

Different Millennial Views

By David Feddes

A millennium is a thousand years. In the Bible the millennium, the thousand-year period, is mentioned in just one passage, Revelation 20. When we look at different views of the millennium, there's more to think about than just different ideas of when that thousand years will be or what it's going to be like. Different millennial views are connected with different views of the end times in general and sometimes even different views about a wider range of things in Scripture. As we consider different millennial views, we'll see their connection to wider differences among Christians.

What Many Current Evangelicals Believe

Let's begin with a view of the millennium and of the end times that is widely held by evangelicals in our day. Here are some of the basic elements.

Secret rapture: Many evangelicals believe in a secret rapture, when many people in the world are suddenly going to vanish. This will happen when Jesus comes down and comes near the earth, but not quite all the way. The dead Christians will be raised to life and caught up to be with Jesus, the living Christians will be caught up with Jesus in the air, and then Jesus will turn around and take these Christians back to heaven. The unbelieving world won't quite know what happened. They won't have seen Jesus actually coming but will notice that a great many people are missing.

Tribulation: Following this mass disappearance of millions of people, according to this view, there will come a seven-year period of tribulation, of intense suffering and persecution led by any evil world ruler, the Antichrist. During this period, many Jewish people will be saved. These Jewish Christians are going to be witnesses, preaching to others and converting many. During this time of tribulation there will be horrible persecutions but also widespread conversions as people understand what happened in the rapture. Many will come to faith in Christ.

Glorious appearing: After the Antichrist has been doing his terrible thing for a while, Jesus will come back. When he appears, he will defeat the forces of evil. He will banish Antichrist and the false prophet and unbelievers to hell. Then, after this glorious appearing and victory, Jesus will reign on earth from Jerusalem for one thousand years. This is the millennium. Many who hold this view believe that a temple will again stand in Jerusalem and animal sacrifices will be reinstated as well during this thousand-year reign of Jesus.

End of millennium: Many evangelicals believe that after the millennium, there's going to be yet another rebellion. Satan will lead nations worldwide to rebel against Jesus. Jesus will then crush the rebels and send Satan to hell.

At this point, let me mention a major reservation that I have with this view: the notion that even after Jesus has been reigning in power and glory over a wonderful kingdom for a thousand years, people will rebel against him. This view claims that at the beginning of the thousand years, the Antichrist and all God's enemies will be defeated and sent to hell, yet at the end of the thousand

years, there will somehow be another worldwide rebellion against Jesus led by Satan. It's very hard to believe that even after all unbelievers have been banished, even after Jesus has been visibly present and reigning over an earthly paradise for a millennium, much of the world would end up rebelling against Jesus again. At any rate, that's the scenario expected in this view. After a thousand-year reign of Christ, there will be a rebellion led by Satan that will involve nations worldwide. Jesus will crush the rebellion and send those rebels and Satan himself to hell.

White throne judgment: Then will come judgment at the great white throne. At that point, unbelievers who died in ages past will be resurrected into a body that can't die. They will be judged and sent to hell to be punished forever. The white throne judgment, in this view, will deal with unbelievers only. Believers will not be evaluated at the great white throne.

Eternity: Then comes eternity. The Lord will create a new heaven and a new earth, where all his people and all his angels will live with him forever.

This is the view that many evangelical Christians have of the millennium and of the end times. Where does this view come from? It's associated with a system of thought labeled with two very long words: dispensational premillennialism.

Dispensational Premillennialism

According to dispensational premillennialism, God deals with Israel very differently than He deals with the church. These sharply distinct ways of dealing are called *dispensations*. God is said to have a different dispensation for Israel than for the church. That's one of the hallmarks of dispensational premillennialism, that God has a different program for Israel than for the church.

In this view, Old Testament prophecies were for Israel, not for the church. The church age is a parenthesis, an interruption of the Old Testament program of prophecy. The New Testament teachings about God's kingdom are not for the church but are about Jesus' reign as Israel's king. The fulfillment of these prophecies about the kingdom and about Jesus' reign have been postponed because Israel did not believe and accept Jesus as its Messiah. But later on those prophecies are going to take effect again when God's prophecy program resumes. Those Old Testament prophecies and those New Testament statements about God's kingdom will be fulfilled in the millennium. In the meantime, the church is, in a sense, God's Plan B, with plan A being put on hold. The church age is a parenthesis, an interruption of the prophecy program of the Old Testament concerning God's kingdom for the people of Israel.

