

Millennial Positions

In order to better understand the debate, we should start with a brief definition of the four major millennial positions in the Church today.

Amillennialism The word millennium is a latin term meaning one thousand years. It's from the root words [*mille*], meaning thousand, and [*annum*], meaning years. In Greek (*yes Greek, not Latin*), placing the letter "a" before a word negates the word. So a-millennial literally means no millennial. However, we should note that this word is a *misnomer* to describe Reformed Amillennialists, because they do in *fact* believe there is a millennial reign of Christ, but not on an earthly throne in this sin cursed world. They believe Messiah's reign is on the throne in the Kingdom of heaven. So the word Amillennial itself is literally accurate only as it is understood to mean no millennial reign "on an earthly or worldly throne!"

This view of eschatology holds that the reign of Christ (Revelation 20:4), began as the apostle Peter declared (Acts 2:30-32), when Christ instituted this kingdom by His death, resurrection, and ascension to the throne of David. Reformed Amillennialists teach that the kingdom of God is both real, effectual, substantive, and spiritual, and is now being extended and advanced by the preaching of the gospel.

Premillennialism By contrast, the term Premillennialists identifies Christians who believe the thousand year reign spoken of in Revelation chapter 20 is of an *earthly* reign of Christ. Pre-millennial literally means *before millennium*, or before the thousand years. This is the belief that sometime in the future Christ will return to this earth and begin a literal one thousand year reign on a literal throne in the middle east. He will reign and govern from Jerusalem, and peace will rule on earth from the nation of Israel. Generally, Premillennialists believe in two separate and unequal Salvation programs. A national or racial (*rather than individual*) Covenant and Salvation plan for the race of the Jews, and another one for everyone else (*any non-Jew or Gentile*). They hold that future redeemed Israel will be the center of government and the spreading of the gospel to the nations of the world. They reject the contention that Christ has already come and redeemed and delivered Israel, or that He is now the center of rule and Government, as prophesied.

There are different forms of premillennialism, such as dispensationalism, or Historical, but in general, they do not believe that many Old Testament scriptures which were fulfilled, are "completely" fulfilled. They take the position that any fulfillment about Israel is incomplete, and the pertinent scriptures dealing with this, have yet a further future literal fulfillment. For example, many look for Elijah to literally come back to prepare the way for Christ because they don't believe that John the baptist "completely" fulfilled that prophesy.

Postmillennialism A view which has gained popularity within some Reformed circles lately is Postmillennialism. This is the view that the millennium is a future golden age of the Church which will precede the second advent of Christ. They (*as the Amillennialists*) offer up the scriptures that declare that Christ is ruling in His kingdom now, and the kingdom of God is now being extended through Christian preaching of the gospel. But they differ from the Amillennialists in that they believe that at the end of this kingdom age, there will be an age of righteousness and world wide turning to Christ. The word post, means after, thus post millennial identifies those who believe in Christ's return "after" this future golden (*millennial*) age.

Generally, the belief is that in this millennium the Church will exercise Christ's power and authority in this World whereby the wicked rulers are hindered in their wickedness and the influence of Christianity will excel until some future time when most of the world will be in obedience to God's laws. They expect that after they have created a just, God fearing society (*lasting this millennium*), Christ will then return and the judgment and resurrection occurs.

Preterist The Preterist view means it's past fulfillment. *Preterit* is Latin and means Pre (before) in fulfillment. i.e., [*L. praeteritus, gone by*]. It is expressing time fulfilled. Preterits believe that most or all of Bible Prophecy has already been fulfilled in Christ and the on-going expansion of His Kingdom. They hang the Past-fulfillment on different verses including the witness that Jesus and his apostles said that his coming (or presence) and the end of all things, would occur soon (*in that generation*). Full Preterits spiritualize Matthew 24 as having already taken place in the past, and that Christ actually returned in 70 A.D. fulfilling the prophesy of the second advent.

