

Eschatology Study Notes

Compiled by Pastor Dave Hentschel, Th.M.

A. Eschatology — “Study of Last Things” from Greek “eschatos” (“last”) and “logos” (“word” or “subject”)

B. Abuses in Eschatology.

- a. Date-setting.
- b. Making controversy over minor points.
- c. Ignoring the future.
- d. Getting caught up in details and forgetting Christ (Rev. 1:1).

C. Why study Eschatology?

- a. The certainty that He will return (John 14:3).
- b. He may return at any moment (Matt. 25:13).
- c. Motivates us to develop Christian character (Titus 3:12-13).
- d. Motivates us in our Christian life.
- e. Motivates us to become involved in Christian service.

D. Greek vocabulary for the “coming of Christ”

1. nouns

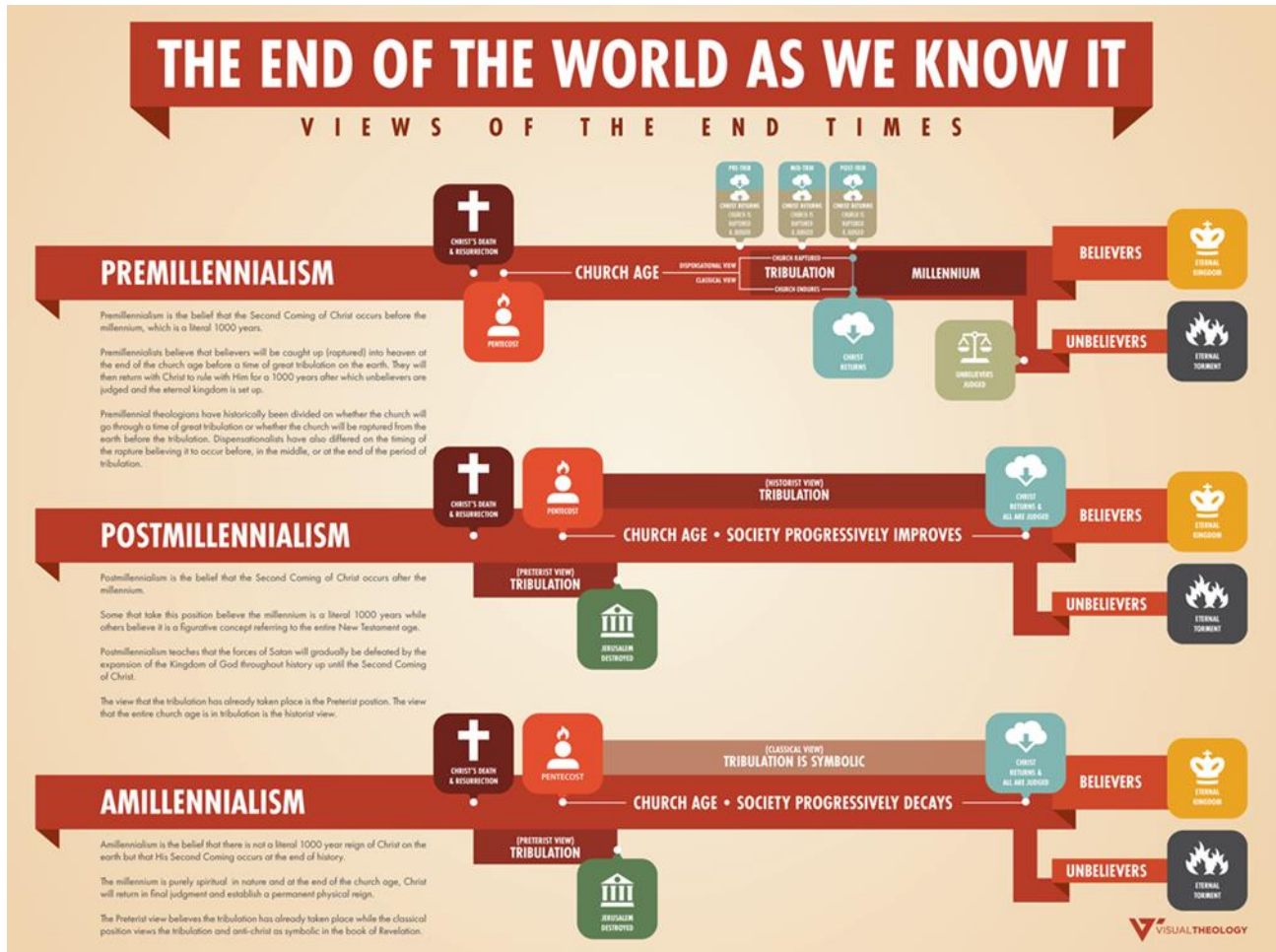
- a. *parousia* — “a presence” (from “para” [with] and “ousia” [being]) trans. “coming”
Of Paul (II Cor.10:10/Phil.1:26/2:12), of Stephanus and Fortunatus (I Cor.16:17), of Titus (II Cor.7:6,7) of the man of sin (II Thess.2:9)
Of Christ (Matt.24:27/I Cor.15:23/I Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23/II Thess.2:1,8/James 5:7,8/II Pet.1:16; 3:4,12/I John 2:28)
- b. *epiphaneia* — lit. “a shining forth”
(translated “appearing” - I Tim. 6:14/II Tim.1:10 [of Christ’s first coming];4:1,8/Titus 2:13 and “brightness” at II Thess.2:8)
- c. *apokalupsis* — lit. “an uncovering, or unveiling”
(usually translated “revelation” or “appearing” — Rom.2:5/I Cor. 1:7/II Thess.1:7/I Pet.1:7,13;4:13/Rev.1:1)

