



A Study of Revelation

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Weeks 1 & 2 – Overview & Backstory of the End Times

The Book of Revelation addresses the events at the end of time in this reality. Often, the term used regarding the topic of Revelation is *eschatology*, which essentially means the “study of (*logy*) the last things” (*eschaton*). Most do not refer to this topic as the *eschaton*; rather, they talk about “the end of the world, time, or all things.” They want to discuss the Book of Revelation, or the rapture and tribulation period. The problem with addressing this subject in such a manner is that it treats the events of the *eschaton* as separated parts that are independent from one another. The *eschaton* is a whole event. It contains stages of mini-events that cannot be fragmented freely and still be understood correctly and completely. In our study of Revelation, we will attempt to understand it in light of the *eschaton* as a whole. As we do so, we will be able to draw concrete conclusions about various aspects of the *eschaton* with confidence.

OVERVIEW OF THE END TIMES

Key Terms of the End Times

Activity: Below are listed certain terms that are often used in the discussion of last things, as well as definitions for each term. Match the term with the definition that describes it.

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| ___ Advent | A. <i>The catching up into the air of believers to be with Christ forever.</i> |
| ___ Armageddon | B. <i>The biblical concept that at the end of history Jesus Christ will return in glory to earth, the dead will be raised, and they, together with all the living, will be finally assigned their eternal destiny in heaven or hell.</i> |
| ___ Eschaton | C. <i>The seven-year period when the world will endure immense sufferings.</i> |
| ___ Eschatology | D. <i>A thousand-year period of the next to last divine triumph over the forces of evil on earth before God’s final conquest of all His enemies and the establishment of everlasting righteousness.</i> |
| ___ Final Judgment | E. <i>The return of Christ to establish His divine kingdom on earth.</i> |
| ___ Parousia / “Day of the Lord” | F. <i>The rallying place of the kings of the world who, led by the unclean spirits from the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, assemble here for “the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.”</i> |
| ___ The Tribulation | G. <i>The study of last things.</i> |
| ___ Rapture | H. <i>Literally “last;” implying last things and usually applied to the end of time.</i> |
| ___ Second Coming | I. <i>Literally “coming.”</i> |
| ___ Millennium/ Millennial Reign | H. <i>Literally “presence;” implying an official visit and usually applied generally to the fulfillment of all things and final judgment.</i> |

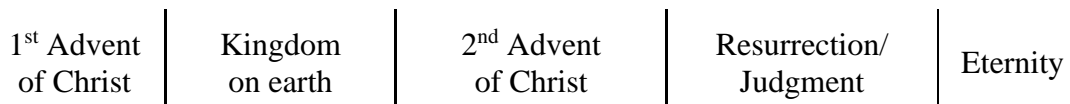
Major Positions on the End Times

The major camps concerning eschatology begin their perspective by identifying when the Millennial Reign of Christ occurs and when Christ will return in relation to the Millennial Reign.

❖ A-Millennialism/Realized Millennialism

This view sees Christ's Millennial Reign as occurring ***now***, in heaven, through the Church.

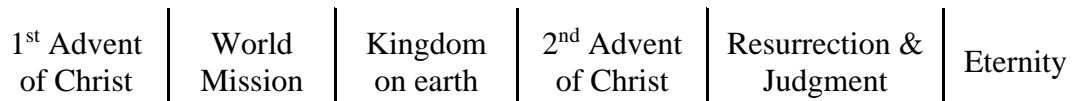
The A-Millennial sequence is as follows:



❖ Post-Millennialism

This view represents those who affirm that Christ will not appear until ***after*** the Millennium—which is to be brought about through the preaching of the gospel.

The Post-Millennial sequence is as follows:



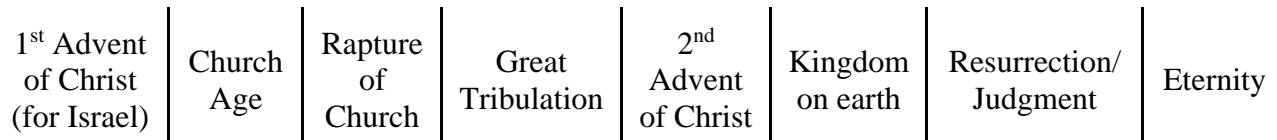
❖ Pre-Millennialism

This view teaches that Christ will return for His Church ***before*** the Millennium

◆ *Dispensational Pre-Millennialists (Pre-Tribulationists)*

This group holds that the Church will not go through the Great Tribulation, for before it begins they will be caught up in the Rapture. This view divides the Day of the Lord into two phases: (1) Christ's coming for His saints at the Rapture and (2) His coming for judgment at the end of the Great Tribulation.

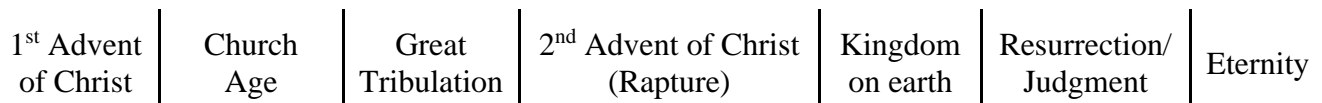
The Dispensational Pre-Tribulationist sequence is as follows:



◆ *Classical Pre-Millennialists (Post-Tribulationists)*

This position explains that the Church will not be taken before the Tribulation but will go through it and be taken after it. The order is the same, yet with the Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ—being one and the same—following the Great Tribulation.