Eschatology Eschatology - from the Greek 'eschaton' meaning 'end,' so literally the study of the end times. More widely the discussion of the ultimate fate of the universe and of human beings, and of the processes leading to the end.

postmillennialism The view that Jesus Christ will return **after** the symbolic 1,000 years mentioned in Revelation.

postmillennialism - dispensational The view that God has two economies - one for the Jews and one for the Church. As such they see the Church Raptured, usually mid-Tribulation period, and 3.5 years later Jesus Christ comes back to establish a literal 1,000 year reign on earth.

premillennialism - historic Also known as classical premillennialism. The view that Jesus Christ will return and establish a 1,000 year reign. Distinguished from dispensational because they see one economy and plan of God. Reject Rapture and Tribulation period.

preterism The belief that prophecies have been fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD.

eschatology The study of future or final times.

amillennialism The view that the 1,000 year reign of Christ as mentioned in Revelation is symbolic **this time period** and will end with the return of Christ.

I. Current Millennial Views

While there are numerous variations in millennialist teaching today, a fourfold categorization has been widely accepted: (1) dispensational premillennialism; (2) historic premillennialism; (3) postmillennialism; and (4) amillennialism.[2] Of the first three categories, all of which hold to a millennium or utopian age on this earth, the most commonly held view is dispensational premillennialism. In the interest of narrowing the discussion that follows to manageable proportions and of seeking to assist the members of the Synod in their evaluation of such teaching, the Commission has chosen to focus on this more well-known and prevalent premillennialist view. Before proceeding with a more detailed examination of the various elements of millennialist doctrine, we offer the following summary of the categories mentioned above.

A. Dispensational Premillennialism

Dispensational premillennialism, or simply dispensationalism, is a theological system having its origin among the Plymouth Brethren in Ireland and England in the early 19th century. This system's originator was John Nelson Darby (1800-82), one of the chief founders of the Plymouth Brethren movement. Dispensationalism arose as a reaction against the Church of England and the widely held view of postmillennialism (see part C. below).

The teachings of dispensational premillennialism on prophecy have spread widely in Canada and the United States, due especially to the influence of the 1909 Scofield Reference Bible and its subsequent editions. Today, dispensationalism is by far the most prominent form of millennialism. It is officially taught at the Moody Bible Institute (Chicago), Dallas Theological Seminary, and an estimated two hundred Bible institutes in the U.S.A. It has been promoted by television evangelists such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Kenneth Copeland, and Jack Van Impe, by independent ministries such as "Lamb and Lion" and "World Prophecy Ministry," and in dozens of paperbacks. Among the best known of these is Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth*, which has made its way into film. Dispensationalists[3] usually divide God's dealings with humanity into seven distinct "dispensations": Innocence (Gen. 1:28-3:6), Conscience or Moral Responsibility (Gen. 4:1-8:14), Human Government (Gen. 8:15-11:32), Promise (Gen. 12:1-Ex. 18:27), The Law (Ex. 19:3-Acts 1:26), The Church (Acts 2:1-Revelation 19), and the Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20). A dispensation is defined as "a period of time during which man is tested in respect to his obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God." [4] In each of these periods, a distinct revelation of God's will is dominant and tests mankind's obedience to God.

What, then, are the key elements in dispensationalist eschatology? The Old Testament, it is said, promises to the Jewish people an earthly kingdom ruled by the Messiah. When Christ came, He offered this kingdom to the Jews. The Jews at that time, however, rejected Him and the kingdom. This kingdom, then, was postponed until some point in the future. In the meantime, Christ introduced the "mystery form" of the kingdom (Matthew 13) and established the church. This "parenthesis" of God's program will end at the "rapture" when all believers, exclusive of Old Testament saints, will go to heaven to celebrate with Christ "the marriage feast of the Lamb" for seven years. Then God's promised purpose for Israel resumes. During this seven-year period, a number of events will occur on earth (Revelation 6-19):

1. The "tribulation" begins, the latter half of which is called the "great tribulation."
2. The Antichrist begins his cruel reign and in the midst of the seven years he proscribes Jewish worship at the temple.
3. Terrible judgments fall on the earth.
4. A remnant of Israel (the 144,000 of REV 7) believes in Jesus as the Messiah & preaches the "Gospel of the Kingdom."
5. Through their witness a multitude of Gentiles is saved (Rev. 7:9).
6. Toward the end, a number of military battles take place leading up to the Battle of Armageddon.