2. verb

- a. *erchomai* — regular generic word for “come” (Matt.10:23/16:28/26:64/Rev.1:7; 22:12)

E. Millennial views

1. *millennium* - from Latin “mille” (“1000”) and “annus” (“years”) mentioned in Rev.20
2. *pre-millennialism* - Christ returns before the 1000 years
3. *post-millennialism* - Christ returns after the 1000 years
4. *a-millennialism* - The 1000 years and subsequent “little while” (Rev.20:7-8) represent the whole time between the first and second comings of Christ.



F. The History of Eschatological views:

- 1). 100-200's pre-millennialism (chiliasm)
Papias (60-130 AD), Polycarp (70-155 AD), Justin Martyr (100-165 AD),
Ireneaus (130-202 AD)
- 2). 200's -1700's a-millennialism
Origen (185-254 AD), Eusebius (260-340 AD), Augustine (400) — Luther
(1500), Calvin, et al.
- 3). 1700's-1900's post-millennialism
Daniel Whitby, Jonathan Edwards, B.B. Warfield
- 4). 1830 - present dispensationalism
J.N. Darby, C. I. Scofield, Lewis S. Chaffer, Walvoord, Ryrie, Lindsey, et al

G. The Rapture

The concept of a “rapture” refers to the eschatological event of both dead and living believers being “caught up” (1Thes. 4:17) together in a moment “in the twinkling of an eye” (1Cor. 15:52) to meet Jesus in the air. The term “rapture” comes from the Latin Vulgate’s use of the word *rapiō* meaning “to seize, snatch away,” which is equivalent to the meaning of the Greek word *harpazō* in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 (“caught up”).

The most common issue centered around the Rapture has to do with the timing of it. There are four main views:

1. **Pre-Tribulation Rapture:** This view maintains the rapture occurs when Jesus comes secretly to gather the church prior a seven-year Great Tribulation that precedes the return of Christ to earth.
2. **Mid-Tribulation Rapture:** This is similar to the pre-tribulation view except that it locates the rapture after the first three-and-half years at the point when the Anti-Christ assumes power.
3. **Pre-Wrath Rapture:** This position argues that the rapture will occur toward the end of the tribulation before the outpouring of God’s wrath with the bowl judgments ([Rev. 16](#)) prior to the return of Christ.
4. **Post-Tribulation:** This view sees the rapture as occurring simultaneous to the return of Christ at the end of the Tribulation.

