

Apocalyptic literature & Prophecy

- Biblical prophecy includes both prediction of the future and proclamation of God's truth for the present
- Apocalyptic literature represents an intensified form of prophecy
- Refers to a group of writings that include a divine revelation, usually thru a heavenly intermediary, to some well known figure, in which God promises to intervene in human history and overthrow evil empires & establish his kingdom
- These visions are not 3 dimensional and are not necessarily to be taken literally
- The chief characteristic that makes apocalyptic so unfamiliar is its use of images
- Why images? Mark 13:32 – Mystery
- Main things are the plain thing and the plain things are the main things.
- The main message of Revelation is "God wins" and therefore those who trust and obey him will win as well

"Already & Not Yet" Eschatology

- the fact that the "Day of the Lord" has already begun but has not yet been completely fulfilled (Mark 1:15)
- Jesus thought the eschatological judgment to be near (Mark 13:30)

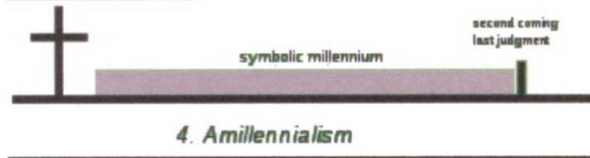
Agreements:

- There will be a sudden, personal, visible, bodily return of Christ (Matt. 24:30-31; Acts 1:11)
- The time of his return is and will remain unknown to man (Matt. 24:36)
- The result of Christ's return

Rapture

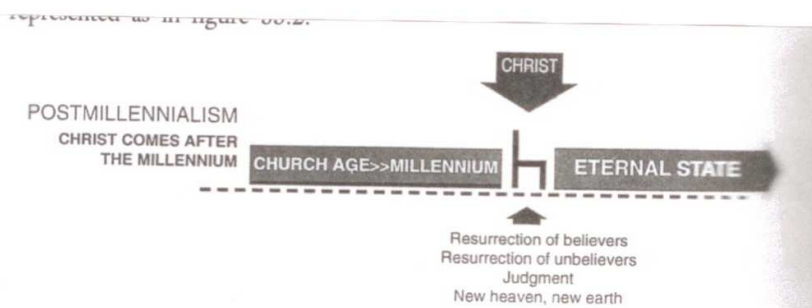
- A secret return of Christ to take believers out of the world
- Historically recent theory
- Unknown in church history
- Proposed by John Nelson Darby in the late 19th Century
- **For**
- Inappropriate for Christians to suffer God's wrath
- Rev. 3:10
- Solves dilemma over "unexpected/signs" disagreement
- **Against**
- Christians avoid the wrath of God
- Rev. 3:10 is written to a specific church and "guarded" doesn't mean "raptured"
- Not the only view that solves the dilemma

Amillennialism



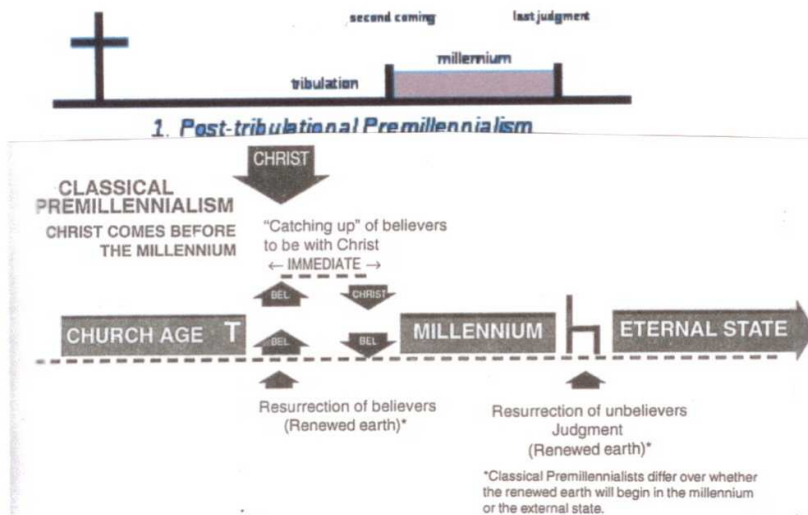
- At any moment Jesus may return to earth & all people (dead or alive) will be resurrected and will undergo judgment
- The earth will be renewed & the saved will enter into their final state
 1. Only one passage (Rev. 20:1-6) appears to teach a future earthly millennial rule of Christ, and that passage is obscure
 2. Scripture teaches only one resurrection
 3. The idea of glorified believers and sinners co-existing on earth is too difficult to accept
 4. If Christ comes in glory to reign on earth, then how will people still persist in sin?
 5. There seems to be no convincing purpose for such a millenium
 6. Scripture seems to indicate that all the major events yet to come before the eternal state will occur at once
- **Strengths**
 - Unites the rapture & 2nd coming
 - Does not rely upon vague passages
 - One judgment for everyone
- **Weaknesses**
 - Must address Rev. 20:1-6
 - Must address Matt. 24:40