At the end of this seven-year period, dispensationalists teach, Christ (together with the church) returns in glory and destroys His enemies. The vast majority of Israelites will be converted. Satan will be bound for 1000 years. Believers who die during the tribulation and Old Testament saints will be raised and join the church in heaven. Christ will judge the living Gentiles (Matt. 25:31-46). The "goats" will be cast into hell. The "sheep": and the believing Jews still living will enter the millennium in their natural bodies. They will marry, reproduce, and die. (The resurrected believers will live in the heavenly Jerusalem hovering above the earthly Jerusalem.) The millennium will be a golden age, a time of prosperity and peace, with worship centering around the rebuilt temple. Though at the beginning of the millennium only believers will live on earth, some of their children and grandchildren will not believe in Christ. These unbelievers Satan will gather in one last revolt (Rev. 20:7-9). Toward the end, all believers who die during the millennium will be raised. After Satan's "little season," all the unbelieving dead will then be raised and judged (Rev. 20:11-15). The final stage will now be ushered in, during which period there will remain a distinction between Jews and Gentiles.

Three presuppositions are critical for the dispensationalist system. These basic premises may be summarized in the following way:

1. The Distinction between Israel and the Church. According to the dispensationalist view, throughout the ages God is pursuing two distinct purposes: one related to earthly goals and an earthly people, that is, the Jewish people; and the other related to heavenly goals and a heavenly people, that is, the Christian church.[5] The church was not foreseen in the Old Testament and therefore constitutes a "parenthesis" in God's predicted plan for Israel. In the future, the distinction between Jew and Gentile will be reestablished and will continue through-out all eternity.

2. The Literal Fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy. The Old Testament, dispensationalist writers argue, contains many promises that God will establish an earthly kingdom involving Israel. These promises are to be fulfilled literally. The central promise to Abraham was that Abraham's physical descendants would be given the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession. The Davidic covenant contains the promise that a descendant of David (the Messiah) would rule over Israel forever from David's throne, i.e., from Jerusalem. The new covenant of Jer. 31:31-34, though containing features which also apply to believers in the present "church age," is essentially a covenant for Israel. A great many passages in the Psalms and prophets are interpreted to mean that Israel will be regathered in the land of Canaan under the perfect rule of the Messiah. These promises will be fulfilled literally during Christ's millennial reign. Similarly, much of Daniel and Revelation awaits a literalistic fulfillment in the future millennium.

3. The Manifestation of God's Glory as the Purpose of History While dispensationalists agree that human beings are reconciled to God by grace alone through the work of Christ in history, "the soteriological or saving program of God is not the only purpose but one of the means God is using in the total program of glorifying Himself." [6] Thus, not salvation but the manifestation of God's glory is the main theme and broad purpose of His activity in human history in each of the dispensations.

B. Historic Premillennialism

In contrast to dispensational premillennialism, those who hold the historic premillennialist view argue that Christ's second advent will be a one-stage event after the tribulation. Either at this time or before, the vast majority of Jews will be converted. Believers who have died will be raised, those alive will be transformed, and all believers will meet Christ in the air and then descend with Him to earth. Christ will then slay the Antichrist, bind Satan, and set up His millennial kingdom on earth. Christ and His redeemed, both Jews and Gentiles as one people of God, will reign visibly over the unbelieving nations still on earth. People in resurrected bodies and natural bodies will live together on the earth. Sin and death will still exist, but external evil will be restrained. The 1000 years of the millennial kingdom will be a time of social, political, and economic justice and great prosperity. After these 1000 years, Satan will be loosed in order to deceive the unbelieving nations into making a final assault against the redeemed. Satan will be destroyed, and the resurrection of the dead unbelievers will occur. Then will come the judgment of all, both believers and unbelievers, and eternity.

