

# Eschatology



## When the Thief Comes

### A Discussion of End Times

[These notes are sequenced with the Power Point PDF by the same name - 2020]

Dr. Stan Fleming

# Topic One: Perspective

## Part One: A Thief in the Night

### I. Introduction

A. Well one descriptive way that we can picture Jesus – even though it seems strange to us – is as a thief because He said that He would come like a thief in the night.

- 1) **1 Thessalonians 5:2** *"the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night."*
- 2) **2 Peter 3:10** *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night."*
- 3) **Revelation 3:3** *"if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief."*
- 4) **Revelation 16:15** *"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches . . ."*
- 5) Related: Matthew 24:42-44; Luke 12:39-40

B. Various world views regarding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ:

1) **Agnostics** say, "IF HE COMES."

**2 Peter 3:3-4** *"Scoffers will come in the last day, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming?'"*

2) **Atheists** say, "HE IS NOT COMING."

**Psalms 14:1** *"The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'"*

3) **Heretics** say, "HE ALREADY CAME."

**Matthew 24:5** *"For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many."*

4) **Christians** say, "WHEN HE COMES."

**John 14:3** *"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."*

**Acts 1:11** *"Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you*

*saw Him go into heaven.”*

**Revelation 1:7** *“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him.”*

C. Believers have been anticipating His coming for over 1900 years. (**Acts 1:9-11**)

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D. At the end of the book of Revelation, Jesus told us:

**Revelation 22:20** *“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely, I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”*

## **II. How to Approach the Topic of the End Times**

A. **BE AWARE! RED LIGHT SIGNALS:** Attitudes of which we should beware.

- 1) Be aware of non-biblical sources predicting end time events.
  
- 2) Be aware of false teaching or prophecy.
  
- 3) Be aware of taking "Absolute Stands" in areas that the Bible does not.
  
- 4) Be aware of an attitude that separate Christians. **Ephesians 4:2-6**

B. **BE CAUTIOUS! YELLOW LIGHT SIGNALS:** Attitudes of which to be cautious.

- 1) Be cautious of accepting someone’s end time view simply because you respect them as a person, but you have not studied it out for yourself.
  
- 2) Be cautious thinking that God does not care if you understand all that you can about end time prophecies.

- 3) Be cautious thinking that Christians can never be deceived.

**Matthew 24:24** *“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”*

C. **BE DESIROUS! GREEN LIGHT SIGNALS:** Appropriate attitudes.

- 1) Desire to learn about the subject because knowledge has increased.

**Daniel 12:4** (NKJV) *“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”*

**Daniel 12:4** (TLB) *“But Daniel, keep this prophecy a secret; seal it up so that it will not be understood until the end times, when travel and education shall be vastly increased!”*

- 2) Desire a blessing from understanding it better.

**Revelation 1:3** *“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”*

- 3) Having an attitude that prays “Maranatha”.

"Many scholars believe that one of the earliest prayers of the Church was 'Maranatha!' (1 Corinthians 16:22). That word is actually an Aramaic phrase that means 'Our Lord come!' This prayer expresses a fact that is confirmed by many other Scriptures; namely, that the first-century Church had an ardent desire for the soon return of Jesus... The twentieth-century Church seems to have lost that desire. The average Christian today does not pray 'Maranatha!' He does not yearn for the return of the Lord. Instead of yearning, he is yawning. Christendom at large is caught up in apathy regarding the return of Jesus. And that is sad, for the Word says that the return of the Lord is our 'blessed hope' (Titus 2:13)"<sup>1</sup>

- 4) Desire to study the Word of God regarding the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 5) Openness and reevaluation of untested views.

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<sup>1</sup>David Reagan, *The Master Plan* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1993), p.215.

## Part Two: Watershed Issues

### I. The Great Battle over Interpretation

#### A. The Literal (normal or grammatical-historical) method of interpreting Scripture.

1) Literalists believe that God did not leave us in the dark concerning the Second Coming of Christ or end time events. We should take what the Bible says literally.

a) Revelation 7:1-8                      **144,000 Jews**

b) Revelation 19:20

d) Revelation 20

2) Literalists say that Jesus was a literalist when interpreting the Old Testament and that the prophecies concerning Jesus' first coming were fulfilled literally; therefore, those of the second coming are also literal.

3) Literalists believe that recognizing and interpreting symbolic things should make sense.

a) The **Golden Rule** of Interpretation: *"If the plain sense makes sense, don't look for any other sense, lest you end up with nonsense".*

b) Examples:

1. Daniel 7:3-7, 15-17                      4 Beasts = 4 Kingdoms

2. Revelation 20:2                              Great Serpent = Satan

#### B. The Spiritualizing (or allegorizing) method of interpreting Scripture

1) Advocates of this method say that it is impossible to apply the literal method of interpretation to all Scripture. Some things are obviously literal but for others there is more than one explanation.

