6-8
    - **6** But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, **7** and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." **8** This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.

## The Expectation of a Third Temple

- The belief that the Temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem comes from Matthew 24:15, 1 Thessalonians 2:3-4 and other places that talk about an “abomination of desolation” being set up in the Temple.



## Holy Cow!: The Red Heifers



# What is the Rapture?

- The word “rapture” is not mentioned in the Bible
- Rapture is a theological term referring to the “catching up” of believers to meet Christ upon his return
- Everyone agrees **a** rapture will occur, but dispensationalism posits **TWO** returns of Christ—one before the Tribulation and one at the end of time.
- Referenced in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17
  - 13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be **caught up** together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

## Arguments for Two Raptures

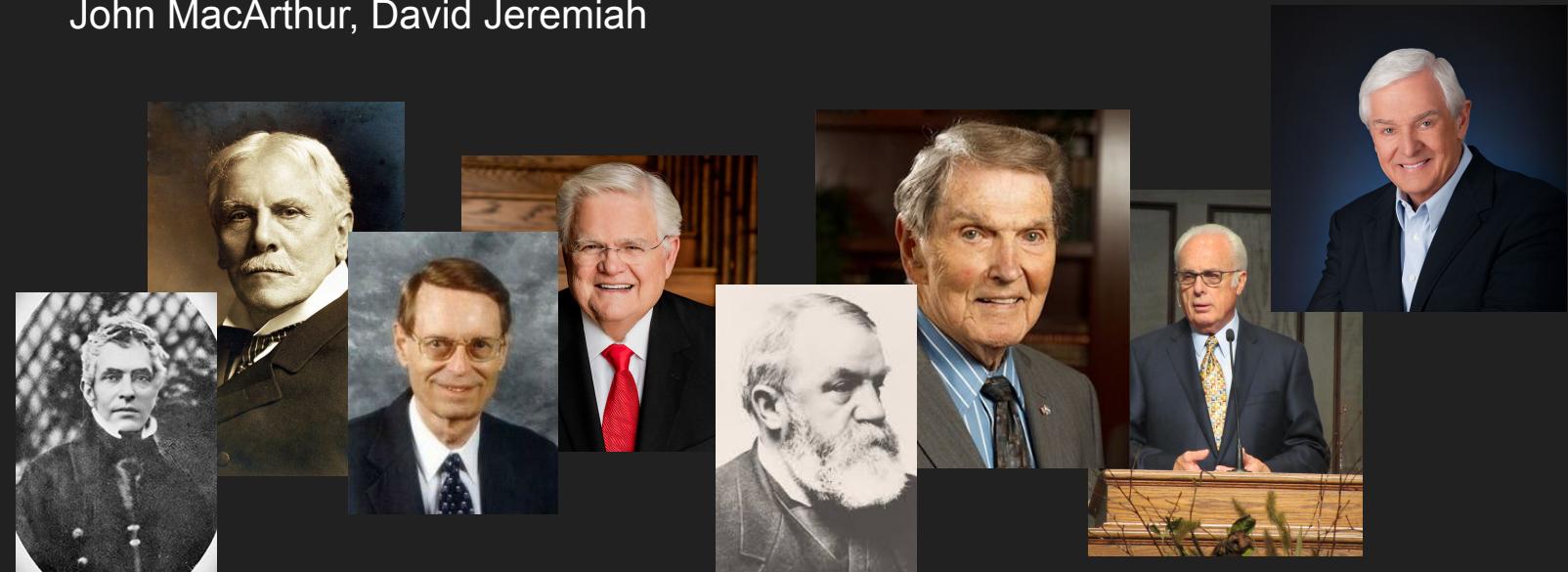
- Revelation 3:10 (In John’s letter to the Church at Philadelphia): “Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.”
- The word “church” is not mentioned in Revelation again after Chapter 3 until the very end.
- Matthew 24:22 “And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.”

