

Various Revelation Interpretations

Eschatology – The Christian Hope

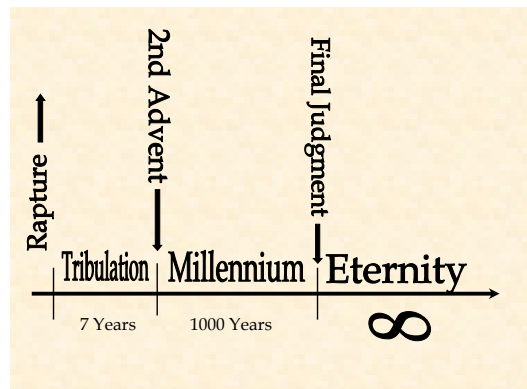
Rev. 21: 1-7 - “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away. And He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ And He said, ‘*Write, for these words are faithful and true.*’ And He said to me, ‘It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.’”

Despite the apathy, or obsession, that often accompanies Eschatology, Bible prophecy.....

- Reminds us that God is sovereign
 - Reminds us that God is good
 - Motivates us to holy lives
 - Helps us establish proper priorities and correct focus
 - Gives us hope and confidence in life and suffering
 - Points us back to Jesus Christ
1. The sheer amount of reference to ‘end-time’ information in Scripture testifies to its high value
 2. Don’t dismiss the main components just because there is so much arguing and speculation associated with the topic
 3. Doubtless we cannot tell from Scripture exactly how every detail of the end will occur; we are told what we are told to encourage us with some information about the fact that “Christ wins!”
 4. The fact that Christ is coming back is the most central element of eschatology

Pre-tribulation, Pre-millennial Timeline

1. Rapture
2. Tribulation
3. Second Advent
4. Millennium
5. Eternity



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The Millennium

Primary Millennium Texts

Old Testament Texts - Isaiah 2:1-4 & Isaiah 11:1-9

New Testament Text - Revelation 20:1-10

Millennial Views

A-millennialism

General Outline

- Church Age (includes general tribulation)
- Second Advent
- General Resurrection/Judgment
- Eternal State

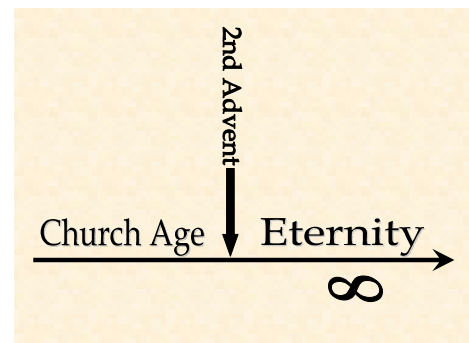
This means we simply await the Return and judgment

Interpretation of Old Testament Prophecy

- Some prophecies interpreted literally, some not
- NT has priority over OT in interpretation
 - It re-interprets various passages
 - Isaiah 54:1-3 & Galatians 4:27
 - But see 4:24: Paul is allegorizing!
 - Hosea 2:23 & Romans 9:24-26
 - Even if this is what Paul is doing, does this allow for such interpretation anywhere we want?

General Interpretation of Revelation

- Contains seven parallel sections which describe the Church age
- One Author's interpretation¹
 - Rev 1-3 = About local Churches at that time
 - Rev 4-7 (seals) = About the Church suffering persecution
 - Rev 8-11 (trumpets) = The Church is avenged, protected, and victorious
 - Rev 12-14 = Opposition of dragon and Church
 - Rev 15-16 (bowls) = graphic depiction of God's wrath on those who don't repent (in Church age)



Spiritual Interpretation
Applied to the Church

¹ Anthony Hoekema, *The Meaning of the Millennium*, pp 156-159

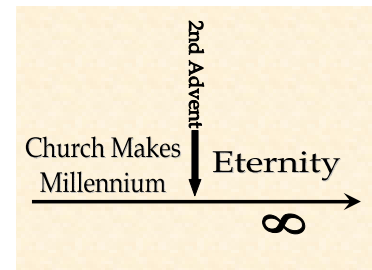
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- Rev 17-19 = similar
- Rev 20-22 = defeat of the dragon, newness
- Interpretation of Revelation 20:1-6
 - Since 20 doesn't follow 19 chronologically (different sections) this doesn't describe something immediately following the 2nd advent
 - Binding of Satan is his defeat at the cross/1st advent
 - 1000 years is an indeterminate time period (not literal)
 - This period extends from 1st advent to right before 2nd advent
 - Verses 4-6 describe what happens in heaven during Church age (1000)
 - Christians persecuted are reigning with Christ in heaven during this time
 - The "resurrection" here is the life of those saints in heaven