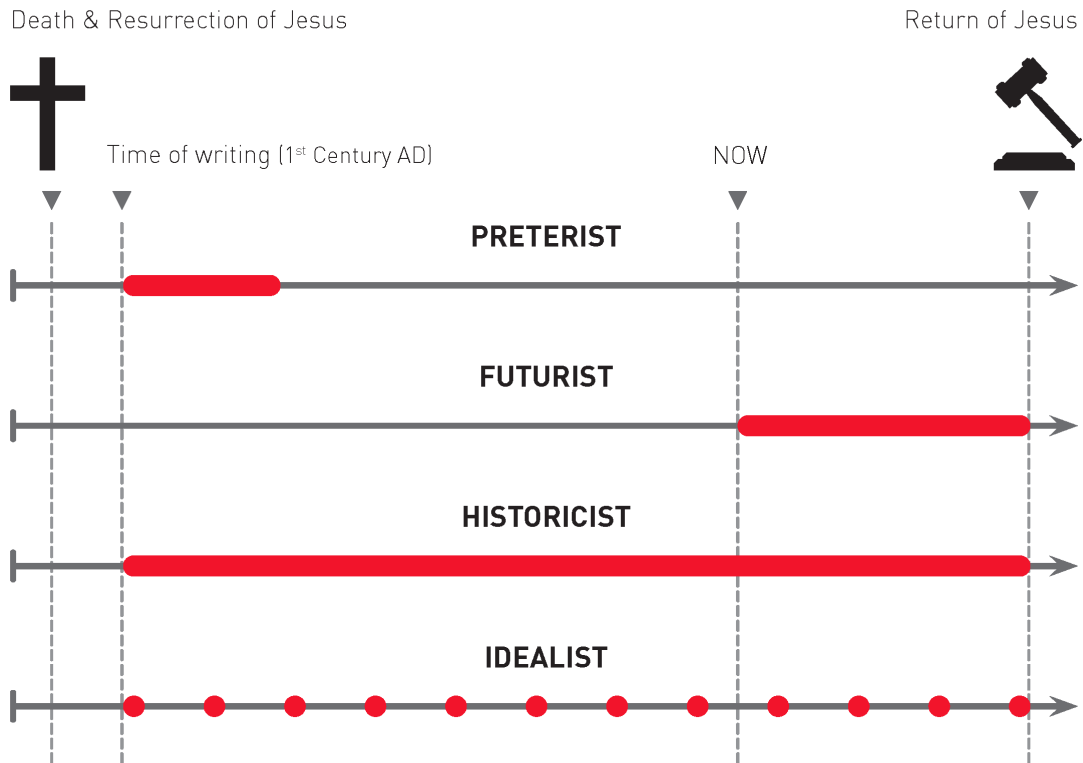


Key Differences of Millennial Views:

1. Discontinuity or Continuity?
2. Optimistic or Pessimistic? (typically an unfair characterization of any view)
3. Church is or is not Israel?
4. Millennium Literal or Symbolic?
5. Interpretation: Literal, Plain, Natural, etc. (Unfair to say any Bible-believing view is “not literal” since all are interpreting according to literary intent of the author.)
6. Promise of *Place* (land) and/or *Presence* (Immanuel/tabernacle principle)

FOUR WAYS TO READ REVELATION

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1. **PRETERIST: Revelation is about events in the past**

The events described in Revelation all took place around the time of the letter's writing and should be read with that historical context in mind. In other words, the letter was written first and foremost to Christians in the first century, under Roman rule and persecution. As such, we need to understand how they would have originally read it, before applying it to ourselves.