# Arguments Against Two Raptures

- Scripture consistently talks about ONE future coming of Christ
- 1 Thessalonians does not describe a discreet coming of Christ
  - Trumpets will sound and a shout will come from Heaven. Everyone sees/hears this.
- Matthew 24 and Revelation 7 describe a gathering of faithful people AFTER the tribulation

## Proponents of Dispensationalism

John Darby, C.I. Scofield, Charles Ryrie, John Hagee, D.L. Moody, Tim LaHaye, John MacArthur, David Jeremiah



# Historic Premillennialism

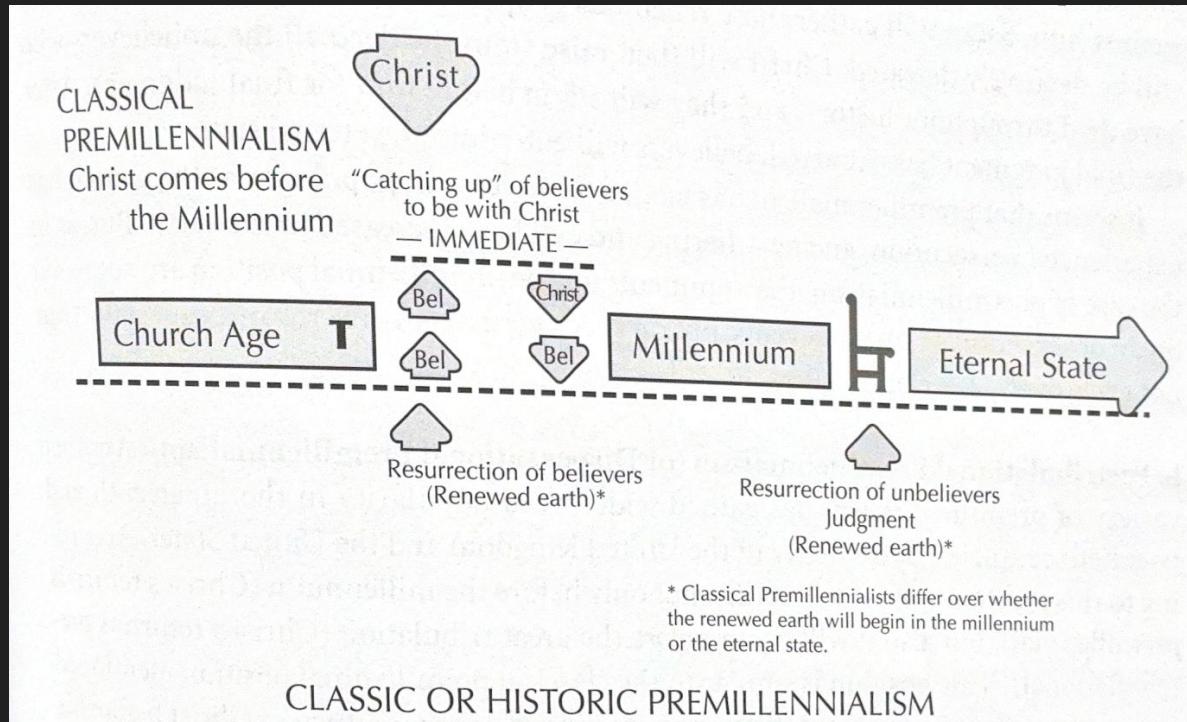
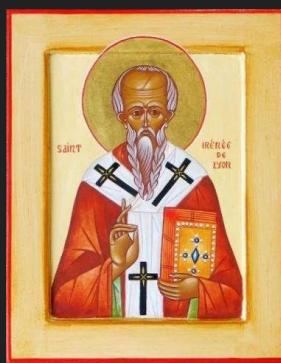


Image Source: Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem

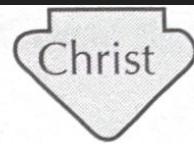
## Proponents of Historic Premillennialism

Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Charles Spurgeon, John Piper, Al Mohler