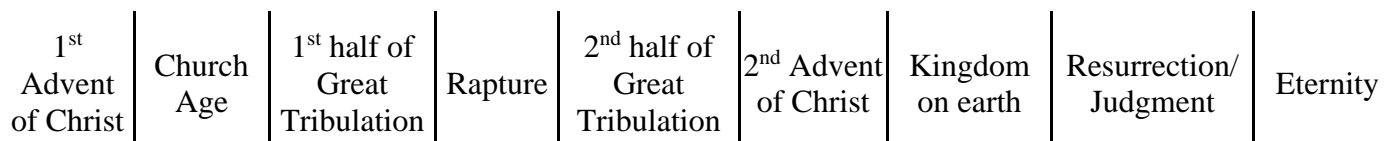
The Post-Tribulationist sequence is as follows:



◆ *Mid-Tribulationists*

This mediating position suggests that the Church will participate in the first half of the seven-year Great Tribulation, but not the more severe last half.

The Mid-Tribulationist sequence is as follows:



LOOKING AT THE END FROM THE BEGINNING

To understand the End Times and the Book of Revelation, we have to back all the way up to the beginning of the Scripture and time. There are a host of passages concerning eschatology that we could address. However, in order to formulate a systematic understanding of the *eschaton*, we will only focus on the major passages which explain a significant portion of the topic. Though some passages may not appear to be related to eschatology, each is inseparably linked to what God will do in the end. Let's look at each passage and begin to discover what the end will be like.

Basic Stages of the Redemption Story:

❖ The Covenants

◆ *Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 15:1-21)*

1. Who is the covenant from? Who is it to?
2. What are the major promises of the covenant?
3. What are the conditions that must be met for the covenant to be fulfilled?
4. How long is the covenant to last? Has the covenant been fulfilled?

◆ *Palestinian (New Generation) Covenant (Deuteronomy 29:1; 30:11-20)*

1. Who is the covenant from? Who is it to?
2. What are the major promises of the covenant?
3. What are the conditions that must be met for the covenant to be fulfilled?
4. How long is the covenant to last? Has the covenant been fulfilled?

◆ *Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:8-16; Psalm 89: 3-4, 19-37)*

1. Who is the covenant from? Who is it to?
2. What are the major promises of the covenant?
3. What are the conditions that must be met for the covenant to be fulfilled?
4. How long is the covenant to last? Has the covenant been fulfilled?

Principles from the Covenants Concerning the End Times

- The Abrahamic & Davidic covenants are only promised to Abraham, David, and their descendants (Compare with the Noahic covenant, Genesis 9:8-17).
- God chose/made the Hebrew people to be the avenue through which His redemption plan would be revealed.
- The Abrahamic & Davidic covenants last forever. Therefore, though parts of the covenants have been fulfilled, other portions are not yet completed.
- The Palestinian (New Generation) Covenant is only made to the specific generation of Israel and lasts only as long as each generation is faithful.

◆ *Daniel 9:20-27*

- *Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.*

Daniel 9:24

- **Jewish Exile & Return from the Temple Rebuilt to the Messiah**

- *Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.*

Daniel 9:25

| | |
|---|--|
| Decree of Artaxerxes to Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem | “Palm Sunday” Presentation of Messiah as Prince |
| 444 B.C. | A.D. 33 |
| SIXTY-NINE SEVENS (483 YEARS) | |
| <i>Seven Sevens (49 years)</i> to complete the rebuilding of Jerusalem | Sixty-two Sevens = 434 Years |

- **Crucifixion of Christ and the Age of the Church**

- *And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.*

Daniel 9:26

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------|---------|
| UNKNOWN LENGTH GAP OF TIME | | | |
| Messiah Cut Off | A.D. 33 | Jerusalem and Temple Destroyed | A.D. 70 |

- ◆ ***The Rapture of the Church (1 Corinthians 15:50-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11)***

- 1) According to 4:13, what concern is Paul addressing in this passage?
- 2) What hints (if any) found in 4:13-18 might lead you to a conclusion of when the rapture occurs?
- 3) Why is 5:9 significant to our discussion of when the rapture occurs?

◆ **The Seven Years of the Tribulation (Revelation 4-19)**

- *Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.* **Daniel 9:27**

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Covenant of Prince with Israel | Fulfillment of 6 Purposes in vs. 24 |
| SEVENTIETH SEVEN (7 YEARS) | |
| 3 ½ Years | 3 ½ Years |

◆ **The Abomination of Desolation (Matthew 24)**

| Destruction of the Temple (A.D. 70) | Abomination of Desolation | Return of the Son of Man |
|---|--|---|
| <i>False christs, wars & rumors of wars, famines, pestilence, earthquakes, persecution of Christians, false prophets, lawlessness abound, gospel preached to all nations.</i> | <i>Those in Judea must flee; great tribulation; false christs & false prophets</i> | <i>Sun, moon, & stars darkened; nations will mourn; Christ gathers His elect.</i> |

◆ **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**

➤ *¹Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ²not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. **2 Thessalonians 2:1-2***

- 1) According to 2:1-2, what concern is Paul addressing in this passage?

- 2) According to this passage, what is the sequence one should look for to know if the “day of the Lord” was present?

- 3) Who is “He who restrains until He is taken out of the way” (vs. 7)? How can He be taken out of the way?

- 4) A terrible truth is stated about the tribulation period in verses 9-12. What is this truth?

TAKE-AWAYS

- 1) God chose/made the Hebrew people to be the avenue through which His redemption plan would be revealed.

- 2) The purpose of the tribulation period is to complete God’s work with His chosen people, the Hebrews.

- 3) God’s design for the eschaton, while mysterious to us, is very precise.

TIMELINE OF KEY BIBLICAL EVENTS