Jesus must return in glory before he reigns a thousand years on earth. *Pre* means "before," and *millennium* means a thousand years. So *premillennialism* means that Jesus comes back before the thousand years when He reigns on earth.

Thus you have *dispensationalism*, a system of thought where Israel and the church are dealt with according to very different programs, combined with *premillennialism*, a particular view of what the Bible means by the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ.

Has dispensationalism been held by most Christians throughout history? Some Christians might say, “Yes, of course. Is there any other way of thinking about it?” It might be the only view of the end times that they’re really familiar with. But the more accurate answer is, “No, dispensationalism hasn’t been held by most Christians throughout history.” Its widespread acceptance among evangelicals is largely the result of recent mass marketing, not of being the commonly held belief of Christians throughout the ages in most cultures.

The founding thinker of dispensationalism was John Nelson Darby. He was a preacher who lived in the 1800s and spelled out the dispensational system of thought. Later in the 1800s, Dwight L. Moody, who was not mainly a Bible scholar but an evangelist, helped to spread dispensational ideas in his preaching and published material. Moody wasn’t a major thinker of the movement, but he was such a powerful evangelist, such a great man of God who reached a lot of people, that his own preference for dispensational ideas spread to many more people.

In the early 1900s, a man named Cyrus Scofield wrote study notes on the books of the Bible and published the Scofield Study Bible. This was one of the first study Bibles to have the words of the Bible on a page and explanatory notes on the same page, below the words of Scripture. Scofield was a premillennial dispensationalist, and his study Bible influenced huge numbers of people. On the very same page as the Word of God, they would find Scripture explained in terms of dispensationalism. As a result, many people took Scofield’s notes as the Bible’s teaching.

A number of bestselling books spread dispensational ideas even further. Hal Lindsey wrote the *Late Great Planet Earth* and published it in 1970. This book portrayed a scenario of what would happen in Europe and Russia in the near future. Lindsey took many things from the latest headlines of that time and connected them with things that were in the Bible. This book became the bestselling book in the world in the 1970s. With so many readers, it had a huge impact in causing many Christians to think in dispensational terms about the end times and the millennium.

Before I explain areas where I disagree with dispensational premillennialism, I want you to understand that I appreciate the importance of some of these Christians and the positive impact they have had in many lives. Dwight L. Moody was a mighty evangelist who led many to salvation through faith in Jesus. I remember a dynamic Jewish Christian who told me that he was converted to Christ after reading *The Late Great Planet Earth*. I think the *Late Great Planet Earth* contains a number of mistakes, but it’s also had a positive impact and even helped some people to come to faith in Christ.

At any rate, some very gifted communicators have helped to spread dispensational premillennialism. In 1995 Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins published a novel titled *Left Behind*. This book sold millions and millions of copies, and was followed by a series of novels that were also bestsellers. The *Left Behind* novels told a story of happenings near the end of the world, using fiction to help people imaginatively enter into a time frame and sequence of events that fit the ideas of dispensational premillennialism.

There are other views of the end times and the millennium besides dispensational premillennialism. In fact, for most of history and in most places, Christians have held one of these other views. But in the American setting during the past two centuries, and in places

strongly influenced by American Christianity, some skilled communicators and mass marketers have influenced many people to accept the ideas of dispensational premillennialism.

Historic Premillennialism

Dispensationalism isn't the only version of premillennialism that there is. Historic premillennialism holds that Jesus will come before (pre) his thousand-year reign, but historic premillennialism does not teach other key ideas of dispensational premillennialism. Historic premillennialists, such as Dr. Wayne Grudem, do not teach a secret rapture, and they do not teach that many Old Testament prophecies and New Testament kingdom passages apply only to Jews and not to the church. This view is called historic premillennialism because, unlike dispensational premillennialism, it was held by some Christians early in the church's history.

Some Christians from the century after Jesus' resurrection, such as Irenaeus and Justin Martyr, held a premillennial view. They taught that Jesus would first return and then reign on earth for a thousand years. But no early Christian taught a secret rapture, where Jesus comes part way to earth, snatches believers away suddenly without a sound, and then turns around and takes them all back to heaven, leaving the rest of the people who've been left behind on earth to wonder what happened. No early Christians taught that.