2. **FUTURIST: Revelation is about events in the future**

The events described in Revelation were predicted to take place in the far distant future, at least from the point of view of the original readers. So, the focus is on events that are still to come, including times like "the tribulation" and "the millennium."

3. **HISTORICIST: Revelation is about all of history**

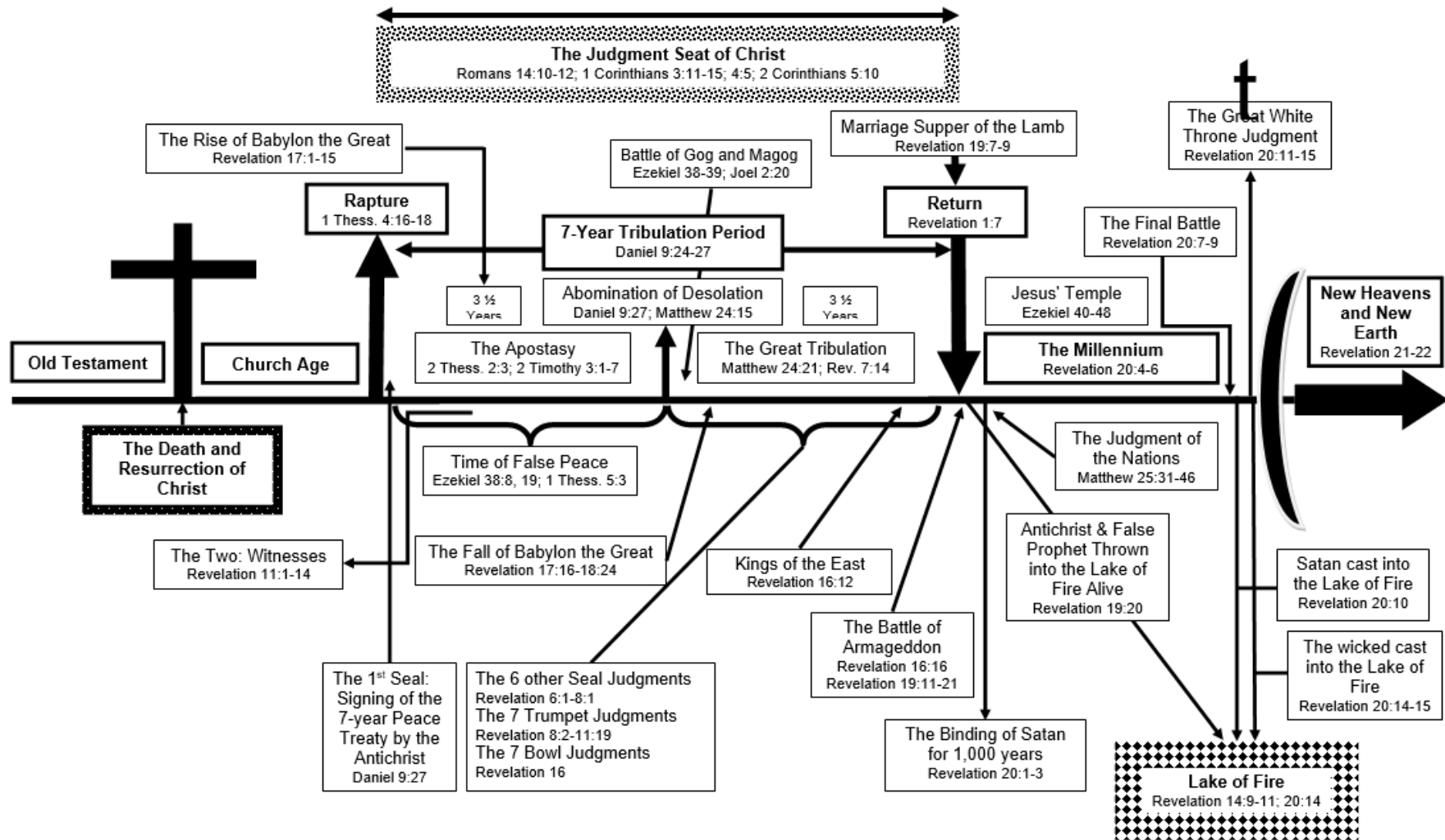
Revelation describes the key events of history stretching from the death and resurrection of Jesus to his return as judge. It can be seen as a *timetable*, by which we can interpret "the signs of the times." In other words, world events *today* are described in Revelation.