Post-millennialism

General Outline

- Church age climaxing in 'Golden Age/Millennium'
- Satan deceives briefly at end of Church age
 - Second Advent
- General Resurrection/Judgment
- Eternal State



More Literal Interpretation
Applied to the Church

Interpretation of Old Testament Prophecy

- "The post-mill(ennialist) looks for a fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecies of a glorious age of the Church upon earth through the preaching of the gospel under the power of the Holy Spirit. He looks forward to all nations becoming Christian and living in peace with one another. He relates all prophecies to history and time. After the triumph of Christianity throughout the earth he looks for the second coming of the Lord."²
- The prophecies are often interpreted more literally than in a-millennialism but as applying to the Church, not Israel
- Isaiah 11:6-9
 - A-millennialism says the peace is spiritual and if fulfilled in Church
 - Post-millennialism says the peace is real and physically on earth but brought about by the preaching of the gospel (nothing unique about Israel over any other country)

Interpretation of Revelation 20:1-6

- View 19:11-21 not as the 2nd advent but as a figure of Christ being victorious in the Church age through the preaching of the gospel
- Resurrection in 4-5 is a spiritual revival that will precede the physical resurrections mentioned later in the chapter
- The 1000 years may not be literal

² Quote from J. Marcelus Kik in *The Millennial Maze*, p 70

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Dominion Theology/Theonomy

Theonomy Summary: It is the duty of the church to apply the Bible to all aspects of life and to bring the Governments into subjection to Christ through the vehicle of the Mosaic Law.

- Law given to Israel
- Christ comes
- New covenant
- Church replaces Israel
- Messianic kingdom established
- Ceremonial law fulfilled
- Civil and moral law remain
- Church to 'disciple' the nations/governments through law
- Post-millennial return of Christ (after job is done)

Historic Pre-millennialism

General Outline

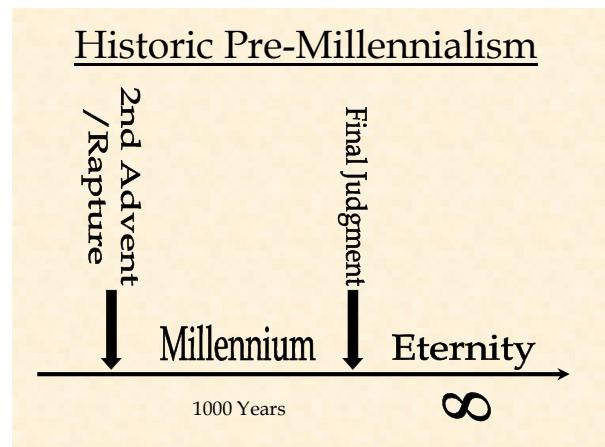
- Church experiences 'the tribulation'
 - Rapture (1st resurrection)/2nd advent
 - Satan bound/Christ reigns for 1000 years
 - Final judgment (lost only)
 - Eternal State
- b

Interpretation of Old Testament Prophecy

- Spiritual interpretation
- Applies to Church
- Same as amillennialism

Interpretation of Revelation 20:1-6

- Literal
- Christ returns before literal 1000 year reign



Various Revelation Interpretations

Dispensational Pre-millennialism

General Outline

- Rapture
- The Tribulation (70th week for Israel)
- 2nd Advent
- Satan bound/Christ reigns for 1000 years
- Final judgment (lost only)
- Eternal State

Interpretation of Old Testament Prophecy

- Literal
- Expects fulfillment for Israel, not the Church

Interpretation of Revelation 20:1-6

- Literal
- Christ returns before literal 1000 year reign

Old Testament Prophecy				
	A-Mill	Post-Mill	H. Pre-Mill	Dis. Pre-Mill
Non-Literal	✘		✘	
Literal		✘		✘
Applied to Church	✘	✘	✘	
Applied to Israel				✘