Why didn't they teach it? The only passage in the Bible where the word "rapture" (raptus in Latin translations) occurs is in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. There the Bible says that Christ "will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God" before Christians are "caught up to meet the Lord in the air." Rapture means being "caught up," but meeting the Lord in the air does not mean the Lord then does a U-turn and goes back to heaven. Rather, believers meet the Lord in the air as Jesus is coming to earth. They rush up to meet their king, and Jesus keeps coming to earth, accompanied by those who have welcomed him and longed for his appearing. This event does not sound at all secret. It sounds very noisy: "a loud command... the voice of an archangel... the trumpet call of God." So, although some early Christians believed that Jesus would return before a thousand-year reign on earth, they did not hold to a secret rapture.

The early Christians also did not separate the church from the Jewish people as sharply as dispensationalists do. The early church taught the unity of Jewish and Gentile Christians, in keeping with what the Bible itself teaches about a wall of partition being broken down and the different peoples being made one in the church of Jesus. They believed that the Old Testament promises reached fulfillment not in some future age with the people of Israel but in the person of Jesus Christ and in his church.

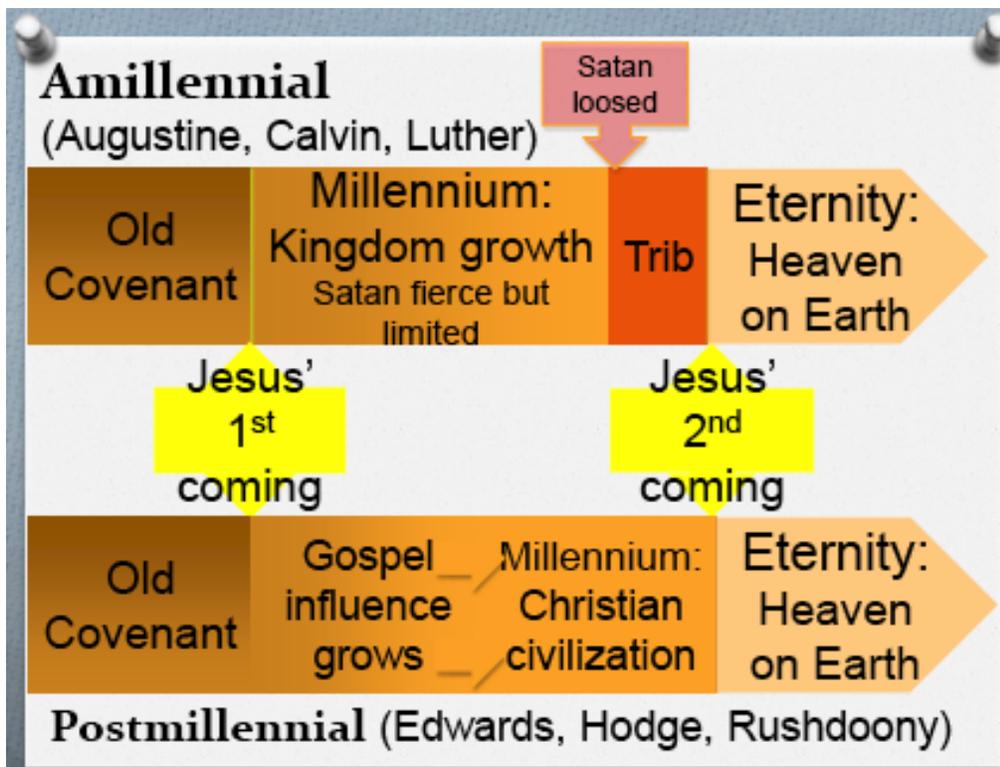
Not all of the early church fathers held a premillennial view that Jesus would return before a thousand-year reign on earth, but Justin Martyr was one who did. Still, even Justin did not divide God's program for Israel from his program for the church. Justin's Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew shows how the promises of God in the Old Testament are fulfilled in the church. In other words, one of the most prominent and brilliant men who held the premillennial view in those early days of the church specifically taught that the church is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, quite a different view from that of dispensational premillennialism.