C. Postmillennialism

In contrast to the above, the less common postmillennial view places Christ's second advent after (post) the millennium. Only then will the rapture, the general resurrection, the general judgment, and the eternal states occur. The millennium is not understood to involve a visible reign of Christ in the form of an earthly monarchy, nor is the millennial period to be taken literally as necessarily 1000 years long. In these respects postmillennialism corresponds closely to the amillennialist position (see below). But the postmillennial view does posit a recognizable millennial period, a golden age of prosperity and peace among all at the end of which Christ will return. The millennium will arrive gradually under the increasing influence of Christianity, leading to the pervasive reduction of evil and to greatly improved conditions in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres. In fact, the entire world will eventually be Christianized to the point that the Christian belief and value system will become the accepted norm for all nations. Matthew 28:18-20 will become a reality.

D. **Amillennialism** An eschatology which does not teach a literal thousand-year earthly reign of Christ may be called "amillennialist" (sometimes called "realized millennialism" because the period spoken of in Revelation 20 is now in the process of realization). Although the detailed exegesis of the pertinent texts may vary somewhat among amillennialist Christians, those who adhere to this position agree that the "thousand-year" reference in Revelation 20 is a figurative expression for the present reign of Christ which began upon His ascension into heaven and will be fully manifested at His second coming. Christ's second coming will be one event at which time He will, in the words of Martin Luther, "raise up me and all the dead, and give unto me and all believers in Christ eternal life" (Explanation to Third Article of the Apostles' Creed). The eschatology presented in The Lutheran Confessions is clearly amillennialist (AC XVII).

Excursus on Seventh-Day Adventism

Central to Adventist eschatology is Christ's second advent. [7] According to Adventist teaching, Christ entered into the holy place of the heavenly temple on Good Friday and remained there for eighteen centuries to plead His blood on behalf of sinners. In 1844 (2,300 "prophetic days" or years after 457 B.C.--Dan. 8:14), Christ entered the heavenly holy of holies to begin investigating the conduct of believers an "investigative judgment" which will last until His second advent. When people die, they become non-existent in body and soul until this second coming. Just before Christ returns, those who were responsible for His trial and crucifixion (Rev. 1:7) and the faithful members of the Adventist denomination who died after 1844 (Rev. 14:13) will be raised to see Him come. At His return Christ will destroy the beast, the false prophet, and the wicked who made war against God and His people at Armageddon (Rev. 16:12-16; 19:11-21). Satan will have the sins of the world placed upon him as a "scapegoat" and will be consigned to a desolate earth for 1000 years (Rev. 20:1-3). At the same time, all believers who died before 1844 and all non- Adventist believers who died after 1844 will be raised (Rev. 20:4-6). All believers who are still alive will be transformed, and both groups will go to heaven to rule with Christ 1000 years. During this period, Christ and the believers will rule for the purpose of investigating the lives of the unbelievers and determining the amount of suffering they will have to experience. After the millennium the wicked will be raised, they will suffer in various degrees on earth, and they will be gathered by Satan for a final assault on the heavenly Jerusalem which has just descended (Rev. 20:7-9).

Following this, God will annihilate Satan, his evil angels, and all the wicked. Christ and all believers will then live forever on the new earth.

Amillennialism

The theological view via an allegorical system of interpretation that believes there will be a continuous development of good and evil in the world until [the second coming of Christ](#), when the dead shall be raised and the judgment conducted. Amillennialists believe that the kingdom of God is now present in the world as the victorious Christ rules his church through the Word and the Spirit. They feel that the future, glorious, and perfect kingdom refers to the new earth and life in heaven. [The Olivet Discourse](#) and the greater part of the book of Revelation are largely viewed as past historical events or are spiritualized out of existence. Amillennialism holds that there will be no future, literal, personal [Antichrist](#) who will seek to destroy the [elect of God](#) in the [last days](#), nor will there be a literal earthly 1,000 year kingdom over which Christ will rule and Christ will not return until the end of human history as we know it.

