

Eschatology – Week 1

Foundations for Biblical Eschatology

SCHEDULE

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC
Session 1	(5/27)	Foundations of Biblical Eschatology
Session 2	(6/3)	The Church Age and the Rapture: Rev. 1-3
Session 3	(6/10)	The Tribulation Part 1: Rev. 4-6 – Tribulation Begins
Session 4	(6/16 T)	The Tribulation Part 2: Rev. 7-9 – Judgment Intensifies
Session 5	(8/12)	Resume after summer break

Introduction to Eschatology

- **What does *ESCHATOLOGY* mean?** The word “eschatology” comes from a combination of Greek words meaning “**the study of last things,**” or **the study of the end times.**
 - *Eschaton* – the last age, last things
 - *Ology* – the study of
- In the article “**Eschatology**” in the *Lexham Bible Dictionary* (LBD) Page Brooks writes that **eschatology includes death, the intermediate state, the afterlife, judgment, the millennium, heaven, and hell, but it also refers to the time of Jesus’ second coming.**
- **The Bookends of the Bible** - Genesis & Revelation – God has always had the end in view. ([Gen. 3:15](#), [Rev. 17:8](#)). After all, He is transcendent!
- **Why study Prophecy at all?**
 - Because it’s in the bible!!! **ALL** Scripture is useful.... ([2 Tim. 3:16](#))

Apocalyptic Literature in the Bible

- **Interpretation Challenges**
 - Signs, Symbols, Hidden meanings, Simile, Metaphor
 - How do I know if I should read something literally or non-literally?
- **Primary Biblical Texts** that speak *Apocalyptically*:
 - The Revelation, Daniel, The Gospels, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah
 - Small references in many others!! (ie. [1 Cor.](#), [1 Thess.](#), [Titus](#))
- **Class Ground Rules:**
 - NO predictions!
 - Hold eschatological views loosely
 - Very few absolutes
 - I am NOT an expert. 😊

God's Plan for the Ages

Timeline of Redemptive History

- Creation, Adam & Eve (Gen. 3:15 – the protoevangelium)
- The Fall, The Curse
- The Flood
- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph. (the Patriarchs)
- Slavery in Egypt, Moses, The Exodus
- The Conquest of Canaan: The Judges, Israel, Judah
- The Kings, The Prophets, Captivity, Restoration
- The Silent Years, John the Baptist as forerunner to Messiah
- Jesus' Birth, Ministry, Death, Resurrection, Ascension
- The Church Age, End Time Events – *Eschatology!*

Primary Views of Eschatology

- **Preterism**
 - Partial
 - Full
- **Premillennialism**
 - Historic
 - Dispensational
- **Postmillennialism**
- **Amillennialism**
- **Apocalypticism**: Views focusing on cataclysmic divine intervention, judgment, and a new heaven & new earth, often influencing the above perspectives.

Primary Views of Eschatology

Preterism (Full or Partial): Generally, interprets prophecy as events already fulfilled in the first century, particularly the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

- **PARTIAL Preterism:** Also referred to as *orthodox* or *moderate preterism*, this view argues that the majority of biblical prophecies were fulfilled in the first century, particularly during the Roman destruction of the Jewish Temple in A.D. 70.
- **FULL Preterism:** Also called *consistent* or *hyper-preterism*, this is the more radical and thoroughgoing version of the theology. It applies the preterist interpretation to *all* biblical prophecies. Full preterists assert that **every single** biblical prophecy - including the Second Coming (Parousia), the bodily resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment - were completely fulfilled by A.D. 70.

Primary Views of Eschatology

Premillennialism (Historic & Dispensational): Christ returns *before* a literal 1,000-year reign on earth, often preceded by a time of tribulation.

- **Premillennialism** is often assumed to be the default view of Christians in America. This is understandable—it is presently the most common view of eschatology held by American evangelicals. While evangelicals are most familiar with the primary framework of premillennial thought, many are unaware that premillennialism has two major divisions: **historic** premillennialism (the traditional form, often called simply “premillennialism”) and **dispensational** premillennialism (usually called “dispensationalism”).

Primary Views of Eschatology

- **HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM** – Historic premillennialists believe that scriptural prophecy, especially the passages in Daniel and Revelation, give the entire *history of the Church in symbolic form*. Thus, they look into the Church's past and present to find prophetic fulfillment and to see where they are in God's prophetic timetable. Most historic premillennialists hold that the nation of Israel will undergo a national salvation immediately before the millennium is established, but there will be no national restoration of Israel. Thus, the nation of Israel will not have a special role or function that is distinct from the Church.
- **DISPENSATIONALISM** – dispensational premillennialism has gained popularity among modern evangelicals. Dispensational premillennialists hold that the second coming of Christ, and subsequent establishment of the millennial kingdom, is to be preceded by a seven-year-long period known as the "Tribulation," the earthly activity of the Antichrist as well as the outpouring of God's wrath on mankind. Dispensational premillennialists hold that the nation of Israel will be saved and restored to a place of preeminence in the millennium. Thus, Israel will have a special function of service in the millennium that is different from that of the Church.

Primary Views of Eschatology

- **POSTMILLENNIALISM** is the belief that Christ returns after a period of time, but not necessarily a literal 1,000 years. Those who hold this view do not interpret unfulfilled prophecy using a normal, literal method. They believe that [Revelation 20:4-6](#) should **NOT** be taken literally. They believe that “1,000 years” simply means “a long period of time.” Furthermore, the prefix “post-” in “postmillennialism” denotes the view that Christ will return after Christians (not Christ Himself) have established the kingdom of God on earth.
- Those who hold to **postmillennialism** believe that this world will become better and better - all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding - with the entire world eventually becoming “Christianized.” After this happens, Christ will return.
 - However, this is not the view of the world in the end times that Scripture presents. From the book of Revelation, it is easy to see that the world will be a terrible place during that future time. Also, in [2 Timothy 3:1-7](#), Paul describes the last days as “terrible times.”