Revelation 20:1-6

A-Mill Post-Mill H. Pre-Mill Dis. Pre-Mill

Refers to Church Age
 Refers to 2nd Advent
 Not a Literal 1000 years
 Literal 1000 years

Rapture

The Rapture is Christ's coming for His Church

The term

It concerns the transformation of believers

- 1 Thess 4:13-18
- 1 Cor 15:51-52
- Phil 3:20-21

The rapture is an epistle-only concept

- Note "Mystery" in 1 Cor 15:51

Main Views on the timing of the rapture

1. Pre-Tribulation Rapture
2. Mid-Tribulation Rapture
3. Pre-Wrath Rapture
4. Post-Tribulation Rapture

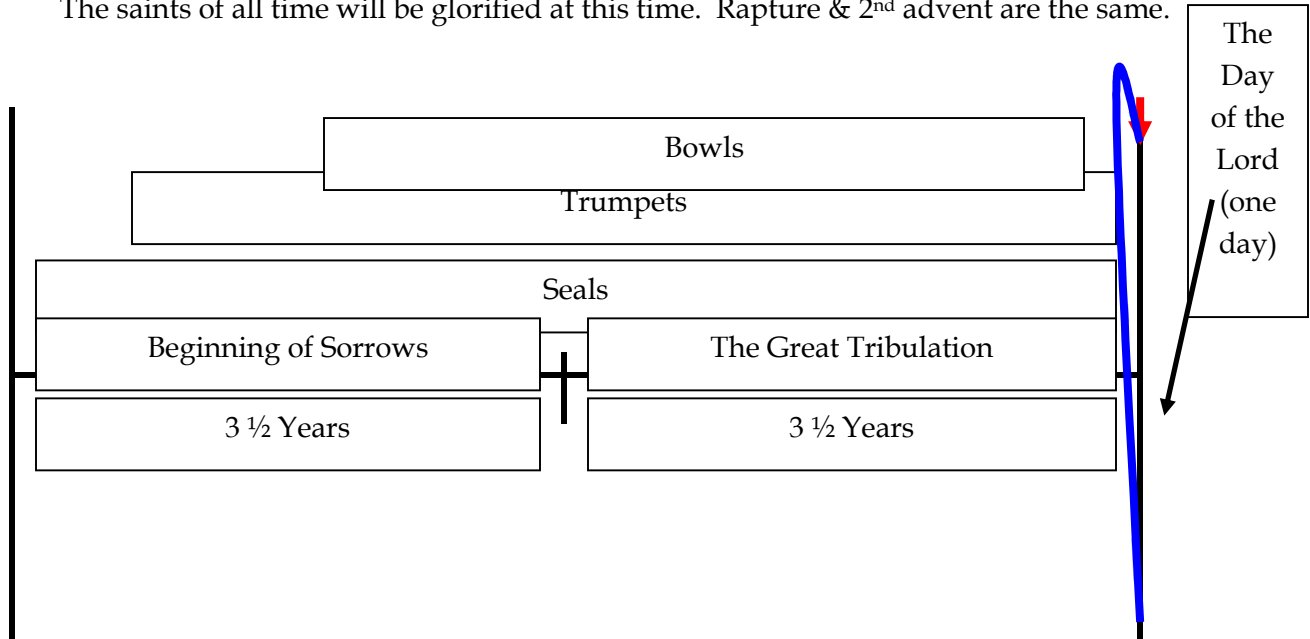
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The Post-Tribulation Rapture View

Belief:

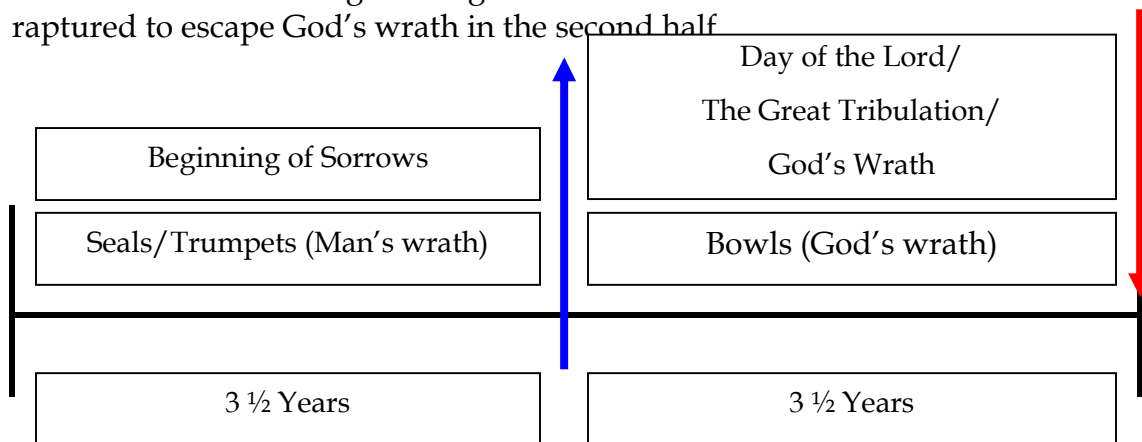
The Church will go through the entire Tribulation period and be raptured to meet Christ in the air on His way to judge the earth at the battle of Armageddon.