C. Basically, the debate rages because those who use the allegorical method say that literalists are **too literal**, while those who use the literal method say that the others allegorize too much. A couple things to keep in mind regarding these different camps are:

- 1) "No matter which view one takes, however, it must be admitted that not until the third century A.D. and the Alexandrian School of theology was there any serious opposition to the literal method."<sup>2</sup>
- 2) "All evangelicals do use the literal method for their understanding of most of the Bible, but some, namely those of amillennial and postmillennial persuasion, think it is best to use a less than literal hermeneutic with much unfulfilled prophecy. It is at this point that the evangelical world is divided over things to come and this is what puts prophecy in the middle of the debate."<sup>3</sup>

**II. A Watershed: Literal Versus Allegorical**

A. The method of your approach determines your outcome.

- 1) With a **spiritualizing** or allegorical approach, the outcome will be more general and vague.
- 2) With a **literal** or grammatical-historical approach, the outcome will be more specific and detailed.

**B. REVELATION 20: 1,000 YEARS IS THE WATERSHED.**

INTERPRETATION

MORE LITERAL

MORE ALLEGORICAL

HISTORIC	MODERN	AMILLENNIAL	POST-MILLENNIAL
PRE-MILLENNIAL	PRE-MILLENNIAL		

Part Three: The Vision of the Third Watch

**I. Vision of the Third Watch.**

A. October - 1999.

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<sup>2</sup>Robert P. Lightner, *The Last Days Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), p. 128.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

B. “The Church is entering into the third watch – the third guard.”

C. The Parable of the **Watching Servants**.

*“Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.” -- Luke 12:35-38*

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## II. How the Word *Watch* is used throughout Scripture.

A. The idea of **keeping** watch:

B. The **watchman** and watchtower.

C. The prophetic office of the Watchmen:

D. The **angelic** watchers.

E. The ward of a prison.

F. Vigilant watching.

G. As a **component** for time.

Note: In the parable of the watching servants, it implies vigilant watching and guarding, but it also is referring to a specific division of hours, the second and third watches of the night.

## III. Time Concepts Regarding the Watches.

A. Old Testament Jewish time division: (Exodus 14:24; Judges 7:19; 1 Samuel 11:11; Lamentations. 2:19) **Four hour** watches.

- 1) First Watch: Sunset to midnight (Actual time was about sunset to 10 pm).
- 2) Second Watch: Midnight to cockcrow (About 10 pm to 2 am).
- 3) Third Watch: Cockcrow to sunrise (About 2 am to sunrise).

B. New Testament Roman time division that the Jews accepted. **Three hour** watches.

- 1) First watch: 6 pm - 9 pm.
- 2) Second watch: 9 pm – midnight.
- 3) Third watch: Midnight – 3 am.
- 4) Fourth watch: 3 am – 6 am.

C. 1,000 years in respect with how the Lord sees it is compared to:

- 1) One day.

**2 Peter 3:8** *“But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day.”*

- 2) A watch in the night

**Psalms 90:4** *“For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night.”*

D. The concept of the third watch gives a new paradigm from which to consider:



# Topic Two: A Brief Survey of the Book of Revelation

## I. Various Views about the Book of Revelation.

- A. **Preterist:** The view that most or all of the events of Revelation and Matthew 24 (The Olivet Discourse) were fulfilled by time of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70; and all prophecy was fulfilled within the first few centuries of the Christianity, including the return of Christ. They believe that the book of Revelation was written prior to A.D. 70.
- B. **Historicist:** The view that the book of Revelation represents in symbolic form the entire course of Church history from the time of its writing to the final consummation, and that the mystical figures and actions described therein can be identified with human events in history.
- C. **Idealist:** The view that the book of Revelation is simply an allegory showing that good will triumph over evil in the end.
- D. **Futurist:** The view that the book of Revelation was written in 96 AD by the Apostle John and is broken into a threefold division based on Revelation 1:19. (1) "The things which you have seen" refer to the immediate surroundings of the writer. (2) "The things which are" represent the Churches of Asia, or the Church ages. (3) "The things that will take place after this" relate to the future return of Christ and the establishment of the City of God.

## II. The Opening of the Book. (Revelation 1:1-8)

- A. Verse 1: "*The **Revelation** of Jesus Christ*".
  - 1) Revelation does not mean riddle; it means *unveiling*.
  - 2) The book is written in symbols -- There are 300 symbols with meanings.
- B. Verses 1 & 2: Presented to the Apostle John by Jesus Christ via an angel.
- C. Verse 3: The only book of the Bible that promises a blessing to those who read it.
  - 1) "Revelation presents a glorious, reigning Christ. The Gospels present Him as Savior, One who came to take the curse of sin, but in this last book we see no humiliation. In one way Revelation is the most remarkable book in the whole sacred canon. Revelation tells us about the reign of Christ on this earth which

Satan wants to control. It tells of Christ's complete and eternal victory over Satan. It describes Satan's defeat and punishment, first for a thousand years, then eternally. It tells more about Satan's final doom than any other book. No wonder Satan doesn't want men to read it!"<sup>4</sup>

C. Verse 4: These were literally seven churches of John's day with which John was familiar because much of his ministry had occurred in that region then called Asia Minor.