End Times Glossary

TRIBULATION This term is synonymous with "testing". Various times of testing are mentioned in Scripture:

(A) In General In relation to end-time events, tribulation refers to man's persecution of other men, inspired by the wrath of Satan, and is not a reference to God's judgment or wrath at [the day of the Lord](#). By far the worst tribulation will be the great tribulation by [Antichrist](#), which will occur during (but is not synonymous with) the second half of the [seventieth week](#).

(B) The Great / Jacob's Trouble This term describes Antichrist's persecution of [God's elect](#) beginning at the [midpoint](#) of the seventieth week, but it is not synonymous with the entire second half of the seventieth week. This persecution (also called "the time of Jacob's trouble" by Jeremiah - Jer. 30:7 and "the time of distress such as never occurred" by Daniel - Dan. 12:1) is man's affliction of other men, inspired by the wrath of Satan. The great tribulation, spoken of by Christ in [the Olivet Discourse](#) and in the book of Revelation, refers to the violent persecution inflicted by Antichrist against all his enemies during a part of the second half of the seventieth week, but pertains especially to Antichrist's persecution of God's chosen nation, [Israel](#), and His elect, [the true church](#) which, in part, comprise the [spiritual kingdom of God](#). This time of extreme torment and suffering will begin when Antichrist gains control of the city of Jerusalem, takes his seat in [the Temple](#), reveals his true identity and demands the worship of the world. It will be the greatest time of persecution Jews or the church in general will ever experience - surpassing even the Nazi Holocaust. The great tribulation by Antichrist will be terminated by God's sovereign intervention at the day of the Lord, (Mark 13:20) sometime before the end of that week. If this slaughter were not divinely cut short, no Jew or any of the elect of God (the true church) would survive. As it is, two out of three Jews living back in Israel will still die during this great tribulation.

(C) Purge of Israel The purging and refinement of the divinely chosen [remnant](#) of Israel that will survive the great tribulation by Antichrist. These will be purified further by the day of the Lord, in preparation for becoming citizens of the [physical kingdom of God](#) over which Christ will rule. They will then "look on Me [Christ] whom they have pierced" and will be saved as a nation, immediately after the end of the seventieth week. God's purification of the third part of Israel that survives the great tribulation will include His discarding as dross every Jew who takes [the mark of Antichrist](#) for his or her personal safety during Antichrist's great tribulation. Only one tenth (Is. 6:13) of the nation will survive both the great tribulation by Antichrist and the day of the Lord.

(D) Time of Testing The great time of testing in the [last days](#) referred to directly by John and Peter in particular will occur during the great tribulation by Antichrist when every human being will be expected to worship [the beast](#) or his [image](#) and obey him alone. (II Pet. 2:9; Rev. 3:10) This time of testing will be the test of Satan, not the test of God, and will primarily become a test to those of the professing church who claim the name of Christ. Those who refuse to worship the beast or his image will face death and/or persecution that will make the Holocaust pale in comparison. Christ taught that at that time "many" will fall away from the faith, and "most" people's love will grow cold, accomplishing the separation of the [wheat from the tares](#). On the other hand, those who fail to pass this test of Antichrist will suffer the immediate wrath of Satan through his minion Antichrist, but will live eternally in the presence of their King. Every true believer will refuse the mark and refuse to worship Antichrist or his image, but untaught and compromising Christians who will not have prepared themselves during the first half of the week will nevertheless experience the full brunt of Antichrist's fury, purifying, as it were, the soon-to-be bride of Christ. Some unbelievers - namely God's protected remnant of the [natural line of Abraham](#) (Israel) and unbelieving Gentiles who assist Israel during her time of great distress - will also refuse the mark and eventually come to salvation after the completion of the seventieth week.

