

### **Historic Premillennialism**

Like dispensationalists, historic premillennialists also believe that the millennium is a future event. The prominence of national Israel will be restored at the return of Christ and Christ will reign on earth for a literal 1000 years. The Jews will be saved because of their lineage (physical relation to Abraham) but only because they believe in the gospel. Basically, the Jews will become part of the church having trusted in Christ for salvation. Most historic premillennialists believe that there will be two raptures; one right before the 1000 years begins and one as it ends. At the end of the millennium Satan will be loosed and there will be a great rebellion and judgment. Then the new heaven and the new earth will be established.

Historic Premil leaders: George Ladd, Wayne Grudem, John Piper

### **Postmillennialism**

Postmillennialists believe that the millennium is in the future and that there will be a 1000-year run of peace and Christian growth also known as a golden age. The basic premise is that the world will become Christianized (Lorraine Boettner) and at the end of this 1000 years of peace Satan will be released and Christ will return. After the destruction of Satan comes the judgment and the eternal new heaven and earth.

Postmillennial leaders: Augustine, John Calvin, John Owen, Jonathan Edwards, Lorraine Boettner, B.B. Warfield, Charles Hodge

### **Amillennialism**

Amillennialism (literally no-millennium) has its origins with Augustine (354-430AD). Augustine felt that a sole focus of Christ's reigning one day in the future (the millennium) denies the fact that He reigns currently. The basic premise is that the kingdom is both current but not yet fully realized. Amillennialists take the 1000 years in Rev 20 to be metaphorical and not literal and see it as the current age in which we live; the church age. This system holds that Satan has been bound (by Christ's work on the cross) and that the consummation of Christ's kingdom and final judgment will occur at the second coming.

Where Premillennialism emphasizes the use of the OT to interpret the NT, amillennialists use the NT to interpret the OT. There is a heavy reliance in this system on the OT being fulfilled fully by the work of Christ and the church as Christ commissioned it. Satan is bound in the sense that he can no longer deceive the nations and at Christ's return (second coming) Satan and all non-believers will be judged and destroyed.

Amillennial leaders – Augustine, Geerhardus Vos, J.I. Packer, Mike Horton, Anthony Hoekema, RC Sproul

This is an extremely brief introduction to the four most common views of eschatology and it should be noted that there are godly men on all sides who seek the glory of God and the promotion and proclamation of the gospel. It should be understood that none of these views undermine the work of Christ or our need to preach the gospel to the lost.

## An Introduction to Eschatology and the Four Main Views

**Eschatology** – Comes from the Greek word eschatos, meaning last. The suffix –logy indicates that this is an area of study. Therefore we get a definition of the study of the last things or end times.

**Millennium** – The “biblical” millennium is the thousand year reference found only in Revelation 20:1-7 and has been interpreted in several different ways, ie. literally, metaphorically.

Four Main Views:

### **Dispensational Premillennialism**

Dispensational premillennialists believe that the millennium spoken of in Revelation 20:1-7 is a future event and is currently (2011) the most popular and complex view of eschatology. An Irish preacher named John Darby is credited with formulating this view in the 1800’s and was popularized in 1909 by C.I. Scofield’s Reference Bible. This view also ascribes to a standing difference of salvation between national Israel and the church. Basically, there are two methods of salvation, one for Jews and the church for the Gentiles. The two groups are never joined together in this view and in the end national Israel will still be separate from the church (Gentiles). A distinct mark of dispensationalism is that the OT takes priority over the NT and that Israel, as a nation, will be fully restored along with the temple and the sacrificial system. Christ will return and literally reign on earth for 1000 years.

This view also holds to what is known as the “rapture” in which Christ will secretly return for the church but this is NOT the second coming of Christ. Along with the rapture come multiple views of the tribulation:

1. **Pre-Tribulation** – The rapture happens before the tribulation so that believers do not have to endure the suffering of what will take place
2. **Post-Tribulation** – There will be a seven-year tribulation in which a person known as the antichrist will hand out turmoil and great affliction AFTER having caused a great peace. After the seven years Christ will return and rapture the faithful from the tribulation
3. **Mid-Tribulation** – The rapture happens 42 months into the tribulation. Up until this time the antichrist will have brought a great peace upon the earth but after the removal of the church things will become violent

Once national Israel has been fully restored with temple worship and sacrifices (to commemorate Christ’s work), at the end of the 1000 years the great white throne judgment occurs and Satan and all unbelievers are cast into the lake of fire. Then the new heaven and the new earth will be established.

Dispensational leaders: John Darby, C.I. Scofield, John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie, Dwight Pentecost, Norman Geisler, Charles Swindoll, Jack Van Impe, Charles Stanley, John MacArthur