E. Verse 5: Christ our Redeemer!

F. Verse 6: Our new role as kings and priests.

G. Verse 7: Jesus Christ is coming again!

H. Verse 8: Alpha and Omega -- Christ = The Beginning and the End

1) Genesis = the beginning of Bible / Revelation = the end of the Bible.

a) **Ecclesiastes 7:8** *"The end of a thing is better than its beginning"*

2) **Genesis:**

- \*Book of beginnings
- \*Heaven & earth created
- \*Sun and moon appear
- \*Garden of Eden
- \*Marriage of 1st Adam
- \*Beginning of sin
- \*Appearance of Satan, the adversary
- \*Appearance of death, pain, sorrow

**Revelation:**

- \*Book of consummation
- \*New heaven & earth
- \*Christ is the light
- \*Paradise / holy city
- \*Marriage of 2nd Adam (Jesus)
- \*Sin done away with
- \*Destruction of Satan
- \*End of death, pain, sorrow

### **III. First Vision: Christ and the Church. (Revelation 1:9 - 3:22)**

A. Verse 10: *"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day."*

B. **Lamp stands** (V. 12) = the seven churches (V. 20)

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<sup>4</sup>Henrietta C. Mears, *What The Bible Is All About* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1983), p. 623.

- 1) Churches are to be a light to the world
- C. Each church received a 1) praise, 2) reproof, 3) exhortation, & 4) promise.
- D. **One theory** or interpretation is that they represent seven ages of the church:
- 1) **Ephesus** --- The Apostolic church: 30 - 100 AD
  - 2) **Smyrna** --- The Persecuted Church: 100 - 312 AD (up to Constantine)
  - 3) **Pergamos** --- The Indulged Church: 312 - 606 AD
  - 4) **Thyatira** --- The Pagan Church: 606 - 1500's (Dark Ages)
  - 5) **Sardis** --- The Dead Church: 1520 - Tribulation
  - 6) **Philadelphia** --- The Church Christ loved: 1750 - Rapture
  - 7) **Laodicea** --- The Apostate Church: 1900 to the Tribulation
- E. It is also said that all of these churches types are represented today in churches and in people's individual lives.

#### IV. Second Vision: Christ and the World. (Revelation 4:1 - 16:21)

- A. Revelation 4:1-2: *"Come up here and I will show you ... I was in the Spirit"*
- 1) **Rapture** verse for those who believe in pre-tribulation rapture.
- B. Chapter Four: The Throne Room speaks to us of judgment.
- 1) Today, Christ offers men grace, mercy, and forgiveness. He came to the world and is before people to be judged. We can accept or reject Him. But the day will come when Christ will judge the world of its sin.
- C. Chapter Five: The Lamb speaks to us of Christ and His worthiness to assume all authority, glory, and power. No one but He can open the book with the seven seals.
- D. THE **TRIBULATION**
- 1) Chapters Six and Seven: The Seven **Seals** of Judgment Unloosed.
    - a) Representing wars, killing, economic disaster, martyrdom by the

saints, great earthquakes, and the introduction of the seven trumpets.

2) Chapters Eight – Eleven: The Seven **Trumpets** of Judgment Blown by Angels.

a) Representing major destruction of the earth's trees, grass, seas, and atmosphere. It includes the unleashing of things upon the inhabitants of the earth that will make them cry out for death. It includes an army of 200 million men marching to war (Rev. 9:16).

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3) Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen: The Seven Bowls (Vials) of the **Wrath** of God Poured out on the Earth.

a) Representing grievous sores, the destruction of life in the sea, the pollution of the rivers, the scorching men by the fire of the sun.

4) During the Tribulation, the **Antichrist** will reign on the earth and cause men to worship Him. At first, he will appear to be a man that has all the answers for the world's problems. He will help Israel in relations with other countries. But then in the last 3 1/2 years his true colors will show and he will massacre the Jews, the Christians, and any who will not take the mark of the beast, 666. There will be war in heaven as well as war on earth.

a) Some would say of this that “Hell has been let loose on earth.”

5) God will give a witness and space for repentance throughout the seven years.

a) Chapter Seven: The witness of the 144,000 Jews turned to Christ.

b) The witness of those who get saved.

c) The witness of the rapture.

d) Chapter Eleven: The two witnesses that prophesy.

1. The salvation of many Jews. (Romans 11)

e) Revelation 14:6 - The witness of the Angel of the Everlasting Gospel.

E. Revelation 16:17 “*It is done*” / compare to the cross. The end of His wrath

## V. Third Vision: **Christ and Victory**. (Revelation 17:1 - 21:8)

A. Revelation 17:1 "*Come, I will show you.*"

- 1) The victory over Babylon -- the earthly system.
- 2) The victory over the Beast and False Prophet.
- 3) The marriage of the Lamb to the church.
- 4) The binding of Satan for a thousand years.
- 5) The final conflict and judgment.
- 6) The new heavens and the new earth.