No church father was dispensationalist: all taught the unity of Jewish and Gentile Christians, and all believed that Old Testament promises are fulfilled in the church. Dispensational premillennialism tends to divide Jews from Gentiles and to divide one part of the Bible from another. However, the Bible emphasizes, especially in Ephesians and Colossians, the unity of God's people, Jew or Gentile. The Bible also emphasizes the unity of Scripture. Unlike dispensational premillennialism, historic premillennialists of the early church and today do not embrace a secret rapture, and they do embrace the unity of Scripture and the fulfillment of God's Old Testament promises in the church, with Jewish Christians being part of the church and not a separate people with a totally separate program.

Amillennialism and Postmillennialism

Two other views, besides dispensational premillennialism and historic premillennialism, are amillennialism and postmillennialism. Amillennialism and postmillennialism have some things in common. Both views hold that the millennium occurs between Jesus' first coming and Jesus' second coming. Both views hold that God was making promises and working through the old covenant. Both views hold that Jesus' first coming ushered in a new era in God's dealings with his people. Both views hold that Jesus' second coming ushers in eternity, heaven on earth, when all things are made perfect forever.

Amillennialism and postmillennialism have these things in common, but have different views of what happens between Jesus' first coming and his second coming.



An amillennial Christian holds that the entire time between Jesus' first coming and His second coming is the millennium. This is the time when Jesus reigns, when the kingdom of God has come near in the person of Jesus and is carried on by the work and power of the Holy Spirit through believers. During this millennium, this time of kingdom growth, Satan remains fierce, but he is limited. He's bound; he's on a leash. For most of that time, Satan is unable to do all that he would like to do. Then, near the end of history, Satan is loosed and brings about some terrible things on earth: the Antichrist, the false prophet, and a brief time of terrible tribulation. At the end of the tribulation, Jesus comes back, defeats the Antichrist, crushes all his forces, destroys his enemies in hell, and brings about heaven on earth. So, in the amillennial view, the millennium began with the first coming of Jesus and continues until his second coming. The millennium is a time when Jesus is reigning but also when Satan is still quite fierce. Near the end, the power of evil will intensify greatly, but the devotion and love and faith of God's people will also shine more brightly than ever during the tribulation. Then Jesus returns, bringing the end of the millennium and the beginning of eternity, heaven on earth.

The postmillennial view has a different scenario of what happens between Jesus' first and second comings. In this view, the first coming of Jesus launches a new era. The gospel spreads. His kingdom reign begins to have its impact. Over time that impact keeps on growing, and it keeps on developing. As more and more people are reached with the gospel, as more and more nations experience the influence of the gospel on their nations, the world becomes largely Christianized. The vast majority of people become believers, and even those who don't become genuine born-again believers are swept along in a largely Christian outlook and are caught up in a Christianized civilization where the laws and the way things are conducted are primarily Bible-directed and Christ-honoring. At some point in history, after Jesus' first coming but before his second coming, the world becomes largely evangelized and widely Christianized. Then, when all of that has come to fruition and the world has become a much better, God-honoring place, Jesus comes again. At his second coming, all things are made perfect. Heaven comes to earth, and we enter into the eternal realm.

Now both of these views, the amillennial and the postmillennial, have some very great thinkers and some very godly men who have held them. Augustine, who lived around the year 400 and was one of the most influential minds in the history of the church, held to an amillennial perspective. John Calvin and Martin Luther, the great leaders of the Protestant Reformation, held an amillennial view, as do many who follow in their footsteps. By the way, *amillennial* in a sense is not an accurate label, because the word *amillennial* literally means "no millennium." We shouldn't say "*no* millennial." We should say "*now* millennial," because the amillennial view is teaching that the millennium is now. Anyway, some great Christians have been amillennialists.

The postmillennial view has been held by people such as Jonathan Edwards, Charles Hodge, and Rousas John Rushdoony. Jonathan Edwards was one of the greatest intellects and Christians that America ever produced, a great preacher and leader in the First Great Awakening. Charles Hodge was a Princeton theologian and a man of God. Rushdoony was an author in the later 1900s. So, the postmillennial view has been held by some very smart and godly people.

Situations Influence Interpretations of Scripture

Sometimes it's not just the Bible but a particular historical situation that affects whether a view seems to make the most sense. Jonathan Edwards, for example, was living at a time when the gospel was spreading rapidly, when people were living in a new world (the Americas) and were hoping to build "a city on a hill," a civilization that was Christ-directed. In a time like that, when Edwards was seeing powerful movements of the Holy Spirit and revival, it was much easier to hold to a postmillennial view that things were getting better and better, that the gospel was spreading faster and faster, that its impact was becoming greater and greater. Reading the Scripture in that particular situation, the postmillennial view seemed to make a lot of sense.