4. **IDEALIST: Revelation is about timeless principles**

Revelation isn't talking about a specific time. It is talking about a pattern of events or trends that will be repeated throughout history, as an encouragement to God's people of all times who face persecution. In that sense, it is a "timeless" message.

Classic Dispensationalism

End Times Overview



**THE KINGDOM OF GOD/HEAVEN:
God's Eschatological Reign or Rule over All of Creation**

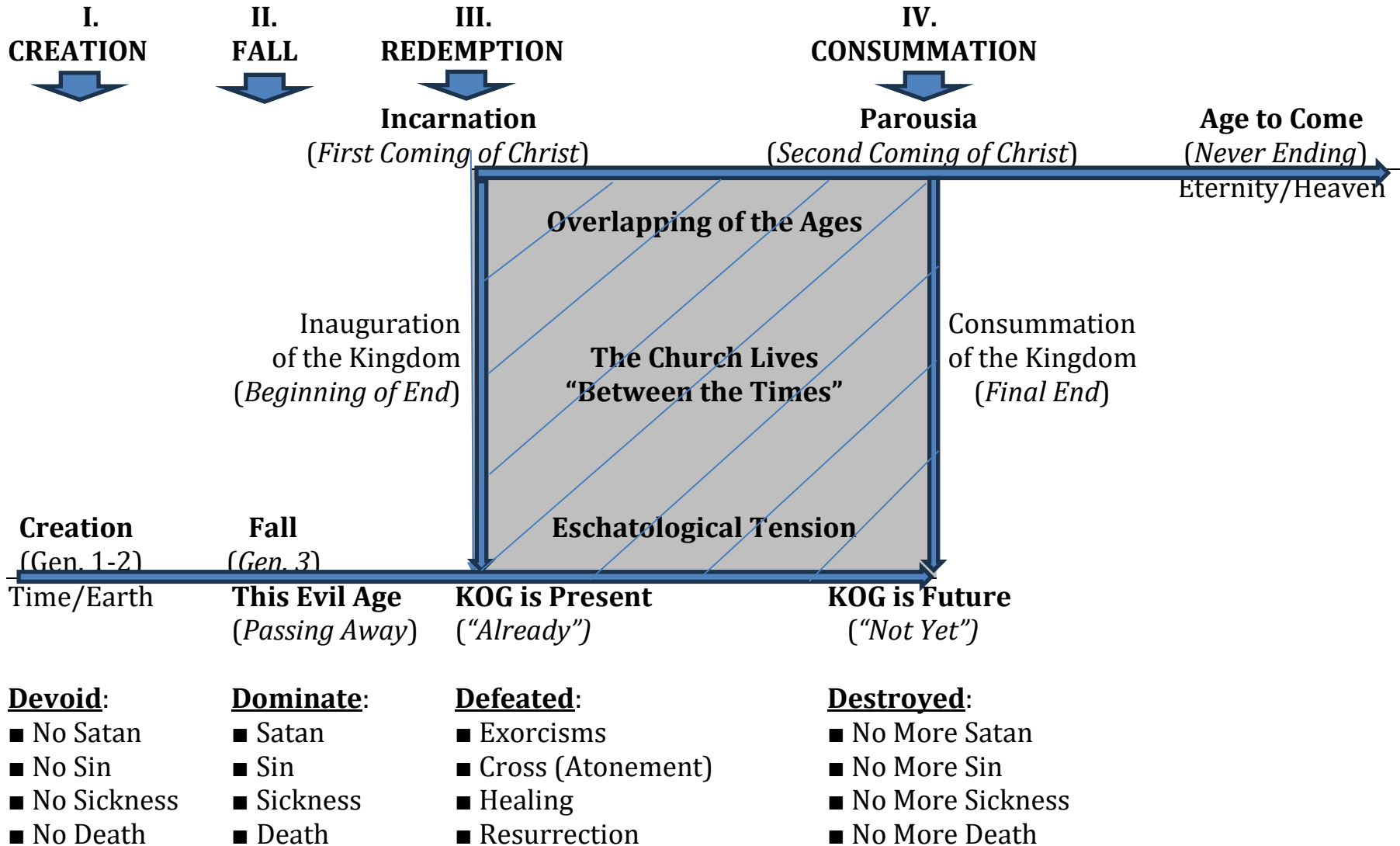


Chart compiled by Professor Keith Brewer

Hermeneutical Systems

“Hermeneutics is that science which furnishes the principles of interpretation. These principles guide and govern anybody’s system of theology. They ought to be determined *before* one’s theology is systematized, but in practice the reverse is usually true. At least in the awareness of most people, hermeneutics is one of the last things to be considered consciously.” (Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, p.86)

“Dispensationalists claim that their principle of hermeneutics is that of literal interpretation. This means interpretation which gives every word the same meaning it would have in normal usage, whether employed in writing, speaking or thinking. This is sometimes called the principle of grammatical-historical interpretation since the meaning of each word is determined by grammatical and historical considerations. ” (Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, p.86f)

“...conservative a-millennarians interpret the Bible in exactly the same manner claimed to be used by conservative millennarians in each of the other schools! All conservative groups, including the futurist and the dispensationalist, claim to use the grammatical-historical literal method of interpreting Scripture.” (Wm. E. Cox, *A-millennialism Today*, p.14)

“But if we reject the literal method of interpretation as the universal rule for the interpretation of all prophecies, how are we to interpret them? Well, of course, there are many passages in prophecy that were meant to be taken literally. In fact, a good working rule to follow is that the literal interpretation of the prophecy is to be accepted unless (a) the passages contain obviously figurative language, or (b) unless the New Testament gives authority for interpreting