B. Revelation 21:6 "*It is done.*"

**VI. Fourth Vision: Christ and Eternity. (Revelation 21:9-22:5)**

A. Revelation 21:9 "*Come, I will show you.*"

- 1) The bride, the Lamb's wife.
- 2) The New Jerusalem.
- 3) The New Life with God and the Lamb.



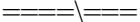







**VII. The Ending of the Book. (Revelation 22:6-21)**

- A. A Call to Obedience (V. 6 - 11)
- B. A Call to Labor (V. 12 - 16)
- C. A Call to Love (17)
- D. A Call to Truth (V. 18 - 19)
- E. A Call to Prayer (V. 20 - 21)

# Topic Three: An Overview of End Time Perspectives

## Part 1: The Different Views

### I. The Historic Premillennial View (common up to 400 A.D.)

Cross	Church Age	Tribulation	2nd Coming & The Rapture	Millennium	White Throne Judgment	New Earth & Heavens
 At Calvary	Little distinction between Israel and the Church.   Unknown Length	 Church to go through the 7 Years	   Will happen at the same time	 1,000 years of peace & righteous rule	  Rev. 20 Judgment of the unbelievers	   Rev. 21 & 22

#### A. Premillennial Post-tribulation View

- 1) This view prevailed until the time of Origen (185 – 254) and was still generally accepted until the time of Augustine in about 400 A.D.
- 2) They believed Jesus would return before the 1,000 years.
- 3) They believed the church would go through tribulation, which they interpreted as "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7).
  - a) The entire seven years is God's Wrath being poured out.

b) At the beginning of the seven years, the Antichrist signs the covenant. Then there is 3 1/2 years of TRIBULATION. After the abomination of desolation is set up in the temple the second 3 1/2 years begins. This time is called THE **GREAT** TRIBULATION.

- 4) There was little distinction between Christ's coming **for** His own in the rapture and His coming **with** His own to establish the kingdom.
- 5) There was even less distinction between God's program for Israel and the Church.
- 6) The early church prayed Maranatha but believed that they either had to go through or currently were going through the tribulation (Temple destroyed 70 AD).
- 7) After the millennium, Gog and Magog would rise in rebellion against Jesus Christ. They would be consumed with fire followed by the Great White Throne Judgment.

B) A current modification of this view.

- 1) In his book, *The Church and The Tribulation*, Robert Gundry, modified this view stating that the Rapture will occur just before the end -- just before God's wrath is poured out -- and thus the church will be kept from God's wrath.<sup>5</sup>

## II. The **Amillennial** View (From 400 AD through the present)

A. "The Amillennial viewpoint is held by the **majority** of professing Christians in the world today. It has been the official view of the Roman Catholic Church since 431 AD., and it has been officially endorsed by the liberal, mainline Protestant denominations."<sup>6</sup>

B. Information on Augustine

- 1) The literal method of interpreting Scripture was widely accepted until the third

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<sup>5</sup>Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), 175-183.

<sup>6</sup>David Reagan, *Crucial Questions concerning the Second Coming of Jesus* (McKinney, TX: Lamb & Lion Ministries, 1994), p.5.






century A.D. At the Alexandrian school of Theology, Clement of Alexandria and Origen used a method of interpreting Scripture that made it all an allegory.

- 2) Origen’s writings later influenced Augustine, but Augustine resisted and rejected the theory that all Scripture should be interpreted allegorically. Instead, he held that only prophecy should be interpreted allegorically.

C. Six questions asked to Augustine by church leaders and his answers.

- 1) Where is the **millennium**? We are in it.
- 2) How can we be in the millennium with so much evil? It is relative. If the Holy Spirit were not here with us, it would be worse.
- 3) Where is the **tribulation**? It is simultaneous with the millennium. We are in both. The number 7 means a perfect period of time.
- 4) Where is the new earth? The new earth is symbolic for heaven. When it happens, we will be ethereal beings in an ethereal world.
- 5) What are the two **resurrections**? The first one is spiritual when you get born again. The second one is literal when Jesus comes.
- 6) What about the binding of Satan? He was bound at the cross.

D. The way Augustine’s amillennial system looks.

<p><b>Cross</b></p>  <p>At Calvary</p>	<p><b>Church Age</b> Israel and church equal one people of God.</p> <p>Church is Kingdom on earth.</p> <p>\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\</p> <p>Unknown Length / 1,000 yrs.</p>	<p><b>2nd Coming &amp; The Rapture</b></p>   <p>Will be at same time</p>	<p><b>In Heaven With Jesus Forever</b></p>  
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### III. The Preterist View (From the 16<sup>th</sup> century)

A. Luis del Alcazar, Spanish Jesuit theologian (1554 – 1613) is thought to be the first who proposed the preterist view.

B. Adherents to this view break down into two main groups:

1) Full Preterism: sometimes called consistent Preterism.