The saints of all time will be glorified at this time. Rapture & 2nd advent are the same.



The Mid-Tribulation Rapture View

Belief: The Church will go through the first half of Daniel's 70th week before being raptured to escape God's wrath in the second half



Arguments:

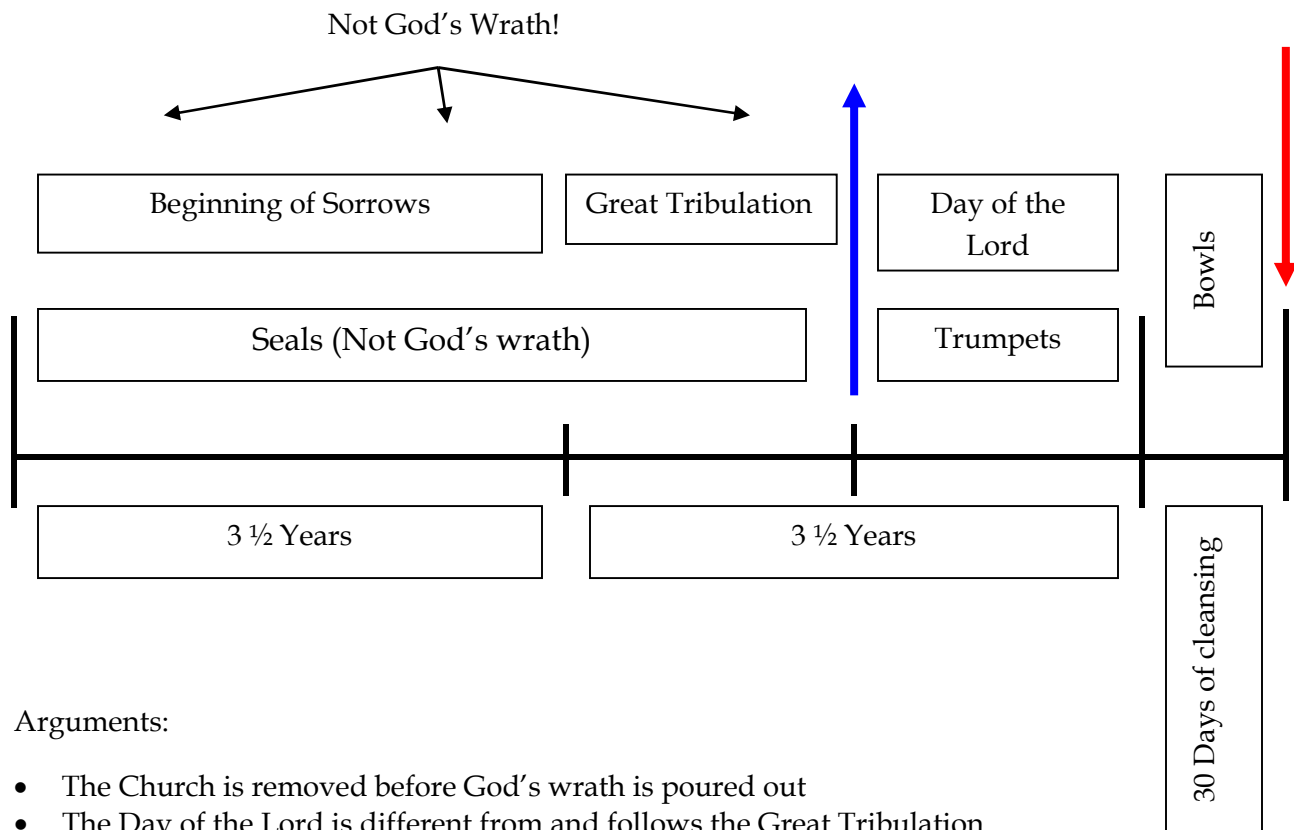
- The Church is removed before God's wrath is poured out
 - The assumption here is that God's wrath begins in the middle of the week
- The first half is the wrath of man, the second half is the wrath of God