them in other than a literal sense, or (c) unless a literal interpretation would produce a contradiction with truths, principles, or factual statements contained in non-symbolic books of the New Testament. Another obvious rule to be followed is that the clearest New Testament passages in non-symbolical books are to be the norm for the interpretation of prophecy, rather than obscure or partial revelations contained in the Old Testament. In other words we should accept the clear and plain parts of Scripture as a basis for getting the true meaning of the more difficult parts of Scripture.” (Floyd Hamilton, *The Basis of Millennial Faith*, pp.53-54)

Covenant Theology

Covenant theologians argue that God has one people, one people of God throughout redemptive history, called ‘Israel’ under the Old Testament, and called ‘the church’ under the New. And this one people, God has one saving purpose for them, and that purpose is to redeem sinners from every tribe, tongue, nation, and race through the blood of Jesus Christ. And that purpose is worked out in a series of covenants: The Covenant of Works, The Covenant of Grace and the Covenant of Redemption.

Dispensational Theology

Dispensationalists argue that throughout history, God has had two peoples: there is Israel and there is the church. And he has two destinies for those two peoples: Israel’s is an earthly one relating to the land and to the temple, and the church’s is a spiritual one, relating ultimately to heaven. And they see a series of dispensations, periods of history, that follow one upon the other in which God is testing Israel or the church. And inevitably, those tests result in failure, and so, the next dispensation. The seven dispensations are as follows:

- a. Innocence (Creation till the fall)
- b. Conscience (the fall till the flood)
- c. Government (Post-flood till Abraham)
- d. Promise (Abraham till Sinai)
- e. Law (Sinai till Pentecost)
- f. Grace (church age)
- g. Kingdom (millennium)

Progressive Dispensationalism

Progressive dispensationalists emphasize more continuity than Classical Dispensationalists. They understand the dispensations not simply as different arrangements between God and humankind, but as successive arrangements in the progressive revelation and accomplishment of redemption.