2) Partial Preterism: sometimes called orthodox, classical or moderate Preterism.

C. Partial Preterist view differs from the full preterist view in that Christ will return sometime in the future. Not all prophecies have been fulfilled.

1) Some main points are that:

(A) A significant portion of Matthew 24 events prophesied by Jesus came to pass in 70 AD at the destruction of the Temple.

(B) The seventieth week of Daniel has already come to pass.

(C) The Book of Revelation was written prior to 70 AD and the events of chapters 7 – 11 came to pass in 70 AD.

(D) The last days or end times are over.

(E) There will be no signs of Jesus' second coming.






(F) Christians live in new times.

(G) Some believe that Jesus will come again before the millennium and some believe that He will come at the end of the millennium.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Information summarized from Harold R. Eberle and Martin Trench, *Victorious Eschatology: A Partial Preterist View* (World Cast Publishing: Yakima, WA, 2007).

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Partial Preterist View	End Times	2nd Coming & The Rapture	In Heaven With Jesus Forever
<p data-bbox="272 411 358 443"><b>Cross</b></p>  <p data-bbox="240 779 386 810">At Calvary</p>	<p data-bbox="451 449 699 548">Most prophecies fulfilled in the first century</p>	  <p data-bbox="769 785 1040 816">Sometime in the future</p>	 

D. Objections to the Preterist view. Those who disagree with the full or partial preterist view have many objections. Here are a few:

- 1) Regarding Matthew 24, various verses refute the notion that the events mentioned were about the persecution of the Jewish people in the first century.
  - a. Verse 21 says that the Jewish persecution that will follow the desecration of the Temple will be the most intense in all of history, “since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor shall ever be.” The persecution of the Jews in WWII was much greater than in the first century.
  - b. Verse 22 indicates that the great tribulation would be so severe that all life would cease unless the days were cut short. In 70 ce, this was not possible, but today with nuclear warheads, the possibility is much more real.
  - c. Verses 29 – 31 convey the idea that “immediately after the tribulation of those days” the Son of Man will come. That did not happen immediately after the destruction of the Temple in 70 ce. Therefore, the tribulation written about must be some future event.<sup>9</sup>
- 2) Regarding the date of the Book of Revelation, evidence refutes the notion that the book was written before 70 ce (common era) and referred to the destruction

<sup>9</sup> Dr. David R. Reagan, “Matthew 24 / Prophetic Issues, Lion & Lamb Ministry, Christinprophecy.org <accessed September 21, 2017>

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of the Temple.

- a. Justin Martyr (born 100, died c. 167 ce) confirmed that the Apostle named John is the same one who wrote the Book Revelation in his book *Dialogue with Trypho*.<sup>10</sup> The Apostle John lived until about 100 ce, perhaps even 102 ce. He outlived all of the other apostles.
- b. Irenaeus (born c. 130, died 202 ce) wrote that the Book of Revelation was written toward the end of (Roman Emperor) Domitian's reign in his book *Against Heresies*.<sup>11</sup> The majority of historians agree that John wrote the book of Revelation on the island of Patmos around 95 – 96 ce.
- c. Other early writers such as Clement of Alexandria, Victorinus, Jerome, and Eusebius also add information that John wrote the book of Revelation near the end of the first century.<sup>12</sup>
- d. Internal evidence also indicates the later date for the writing of the book of Revelation. Here are some examples:
  - i. The Apostle Paul wrote the epistle of the Ephesians around 61 ce in which he commended them in 1:15 – 16 for their faith and “love of the saints”. Yet, in Revelation 2:4, the church of Ephesus was admonished by the Spirit that they had left their “first love”. It seems unlikely that this would have happened before 70 ce but quite possibly by 96 ce.
  - ii. Revelation 3:17 represents the church of Laodicea is represented as being wealthy and having need of nothing. This would not have true in the 60's because an earthquake devastated the community in 61 ce.
  - iii. Emperor Domitian was prone to exile people like he did John to Patmos, but Emperor Nero was prone to execute like he did Peter and Paul around 67 ce. So, if John was captured by Nero, why didn't he execute him?<sup>13</sup>

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10 Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, chapter 81. This book was written sometime between 155 – 167 AD.

11 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book Five, chapter 30.

12 Wayne Jackson, “When was the Book of Revelation Written?” ChristianCourier.com. Accessed November 22, 2019.

13 Ibid.

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**IV. The Postmillennial View (1650 AD - after WWI --- still some today)**

A. Developed by Daniel Whitby, a Unitarian minister (1638-1726).






B. "Whitby was convinced that the gospel, like leaven, would permeate the entire world. As the gospel had its purifying effect on men's hearts, things would get better and better. Eventually men, through the effect of the gospel, would bring in the kingdom. Then, when everything was right, after a thousand years of man's progressive improvement, Christ would return."<sup>14</sup>

C. A widely held view until the end of WWI. (Emerging again today)

1) Positive impact on church = Great Missionary Advances.