Post-millennialism



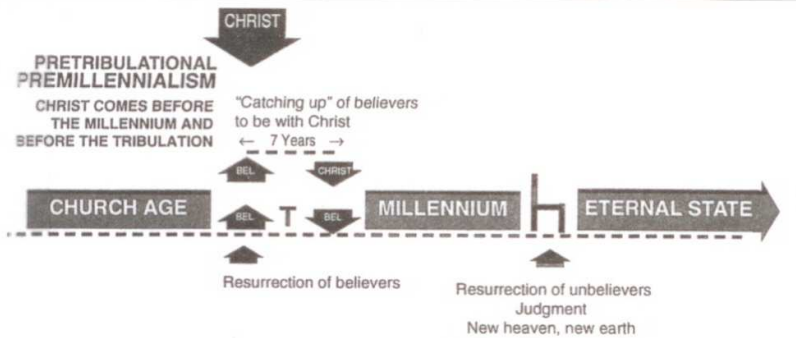
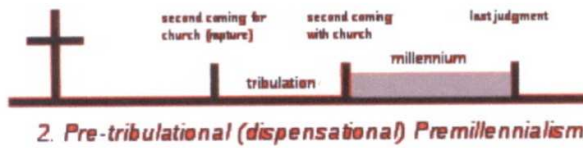
- Rapture & final judgment occur at the end of the millennial kingdom
- Things will get better and better
- Society will become more & more Christianized until the millennial kingdom starts
- We may already be in the midst of the millennial kingdom
- 1. The Great Commission leads us to expect that the gospel will go forth in power and eventually result in a largely Christian world
- 2. Parables of the gradual growth of the kingdom indicate that it eventually will fill the earth with its influence
- 3. The church is growing and spreading throughout the world, and even when it is persecuted and oppressed it grows
- It is important to realize that post-millennialists define the millennium differently
- They define it as: an earth with many Christians influencing society
- **Strengths**
- Unites rapture & 2nd coming
- Doesn't rely upon vague passages
- One judgment for everyone
- **Weaknesses**
- Current state of the world
- View is counter of "few will enter the narrow gate"

Pre-millennialism



- Unspecified time of tribulation will come
 - Jesus will come at the end of that time
 - Church will be raptured, receive glorified bodies, & will then immediately return to earth with Christ
 - Christ will establish an earthly kingdom during which OT prophecy will be fulfilled
 - Unsaved will be judged at the end of millenium
1. Several OT & NT passages indicate some future stage in the history of redemption which is far greater than the present church age but which still doesn't see the complete removal of all sin, rebellion, & death from the earth
 - Isa. 65:20
 - Rev. 2:26-27
- **Strengths**
 - Unites rapture & 2nd coming
 - Revelation interpreted literally (other than numbers)
 - **Weaknesses**
 - Interprets apocalyptic passages literally
 - Incorrect view of biblical prophecy
 - Forces 2 judgments
 - Difficulty explaining purpose & nature of millenial kingdom
 - Interaction of glorified humans w/ sinful humans during millenium

Pre-millennial Dispensationalism



- Rapture followed by 7 yrs of tribulation
 - Matt. 24:40
 - 1 Cor. 15:51-52
 - 1 Thess. 4:16-17
- After tribulation, Christ will return to earth & establish a millennial kingdom
- At the end of millenium, lost will be judged
- Saved will enter into their eternal state
- **Strengths**
- Unites OT & NT prophecies
- Christians spared God's wrath
- Revelation interpreted literally
- **Weaknesses**
- Relies on vague & apocalyptic passages
- Incorrect view of biblical prophecy
- Forces Christ to return 2x
- Forces 2 judgments
- Difficulty explaining purpose & nature of millennial kingdom