(E) "Cut Short" The great tribulation by Antichrist will begin at the midpoint of the 70th week of Daniel. This time of testing will be "cut short" by Christ (Mark 13:20), or "amputated". The 3 1/2 years given to Antichrist will continue, but he will be rendered useless against the elect at the parousia of Christ when He comes to rapture believers.

ESCHATOLOGY The study of biblically prophesied events of the [end times](#), especially in relation to God's redemptive and judgmental work. From the Greek [eskhatos](#), meaning "last".

RAPTURE, THE = The Last Day

Christ's gathering together, the deliverance of, and rescue of the [true living church](#) (by His [angelic "reapers"](#)) to Himself in the clouds at [His second coming](#) (parousia), an event that occurs on the last day when [the day of the Lord](#) commences, between the [sixth seal](#) ([the sign of the end of the age](#)) and the [seventh seal](#) (the day of the Lord). The Rapture cannot occur

until sometime during the second half of the [seventieth week](#), when God cuts short the [great tribulation](#) by [Antichrist](#). "But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows."

MILLENNIUM, THE The physical reign of Christ over the [kingdom of God](#) upon earth for a thousand years. The primary subjects of this kingdom will be the surviving [remnant](#) of Israel that will eventually turn to Christ as their true Messiah and King just after the completion of the [seventieth week](#). There will also be a remnant from among the [surviving Gentile nations](#), especially from Egypt and Assyria, none of which will have taken [the mark](#) or worshipped [the beast or his image](#). The seventieth-week Jewish Christian [martyrs](#), who will have been persecuted and put to death by their fellow Jews, will be resurrected to rule with Christ over the new divinely established house of Israel. (Rev. 20:1-6)

POSTMILLENNIALISM The end-time view that was held by most Protestants during the 18th and 19th Century. Postmillennialists view history as moving toward the Christianization of the world by the church (millennium - symbolic term) of undetermined length on earth culminating in the final return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment.

POSTTRIBULATIONALISM The end-time view that places the rapture of the elect at the end of the 70th week of Daniel and prior to the battle of Armageddon. This view believes that the great tribulation is merely an intensifying of the kind of tribulation the church has suffered throughout history and through which the church logically must pass.

[Rapture Positions Compared Chart](#)

PREMILLENNIALISM

(A) **Theology of** The prophetic view that history is moving toward a cataclysmic conclusion that includes wars, famines, earthquakes, a great apostasy, the appearance of a literal Antichrist, a great tribulation and, the physical return of Christ to earth prior to His reign on earth for 1,000 years. At the end of the millennium, there will be a final rebellion of wicked people against Christ and His saints which will be crushed by God followed by a judgment for all the non-Christian dead.