D. Tribulation was spiritualized to mean we are always in it.

E. The way it looks.

<p><b>Cross</b></p>  <p>At Calvary</p>	<p><b>Church Age</b></p> <p>Israel and church equal one people of God.</p>  <p>Unknown Length</p>	<p><b>Millennium</b></p> <p>The Golden Age / Good eventually overcomes Evil.</p>  <p>1,000 years of peace &amp; righteous rule</p>	<p><b>2nd Coming &amp; The Rapture</b></p>  <p>Will happen at the same time</p>	<p><b>Heaven</b></p> 
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F. The perplexing question persists with both postmillennialism and amillennialism, If certain prophecies can be spiritualized, why not others and Biblical teachings also?

G. Aspects of this seem to transcend evangelical borders impacting people's political

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<sup>14</sup>Marvin Rosenthal, *The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), p. 50.










involvement, missionary outlook, and view of Christ's return.

H. Controversial Scriptures = Acts 3:21; Matthew 24:14; Romans 8:19.


**V. The Modern Premillennial Views**

A. The Pre-Tribulation Rapture (1830 - present)

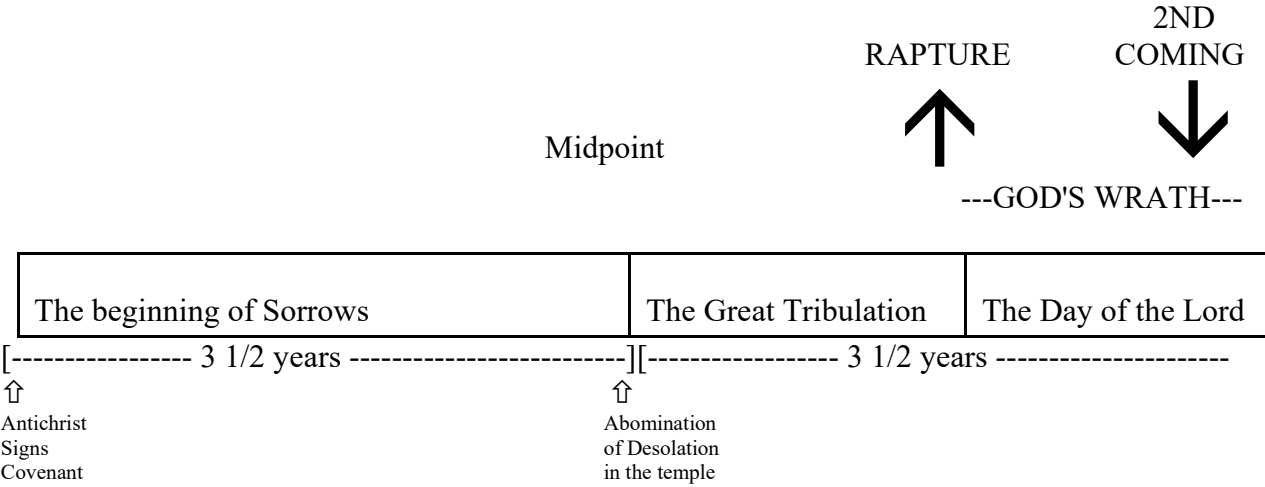
- 1) John Darby and the Plymouth Brethren.
- 2) Distinguished scriptures between Christ coming *"for"* and *"with"* the Church.
- 3) This view considered the most literal by many evangelicals.
- 4) Somewhat close to the historical view with the exception of the rapture.
- 5) Dispensationalism.

<p><b>Cross</b></p>  <p>Calvary</p>	<p><b>Church Age</b></p> <p>Israel and Church in separate plans by God.</p>  <p>Unknown Length</p>	<p><b>Tribulation</b></p> <p><b>Rapture</b>      <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Coming</b></p>   <p>Tribulation      Great Tribulation</p> <p>===== GOD'S WRATH =====</p> <p>☐ 3 1/2 yrs.      ☐ 3 1/2 yrs.</p> <p>Antichrist Signs Covenant      Abomination of Desolation in the temple</p>	<p><b>Millennium</b></p>  <p>1,000 years of peace &amp; righteous rule</p>	<p><b>White Throne Judgment</b></p>   <p>Rev. 20 Judgment of the unbelievers</p>	<p><b>New Earth &amp; Heavens</b></p>   <p>Rev. 21 &amp; 22</p>
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B. The Mid-tribulation Rapture (Developed in the last 50 - 60 years)

Cross	Church Age	Tribulation	Millennium	White Throne Judgment	New Earth & Heavens
	Israel and Church in separate plans by God.	<p><b>Rapture 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">↑      ↓</p> <p>Tribulation      Great</p> <p>Tribulation</p> <p>===== =====</p> <p style="text-align: right;">GOD'S WRATH</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 1/2 yrs.    <input type="checkbox"/> 3 1/2</p> <p>yrs.</p> <p>Antichrist Signs Covenant              Abomination of Desolation in the temple</p>	<p>1,000 years of peace &amp; righteous rule</p>	<p>Rev. 20 Judgment of the unbelievers</p>	<p>☆</p> <p>☺</p> <p>Rev. 21 &amp; 22</p>
Calvary	<p>Unknown Length</p> <p>////////////////////</p>				

C. The Pre-Wrath Rapture (Developed in the last 30 years by Marvin Rosenthal)



1) Tribulation is man's wrath being poured out.