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- The seals and trumpets don't contain God's wrath
- See pre-trib arguments for response
- There is greater emphasis on the second half of the 70th week in Scripture
 - True, but doesn't prove the point at all
- Rapture at 7th trumpet
 - 7th trumpet judgment not the last sequential trumpet: there is a trumpet after Christ's return (Matt 24:31)

The Pre-Wrath Rapture View

Belief: The Church will go through the first half and the great tribulation and be raptured before the Day of the Lord



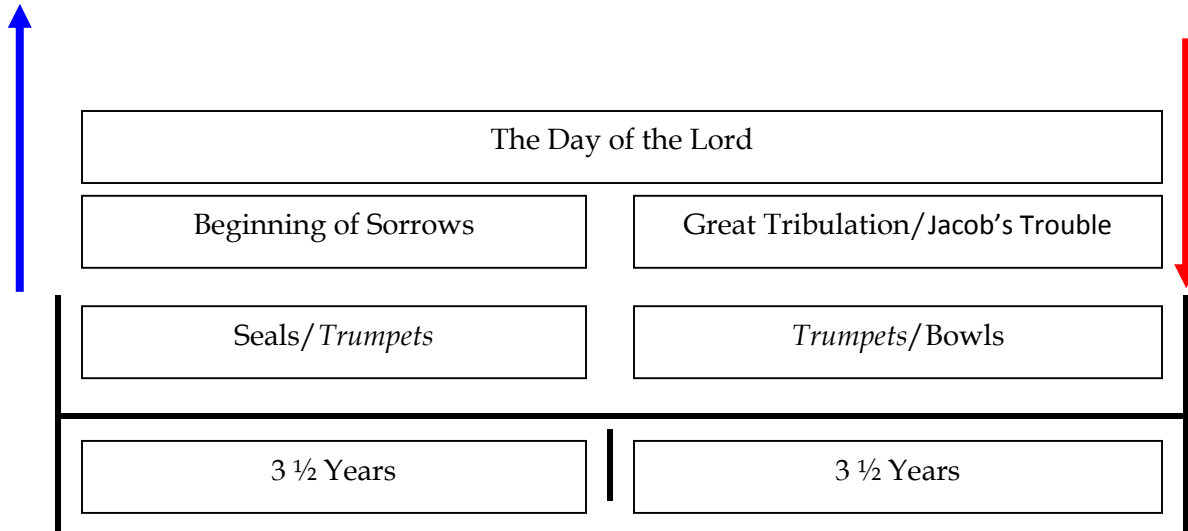
Arguments:

- The Church is removed before God's wrath is poured out
- The Day of the Lord is different from and follows the Great Tribulation
 - The Great Tribulation is "cut short" (Matt 24:22)
 - Day of the Lord is Matt 24:30
 - God's wrath occurs here, not before
 - Rapture is Matt 24:31
- There is only one coming
 - He comes half way down for the rapture, stays there dealing out wrath, then comes down for Armageddon

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The Pre-Tribulation Rapture View

Belief: The Church will be raptured before the beginning of the 70th week.



God's future wrath/testing will comprise the entire 7 year period

- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 connect the "Day of the Lord" Paul refers to with the "beginning of sorrows" Jesus spoke of
- The seals contain God's wrath too
 - Jesus personally unleashes the effect of each seal
 - 3 of the 4 horsemen are said to be "given power" to do what they do
 - God often uses instruments to execute His wrath
 - Isaiah 10:5-6
 - Isaiah 13:9, 17
 - Jeremiah 21:1-6
 - Ezekiel 7:14-15; 14:19, 21
 - Revelation 6:16-17 - even the lost recognize the 6th seal as wrath
- It seems clear that all the events of Revelation 6-19 are part of the "hour of testing" of Revelation 3:10