But in a time when the church was going downhill, when its theology was becoming very liberal, when many people were walking away from the faith, when even churchgoers were twisting the teachings of the Christian faith, postmillennialism didn't seem to fit what was happening. In the late 1800s and beyond, the church in Europe and America seemed to be getting weaker, and society seemed to be less and less Christian. In times like that, Christians were more pessimistic about the future of the church and society, and dispensational premillennialism seemed to fit the mood of Christians in that particular context.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that postmillennialism was just carried away by a feeling of optimism rather than studying the Scriptures, and I'm not saying that dispensational premillennialism was just carried away by a feeling of pessimism rather than studying the Scriptures. People holding those views have studied the Bible carefully and have worked hard to understand the Bible's teaching. However, I am saying that how you read the Bible is often affected by the particular society and conditions that you are reading it in.

Take, for example, one argument for dispensational premillennialism that is used by some people (though not by the best dispensationalist scholars). Arguing for a pre-tribulation rapture, some people say, "God would never allow his people to suffer through such a terrible time as the tribulation." I remember hearing a Romanian pastor say, "Only in America would that sound like a good argument. I have had a gun held to my head. I've been tortured. Many of my fellow pastors were murdered for their faith by the Romanian secret police in the name of communism. Don't try to tell me that God would never let His people go through times of terrible tribulation." If you live in a setting like the United States, where you are safe and prosperous but the church and the culture seem to be going downhill, it might seem sensible to say, "God is going to snatch us all out of here. He's going to rescue us before things get too bad." But that claim makes sense only if you're living in a situation where things aren't too bad. If you've lived in a situation of horrifying persecution, you know that sometimes God's faithful people must endure tribulation.

Room for Various Views

Of the different millennial views, amillennialism has probably been the most widely held in the most eras of history and the most places. But each view has been held by many Christians of great learning and godly character.

I hold a view of the millennium that is taught by amillennial Bible scholars such as Anthony Hoekema, Samuel Waldron, and G.K. Beale. However, I want to emphasize that one's view of the millennium is not a central aspect of the Christian faith that all Christians must agree upon. My own congregation does not require a particular millennial view. The denomination in which I am ordained does not require a particular millennial view.

It's not that everything about the end times is up in the air, so that you can just pick and choose whatever you like. The Apostles' Creed insists on certain basics. We must all believe that Jesus "will come again to judge the living and the dead." We must all believe in "the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." We can't just be liberals who say, "Resurrection is a metaphor of our spirit being energized by the teaching of Jesus." No, we believe that our *bodies* are going to rise again and that we will live with Christ forever. All Christians must affirm these basics. But there is room to differ on how to interpret and apply some details of biblical prophecy. One area where Christians have long differed is how to understand the millennium.

In dealing with Bible prophecy, Samuel Waldron describes two kinds of people: Fascinated Fred and Practical Pam. Fascinated Fred is a prophecy buff. When he opens his Bible, he's always looking for a prophecy and for recent news headlines that might match the prophecy. He studies book after book on prophecy. Sometimes he's analyzing prophecy so much that he really can't be bothered with the day-to-day fruit of the Spirit or living for the Lord, because prophecy is his thing. Don't be a Fascinated Fred. There's more to the Bible than just predictions about the end times. At the opposite extreme is Practical Pam. She says, "All that prophecy stuff is hard to understand. People disagree about it, so I'm not going to bother. I'm a panmillennialist: it will all pan out in the end." Pam is happy just to read a few books about how to be a better wife and mother, how to manage money, how to get along in today's world and still be a decent Christian. Practical Pam doesn't have enough interest in the wonderful promises of God, and she doesn't pay enough attention to what the Bible says about the future. Avoid both extremes. Don't be a Practical Pam who has no interest in prophecy, and don't be a Fascinated Fred who focuses all your attention on prophecy and the end times. Keep a healthy balance. We should keep seeking to understand biblical prophecy as well as we can, while realizing that there are also other important things to learn from the Bible.