# Postmillennialism

POSTMILLENNIALISM  
Christ comes after  
the Millennium



Church Age >> Millennium



Eternal State

Resurrection of believers  
Resurrection of unbelievers  
Judgment  
New heaven, new earth

## POSTMILLENNIALISM

Image Source: Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem

## Evidence for Postmillennialism

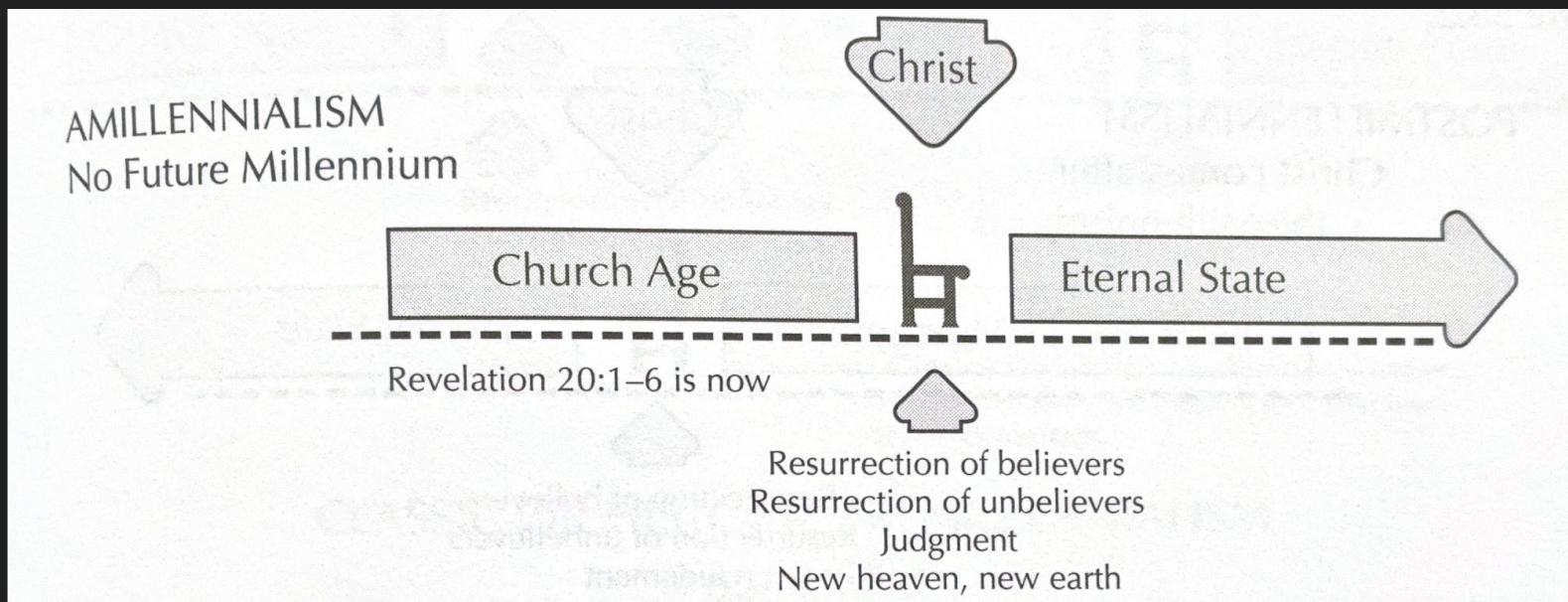
- The parables of leaven and mustard seed in Matthew 13
- Psalm 110:1: “The LORD said to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool’”
- Isaiah 9:6-7: “of the increase of his government there shall be no end”
- 1 Corinthians 15:25 “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.”
- Isaiah 55:11 “so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.” Implies that the Great Commission will be completely successful.
- Christianity has progressively grown from a religion of a few hundred people to approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the world population. (Source: Pew Research Center)