PREMILLENNIALISM SUMMARIZED

Biblical premillennialism is the belief that Jesus Christ will return *before* (“pre-”) a future literal reign often identified with the 1,000 years described in Revelation ch. 20. Its central ideas include:

- **Christ returns before the millennium**
Jesus’ second coming occurs prior to the millennial kingdom and inaugurates it directly.
- **The millennium is a future earthly reign**
The “1,000 years” is generally understood as a real future period in which Christ reigns over the earth in peace and righteousness.
- **Christ’s reign is visible and personal**
Jesus rules openly as King, not merely spiritually from heaven. Premillennialists expect a concrete manifestation of God’s kingdom in history.
- **Satan will be bound during the millennium**
Revelation 20’s binding of Satan is viewed as a literal, future event that removes his influence during Christ’s reign.

PREMILLENNIALISM SUMMARIZED

- **The world does not gradually become the kingdom before Christ returns**
Premillennialism typically expects increasing conflict, tribulation, or apostasy before the second coming of Christ rather than a progressive Christianization of the world.
- **There is usually a distinction between Israel and the church**
Many premillennialists - especially dispensational premillennialists - believe God still has specific future promises for ethnic Israel that will be fulfilled in the millennium. Historic premillennialists often see more continuity between Israel and the church.
- **Resurrection and judgment occur in stages**
Revelation 20 is commonly interpreted as teaching:
 - a resurrection of believers before the millennium,
 - and a later resurrection of the unbelieving dead after it – see end of Rev. 20
- **Old Testament kingdom prophecies are interpreted more literally**
Promises in books like Book of Isaiah, Book of Ezekiel, and Book of Zechariah are often understood as referring to a future earthly kingdom centered on Christ's reign.

POSTMILLENNIALISM SUMMARIZED

- **Jesus returns after the millennium.** The word *post* means “after,” so postmillennialists believe Christ comes back **after** the millennial period.
- **The millennium is usually not taken as a literal 1,000-year period.** It is often understood as a long era of gospel success and growing Christian influence in the world.
- **The gospel will spread widely throughout the world.** Postmillennialists believe the preaching of the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit will gradually bring many people to faith in Christ.
- **The world will experience a future “golden age” of greater righteousness, peace, and justice before Christ returns.** This does not mean a perfect world, but a world much more shaped by Christian truth than it is now.
- **Satan is understood to be bound now in a limited sense.** That means he cannot stop the worldwide spread of the gospel, even though evil still exists.

POSTMILLENNIALISM SUMMARIZED

- **Christ reigns now from heaven.** Postmillennialists generally believe Jesus is already reigning, and his kingdom is advancing in history through the church's witness. *(most agree with this view!)*
- **After this long period of gospel victory, Jesus returns once for the final events.** His return is followed by the resurrection, final judgment, and the new heavens and new earth.
- **Postmillennialism is generally optimistic about history.** It expects the kingdom of God to grow and have increasing visible effects in the world before the end.
- **Short version:**
 - The gospel will win in history
 - The world will become more shaped by Christianity
 - Jesus returns **after** that era of blessing
 - Then comes the final judgment and eternal state

AMILLENNIALISM SUMMARIZED

- **Amillennialism:** The millennium is symbolic, representing the current church age between Christ's first and second comings, where Christ reigns spiritually.
- **Key Views Held:**
 - **The millennium is happening now**
The "1,000 years" in Revelation 20 represents the current church age — the period between Christ's first coming and second coming — not a future political reign on earth.
 - **Christ reigns spiritually from heaven**
Jesus Christ is presently reigning at the right hand of God. His kingdom is real now, though primarily spiritual rather than geopolitical.
 - **Satan is bound in a limited sense**
Revelation's description of Satan being bound means he is restrained from deceiving the nations in the way he once did before the spread of the gospel. It does not mean evil activity has ceased entirely.

AMILLENNIALISM SUMMARIZED

- **The church is the present expression of God's kingdom**
Amillennialists generally see the church — including both Jewish and Gentile believers — as the continuation or fulfillment of God's covenant people.
- **There will not be a separate earthly millennial kingdom after Christ returns.**
Unlike premillennialism, amillennialism teaches that Christ's second coming leads directly to:
 - the final resurrection, final judgment, and the eternal state (new heavens and new earth).
- **The “first resurrection” is usually understood spiritually**
Many amillennialists interpret the “first resurrection” in Revelation 20 as either:
 - believers' spiritual regeneration/salvation, or
 - the entrance of believers' souls into heaven after death.
- **Prophecy is often interpreted symbolically or typologically**
Apocalyptic passages in Revelation, Book of Daniel, and related texts are commonly read using symbolic imagery rather than strictly literal chronology.
- **The kingdom is “already and not yet”**
God's kingdom has already been inaugurated through Christ's resurrection and ascension, but it will not be fully consummated until his return.

AMILLENNIALISM

No literal, open, visible, 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth.

HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM

Christ will return physically and visibly to usher in the millennial reign.

4 Views of the End Times

POSTMILLENNIALISM

The ever-expanding progress of the gospel until the world becomes markedly Christian. Then, Christ returns.

DISPENSATIONALISM

The millennial reign of Christ will begin after his return, at the end of a distinct seven-year period known as the tribulation.

YOUR QUESTIONS

- **Questions that relate to tonight's topic**
- **Questions that we'll address in future weeks**
- **Email me anytime with questions you have!**