- 2) Rapture will occur immediately before the Day of the Lord.
- 3) The cosmic disturbances of the sixth seal will signal the Day of the Lord.
- 4) The Day of the Lord will begin with the opening of the seventh seal. (Revelation 8:1)
- 5) Revelation 7 is the Rapture scene in Heaven.

**VI. A Partial Rapture Theory** also exists which states that only those Christians who are ready for the Lord's return by being spiritual and watching for His return will be taken. Those who are not living spiritual lives and are in disobedience will undergo testing in at least part of the tribulation. They represent the lukewarm, shallow, Laodicea Christians.

## Part 2: The Rapture

### I. The Rapture is a Certainty.

#### A. 1 Thessalonians 4:13 - 18

- 1) "caught up" (726 in Strongs) = Greek *har-pad-zo* means to seize by force.
  - a) The Latin word for this is *raptus* from which we derive RAPTURE.
  - b) "We have as the meaning of rapture that one day Christ is coming to rob the world of His jewels (that is, His redeemed ones) to take them into heaven with Him. Therefore, when we refer to the Rapture of the Church, we mean it is a sudden snatching out of this world of the believers"<sup>15</sup>
- 2) Other New Testament usages:
  - a) Matthew 13:19 - Satan snatching seed from someone's heart.
  - b) John 10:12 - The wolf snatching a sheep / hireling concept.

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<sup>15</sup>Tim LaHaye, *Revelation Illustrated & Made Plain* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), p. 76 - 77.



- c) Acts 8:39 - Philip caught away by the Spirit.
  - d) 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4 - Paul caught up to the third heaven.
  - e) Revelation 12:5 – Man-child (Jesus) caught up into heaven.
- 3) Who will be raptured?
- a) The dead "in Christ" will rise first.
  - b) Then the living Christians will be caught up

## II. The Chronological Order is Unclear and Varies with Viewpoint

### A. PRETRIBULATION VIEW? **Revelation 4:1**

- 1) The location of the verse is right for the rapture (Revelation 3:10)
- 2) The absence of any mention of "The Church" after this point.
- 3) The extensive use of O.T. language and symbols in chapters 4 - 18 is an indication of Israel, not the Church.
- 4) Similarity between events in Revelation 4:1 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

### B. MIDTRIBULATION VIEW? Last trumpet in **1 Cor. 15:51 & Revelation 11:15.**

### C. PRE-WRATH RAPTURE VIEW? **Revelation 7:9 - 14**

- 1) Revelation 6:17 - The announcement of God's Wrath beginning just prior to the rapture.

## III. The Issue of Imminence.

### A. Matthew 24:42 - 51

- 1) This Pre-tribulation view says there is nothing that stops Jesus from returning immediately and that we must be constantly ready moment by moment for His soon return.
- 2) Although, they believe that the rapture kicks off the tribulation period, there are actually no scriptures that state it. So the rapture could actually occur at any time before the Tribulation begins.

## B. Arguments against the concept of imminence.

- 1) Those who don't hold to imminence in the sense that it can happen any moment believe certain events must first take place before Christ will return.
  - a) Acts 3:21 - The heavens retain Him until O.T. prophecies fulfilled.
  - b) Matthew 24:14 - Every nation must have the witness of the gospel.
- 2) The weight behind this argument is that it has already been over 1900 years since the Lord ascended into Heaven.
- 3) Another argument against imminence is the chronological order of events in Matthew 24. Some think Jesus was giving the order of end time events.
  - a) V. 6 "but the end is not yet"
  - b) V. 8 "the beginning of sorrows"
  - c) V. 21 "great tribulation"
  - d) V. 22 "for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened"
  - e) V. 29 "immediately after the tribulation of those days"
  - f) V. 30 "Son of man coming in the clouds"
  - g) V. 37 "as the Days of Noah"
  - h) V. 40 - 41 "one shall be taken"

## IV. Events associated with the Rapture

- A. The Resurrection of the Righteous - John 5:28 - 29
- B. The Glorification of the Redeemed - 1 Corinthians 15:42 - 55
- C. The Judgment of the Redeemed - 2 Corinthians 5:10
- D. The Rewards distributed - Revelation 22:12; 1 Corinthians 4:5