Amillennialism: the Millennium is Now

I explained earlier the rough sequence of events that dispensational premillennialists expect. Now let me explain what the sequence looks like if you're looking at the Bible from my angle, the amillennial angle.

The millennium is now. We are living in the period right now where Satan is bound, cast down, and restrained. In the first coming of Jesus, in his rejection of Satan's temptations, in his exorcism of demons, in his death and victorious resurrection, Jesus won a decisive victory over Satan. The devil is now limited. Satan is no longer able to do all that he would like to do in deceiving the nations.

We are living in the millennium period when Christ's reign on earth is already underway. Jesus came proclaiming the kingdom of God, the reign of God. He said, "The kingdom of God has

come near. Repent and believe the good news!” The kingdom had come near because Jesus had come. In his first coming, Jesus launched the reign of God in a new and decisive way here on earth. We are now living in the millennium period when Christ’s reign continues to be implemented by the power of his outpoured Holy Spirit.

“The first resurrection” has already happened for millions of souls in heaven. When people go to heaven after they die, their spirits are alive in Jesus’ presence and they are now reigning with Christ on heavenly thrones.

At the end of this present millennium of Jesus’ reign and of Satan being limited, Satan will be unleashed. Satan’s man of ultimate evil, the Antichrist, will take power for a brief time.

The Second Coming: Judgment Day

That time will end with the coming of Jesus Christ. His coming will not be secret. Jesus will come loudly and visibly with his angels. Dead believers will be resurrected. Those who are still living when Jesus comes will have their bodies transformed and glorified. All of God’s people together will be caught up to meet their king as he comes down to earth. When the apostle Paul wrote about being caught up to meet the Lord, he used a word that often described what happened when a king came to a city. Those who were glad to see the king would come out of the city gates to welcome him, and then they would accompany their king back into the city. Similarly, when Jesus comes again, we Christians will be caught up to meet him in the air, and then we will accompany him to earth, praising him and rejoicing.

When Jesus comes again, Antichrist and all his armies of unbelievers will be defeated and slain. As the Bible portrays it, the rulers of the earth will cry out from fear of Jesus’ presence. They will want to hide under rocks or in caves. They will want the mountains to fall on them and cover them.

After Jesus’ victory, all the unbelieving dead in all the world’s history will be resurrected. Each of them will receive a body—not a glorious, happy body, but a body suited for hell.

Then all people, believers and unbelievers, will stand before God’s throne of judgment. All will be judged according to God’s records, especially one main record: whether their name is in the book of life. Those who belong to Jesus Christ by faith, who were chosen by God from before the foundation of the world, will be judged in mercy. God will have other records of all that they did wrong, but the book of life states that they belong to Christ and states what Christ did on their behalf. The judge will also have records of good things his people did in Jesus’ name, and they will be rewarded for those deeds.

Satan and all God’s other enemies, whose names are not in the book of life, will go to hell. There wicked people will suffer, body and soul, God’s wrath and punishment of their sins.

Christ will present his church to God the Father. Heaven will come to earth when the earth has been cleansed and renewed. Believers will enjoy God forever.

All of this is part of one great event, the day of the Lord, Judgment Day. Unlike the dispensational view, Jesus won't come back for a secret rapture, where those left behind still have an opportunity to come to faith in Christ. When Christ comes again, it will be final. There will be no second chance for anyone to be saved. When Jesus comes loudly and visibly, everyone who loves him and knows him will be irresistibly drawn to him. Those who have not loved him and trusted him will be irresistibly driven from him. His appearance will repel them and horrify them, and they will forever be fleeing from the Lord. So then, the return of Jesus will be a final, once-for-all event. His judgment of Satan will not come a thousand years after his judgment of the Antichrist. The final judgment of all God's enemies will occur at the same time. When Jesus comes in all his glory and makes all things new, there will be no place for rebels and no possibility of further rebellion. All the rebels will be gone. All who love his appearing will be perfect. We will be with the Lord forever in that perfect heaven on earth.

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Many evangelicals believe:

- **Secret rapture:** Jesus comes near earth, resurrects dead believers, and takes living Christians, who vanish from earth.
- **Tribulation:** 7 years ruled by Antichrist; many Jews are saved and preach to others.
- **Glorious appearing:** Jesus comes and banishes Antichrist and unbelievers to hell.
- **Millennium:** Jesus reigns on earth for 1,000 years. Temple worship and animal sacrifices are reinstated.
- **End of millennium:** Satan leads nations worldwide to rebel against Jesus. Jesus crushes rebels and sends Satan to hell.
- **White throne judgment:** Unbelievers are resurrected, judged, and sent to hell.
- **Eternity:** The Lord creates a new heaven and a new earth, where all his people and his angels will live with him forever.