# Proponents of Postmillennialism

Doug Wilson, Jonathan Edwards, B.B. Warfield, Jeff Durbin, James White



## Amillennialism



# Proponents of Amillennialism

Augustine, John Calvin, Martin Luther, J.I. Packer, Voddie Baucham, Keith Foskey, Seth Busby



## Views on the Timeline of Eschatological Prophecy

1. Idealism
2. Futurism
3. Preterism



## Idealism

- Idealism refers to an interpretive approach that views the imagery and prophecies of the Book of Revelation as symbolic and timeless allegories, rather than literal forecasts of specific historical events.
- The Tribulation is NOT a specific event, but as a symbolic and ongoing reality for believers
- Accepted primarily by amils
- See Matthew Everhard's YouTube channel for a deep dive

## Futurism

- Views most prophecies in the Book of Revelation and other apocalyptic scriptures as describing literal future events that will occur in an end-time period just before the Second Coming of Christ.
- Most common view
- Popular among premils but accepted by others



# Preterism

- Preterism = past tense
- Belief that MOST of Revelation was fulfilled in AD 70 and that AD 70 was the Great Tribulation
- Preterists can fall into the pre, post, or amil camps (but most likely post and amil)
- Most preterists draw on Matthew 24 and Luke 21 to justify their position

What Happened in AD 70?



# Flavius Josephus Describes the Destruction



Josephus



Vespasian



Arch of Titus in Rome

## Matthew 24

### Key Points

- Jerusalem and the temple will be destroyed v. 2
- This will be the sign of the end of the AGE (KJV “world”) v. 3
- An “abomination of desolation” will be set up in the temple v. 15
- Tribulation v. 29
- “This generation will not pass away until all these things take place” v. 34

# Apocalyptic Literature

- Apocalyptic literature is a specific genre of prophecy, largely involving symbols and imagery and predicting disaster and destruction.
- **Matthew 24: 29-30**
  - 29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."
- **Isaiah 13:1-13 and Isaiah 19:1-2**
  - Similar language referring to God pronouncing judgement on Babylon and Egypt in the 6th century BC.
- Matthew 24 is written to a Jewish audience familiar with apocalyptic literature. Luke writes more clearly to a Gentile audience in Luke 21:20-24

## Who is the “Antichrist”?

- Revelation never mentions Antichrist
- Mentions of Antichrist are in 1 John 2:18-22, 1 John 4:1-3, 2 John 2:7



# The Beast of Revelation

- Revelation 13:11-18
  - Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast whose mortal wound was healed. It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: **let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast**, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.

## Gematria

- Gematria is a traditional Jewish system of numerology that assigns numerical values to Hebrew letters

Symbol	Name	Value	Symbol	Name	Value
א	Alef	1	כ	Kaf	20
ב	Bet	2	ל	Lamed	30
ג	Gimel	3	מ	Mem	40
ד	Dalet	4	נ	Nun	50
ה	He	5	ס	Samech	60
ו	Vav	6	ע	Ayin	70
ז	Zayin	7	פ	Pe	80
ח	Chet	8	צ	Tsadi	90
ט	Tet	9	ק	Qof	100
י	Yod	10	ר	Resh	200
			ש	Shin	300
			ת	Tav	400

When the name “Nero Caesar” is written in Hebrew (נָרוֹן קָסָר) and the numerical values of each letter are added, the sum is 666.

נ = 50  
ר = 200  
כ = 6  
א = 50  
י = 100  
ר = 60  
ם = 200

$$\begin{aligned} & 50+200+ \\ & 6+50+100 \\ & +60+200 \\ & = 666 \end{aligned}$$



1st century Roman coin, “Neo Caesar” minted on the left with “Augustus” on the right.

## Importance and Implications

- Your view of eschatology is more than theoretical. It can also affect your evangelism, personal readiness, outlook, and politics.