## Part 3: The Tribulation

### I. The Word Tribulation

- A. The word tribulation conveys the idea of pressure, affliction, anguish, persecution, and trouble.
- B. The Greek word *thlipsis* is translated as tribulation or affliction 20 times in the New Testament. Most of the time it is used in a non-prophetic sense such as John 16:33 or Romans 5:3-4.
- C. Prophetically, it is used six to eight times. Here are some examples:
  - 1) **Deuteronomy 4:30** *“When you are in distress (tribulation), and all these come upon you in the latter days.”*
  - 2) **Matthew 24:21** *“For then there shall be great tribulation, such as has not been seen since the beginning of the world until this time, no nor ever shall be.”*
  - 3) **Matthew 24:29** *“Immediately after the tribulation of those days.”*
  - 4) **Revelation 7:13-14** *“These are the ones who come out of great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb.”*
  - 5) Other Scriptures: Mark 13:19, 24; Romans 2:2-9; and 2 Thessalonians 1:6

### II. The Length of the Tribulation (From a premillennial perspective)

- A. The so-called *tribulation period* is a time of seven years. In some ways the use of the term is very misleading since there have been many times of tribulation for Christians around the world. Yet, it is the word that the Lord Himself used that we see in Matthew 24 and Mark 13. The tribulation period is considered synonymous with Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week and “the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jeremiah 30:7).
  - 1) Daniel 9:27 - 70 weeks = 7 years times seventy = 490 years.
    - a) 49 years (7 times seven) from Cyrus’ release to the rebuilding of the walls.

- b) 434 years (7 times sixty-two) from the walls to crucifixion of Christ.
  - c) Leaving one week – the 70<sup>th</sup> week = 7 years of future tribulation.
- 2) Revelation 11:2 - First half = “forty-two months” (The two witnesses).
  - 3) Revelation 13:5 – Second half = “forty-two months” (The Anti-Christ).

### III. The Purpose and Principle of the Tribulation

A. The purpose: Six parts revealed in Daniel 9:24:

- 1) The transgression of Israel walking away from God.
- 2) An end to all the sins of mankind.
- 3) A time of forgiveness for those who turn to the Lord.
- 4) The beginning of the millennium of Christ’s kingdom on earth.
- 5) No more need for prophets and visions.
- 6) Could mean a place, the millennium itself, or something else. (Other Scriptures: Isaiah 26:9 and Revelation 5:1-7)

B. The principle: It is caused by an accumulation of wrath.

- 1) **Genesis 15:16** *“But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”*
- 2) **Romans 2:5** *“But in accordance with your hardness and your impertinent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds.”*

### IV. The Nature of the Tribulation **Isaiah 24**

A. Verses 1 – 3: The earth is trashed and empty.

B. Verse 5: The earth is defiled because of the broken covenant.

C. Verses 19 – 20: A time of major upheaval (possibly nuclear or astronomical anomaly).

## V. Key Events of the Tribulation

A. Revelation six:	The seven seal judgments
B. Revelation seven:	The 144,000 witnesses and mercy of God
C. Revelation eight – eleven:	The seven trumpet judgment
D. Revelation eleven:	The two witnesses
E. Revelation twelve:	War in heaven (future or past?)
F. Revelation thirteen:	The Anti-Christ
G. Revelation sixteen:	The bowl judgments
H. Revelation seventeen – eighteen:	The destruction of Babylon

## Part 4: The Millennium

### I. What is the Nature of the Millennium? (From a premillennial perspective)

- A. Isaiah 65:17-25 (If this is referring to the millennium)
- B. Revelation 20:1-6
  - 1) Satan will be bound so that he cannot deceive the nations.
  - 2) Christians will rule and reign for a thousand years.

### II. What are the Purposes of the Millennium?

- A. To fulfill God's promises to Jesus - Psalm 2 and Revelation 2:26-27
- B. To fulfill God's promises to creation - Romans 8:18-23 and Isaiah 11:6-9
- C. To fulfill God's promises to the nations - Micah 4:1-7
- D. To fulfill God's promises to the Church - Daniel 7:13,18 and Revelation 5:9
- E. To fulfill God's promises to Israel - Isaiah 4:2-6 and Isaiah 60 – 62
- F. To prove the fallacy of humanism – Mark 7:20-23

### III. What is the Climax of the Millennium?

- A. The last rebellion – Revelation 20:7-10
- B. The final judgment – Revelation 20:11-15

## The Topic of Heaven

### Introduction

#### I. What is Paradise?

#### II. Jesus talked about Heaven

- A. Jesus had a lot to say about Heaven. His first recorded message was: Matthew 4:17 “*Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*”
- B. He told us that God is in Heaven
- C. He told us that Heaven has many mansions:
- D. He taught parables to help us understand Heaven: (Matthew 13 contains 7 parables)
- E. He taught us the character needed for Heaven:

#### III. Intermediate Heaven

#### IV. A Glimpse of Heaven

#### V. Things to Consider

### Questions and Answers