Dispensational premillennialism

- God deals with Israel and the church in sharply distinct ways (**dispensations**).
- OT prophecies were for Israel, not for the church. Church age is a parenthesis.
- NT teachings about God's kingdom are not for the church but were about Jesus' reign as Israel's king—postponed because of Israel's unbelief but to be fulfilled in the millennium.
- Jesus must return in glory before (**pre-**) reigning a thousand years (**millennium**).

Has dispensationalism been held by most Christians throughout history?

No, its widespread acceptance among evangelicals is largely the result of recent mass-marketing.

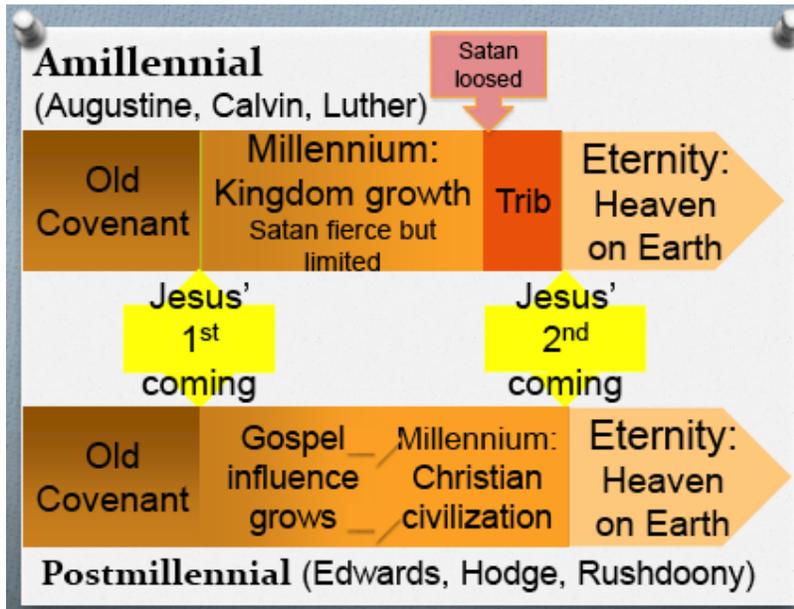
- J. N. Darby and D. L. Moody (1800s)
- C. I. Scofield's study Bible notes (1909)
- *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970)
- *Left Behind* novels (1995 and beyond)

Other views have been more prominent among Christians in other times & places.

Historic premillennialism

- Some early Christians (Irenaeus, Justin Martyr) held a premillennial view.

- No early Christians taught a secret rapture. *Christ “will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God” before Christians are “caught up to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess 4:16-17).*
- No church father was dispensationalist: all taught the unity of Jewish and Gentile Christians, and all believed that OT promises are fulfilled in the church.



Room for various views

- My congregation and denomination do not require a particular millennial view.
- The Apostles Creed insists that Jesus “will come again to judge the living and the dead.” We believe in “the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.” All Christians must affirm these basics, but there is room to differ on how to interpret and apply details of biblical prophecy.
- Keep seeking better understanding (not Fascinated Fred or Practical Pam)

Amillennial: the millennium is now

- We are living in the millennium period when Satan is bound, cast down, and restrained.
- We are living in the millennium period when Christ’s reign on earth is already underway.
- “The first resurrection” has already happened for millions of souls in heaven. Their spirits are alive in Jesus’ presence, and they are now reigning with Christ on heavenly thrones.
- At the end of the present millennium, Satan is unleashed briefly, and Antichrist takes power.

The Second Coming: Judgment Day

- Jesus comes loudly and visibly with his angels.
- Dead believers are resurrected, living believers transformed, and together they are caught up to meet their King as He comes down to earth.
- Antichrist and unbelievers are slain.
- All unbelieving dead are resurrected.
- All are judged according to God's records and whether they are in the book of life.
- Satan and all God's enemies go to hell.
- Christ presents his church to the Father, heaven comes to earth, and believers enjoy God forever.