Progressive Covenantalism

Progressive covenantalism and new covenant theology are evangelical biblical-theological systems that seek to understand how God's entire plan of redemption unfolds from creation to Christ. Specifically, they seek to understand how God's one, eternal plan is progressively unveiled and revealed through the biblical covenants, and how all of God's promises are fulfilled in Christ, applied to the church as God's new covenant people, thus allowing us to draw right theological conclusions from Scripture for God's glory and our good.

All Positions Agree:

1. The Bible is the Word of God; and is to be interpreted "literally"=authorial intent
2. Salvation is not determined by your view of the timing of Revelation 20 but by faith in Christ's Cross, Resurrection and Return
3. 1st Coming of Christ involved cross and resurrection (payment of and victory over sin)
4. Christ Physically Returns in 2nd Coming
5. Time of Apostasy and Persecution Return
6. Christ's Return Rapture/Rescue/Resurrection
7. Reunion accompanies Return
8. Judgment follows Return
9. Eternity (New Heavens and Earth) follows Judgment
10. Renewal (bodies, souls, heavens and earth) follows return

"He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

(Rev 22:20, NIV)

Recommended Resources for the study of Eschatology:

Revelation Commentaries:

- Greg Beale, [Revelation](#). (NIGNT series), 1998
- Jim Hamilton, Revelation commentary: The Spirit Speaks to the Churches (Preaching the Word).
- Buist Fanning – Zondervan Exegetical Commentary, Revelation
- Robert Thomas, 2 Vols, Revelation

Videos and teachings:

- Mark Dever – Overview sermon of Revelation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8fpqIY276o>
- Matt Chandler – Village Church Revelation – 12 Week sermon series [here](#) (2021).
 - Youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FXqdzYGU3A>
- Idealist – perspective - Voddie Bauchum – 38 sermons (note some content requires subscription) <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjSIFDZIs-qdWnaHSnxjciuvkf8QbWvgC>
- Futurist perspective – Mark Hitchcock – Credohouse. <https://www.credocourses.com/product/revelation/>

Other Resources:

- William Hendriksen, **More than Conquerors**: An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1940)
- Steve Gregg, [4 views on revelation](#): a parallel commentary – (Nelson, 2013.)
- Zondervan Counterpoints series book: [4 Views on Revelation](#) – (Gentry - Preterist, Hamstra - Historicist, Pate - Idealist, Thomas - Futurist)
- “**An Evening of Eschatology**” w/ John Piper and friends: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4S0TQ2dXnms&t=3s>
- Southeastern Eschatology Roundtable: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4tO1cnH2Ts&t=2s>
- Thomas Schreiner Millennial Views: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEUtpIvjexU>
- R.C. Sproul “Four Views of Revelation”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUwI_XDriho
- Eschatology Matters 2022 Conference (Panel Link—Other talks should be connected): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPsUu1ETP2Y&list=PLg6HVWTrlnkKkRXI84_giOx4NRaTS98dt
- Progressive Covenantalism and New Covenant Theology AN ESSAY BY Stephen Wellum <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/progressive-covenantalism-and-new-covenant-theology/>
- Kingdom Through Covenant, by Gentry and Wellum
- Progressive Covenantalism, edited by Wellum and Parker
- Covenantal and Dispensational Theologies: Four Views on the Continuity of Scripture (Spectrum Multiview Book Series) Paperback – February 8, 2022
- Dispensationalism. Charles Ryrie
- Progressive Dispensationalism, Bock and Blaising