# Implications of Premillennialism/Dispensationalism

- Evangelism
  - Spread Gospel as quickly as possible since Rapture is imminent
- Readiness
  - Be ready at all times since Rapture is imminent
- Outlook
  - Generally negative. Believe world will get more evil
  - Can be tempting to make Rapture predictions
- Politics
  - Heavy support for the nation of Israel because of the belief the Temple will be rebuilt

# Implications of Postmillennialism

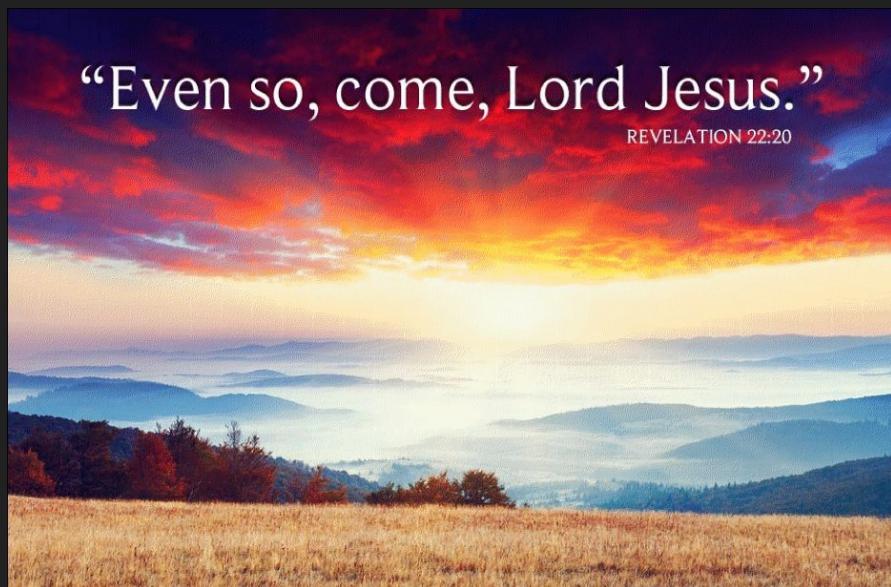
- Evangelism
  - Still committed to spreading the Gospel quickly since souls are dying, but do not expect an imminent return of Christ since the world is not yet Christianized
- Readiness
  - **Possibly** leads to laxness among some since an imminent return of Christ is not expected
- Outlook
  - Generally positive. Believe world will slowly become more Christian
- Politics
  - Since Postmils believe the world will be Christianized there is a tendency toward Christian Nationalism

# Implications of Amillennialism

- Evangelism
  - The return of Christ is possible at any time, so evangelism is urgent
- Readiness
  - The return of Christ is possible at any time, so readiness is key
- Outlook
  - Varies
- Politics
  - Varies

One thing in eschatology is certain...

We are on the welcoming committee, not the planning committee!



# Personal Eschatology—The End of Your World



## What Happens When Someone Dies?

- Prior to Jesus' Resurrection
  - The righteous and unrighteous dead dwell in a place called Sheol (Greek "Hades")
  - Gen. 37:35, Psalm 6:5, Psalm 9:17, Psalm 16:10
  - Lazarus and the Rich Man
    - Luke 16:19-25



## The Fate of the Righteous Dead After Christ's Resurrection

- The righteous dead enter into an intermediate, **disembodied** state with Jesus while awaiting the final resurrection and judgement
  - 2 Corinthians 5:1-8, Philippians 1:21-23, Luke 23:43

## The Fate of the Unrighteous Dead After Christ's Resurrection

- The unrighteous dead enter into an intermediate **disembodied** state separated from Christ in Sheol/Hades awaiting judgement
  - Luke 16 (Rich man and Lazarus)

# The Final End

- After the resurrection of the dead at the end of time, the judgement occurs.
- The unrighteous dead are cast into Hell (Greek “Gehenna”).
  - Revelation 20:11-15
- The righteous dead will enter into the new creation with glorified bodies.
  - Revelation 21-22:5