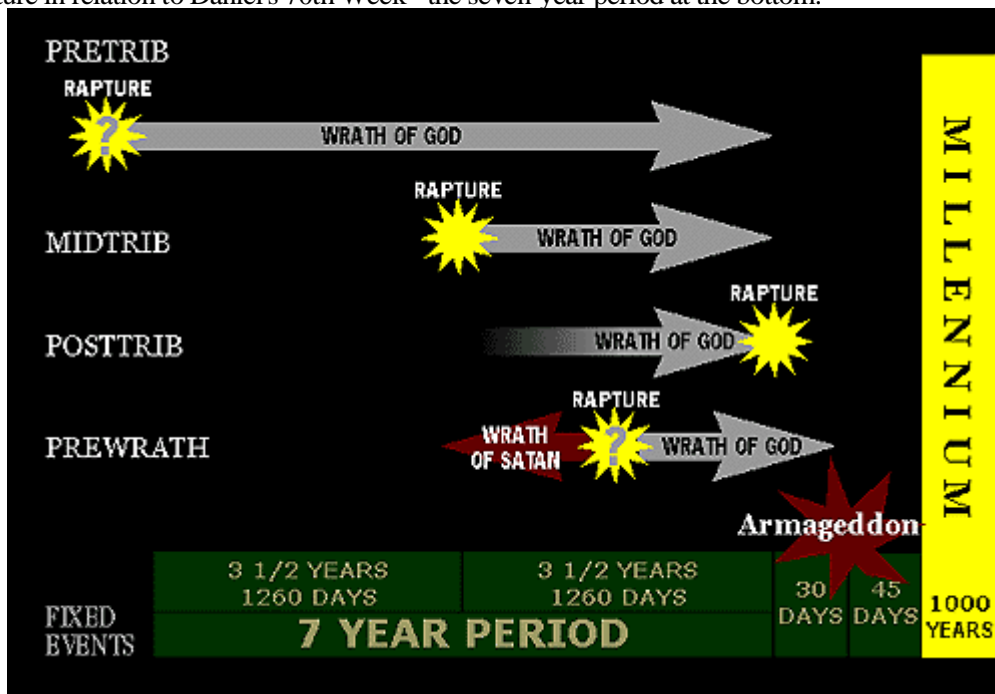
(B) **Historical Premillennialism** The historical view of the church fathers (generally pre-Ante-Nicaea Council - AD 325) that said the church would experience the wrath of Antichrist, the rapture of believers, the judgment of the nations as "a single unified event" just before the 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth begins.

PRETRIBULATIONALISM The view, articulated in the early 19th Century, that the return of Christ has been imminent since the days of the early church and that the church will be raptured sometime before the seventieth week begins. The seventieth week of Daniel is therefore considered to be a seven-year period of God's judgmental "tribulation" (hence the term pretribulation). This position generally views the seventieth week as the day of the Lord from which the church is excluded.

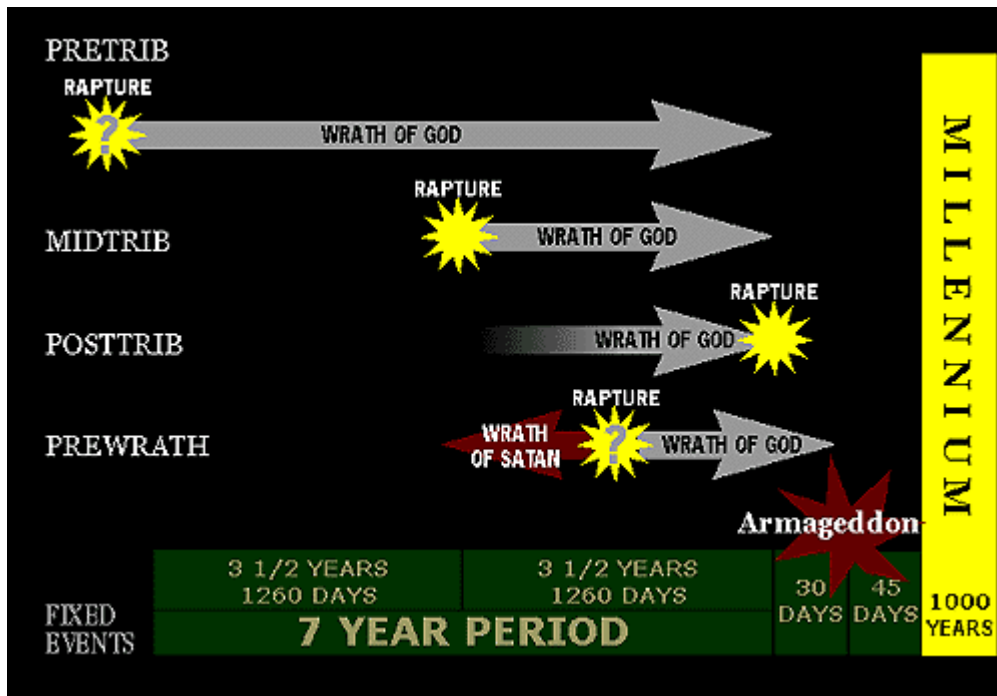
PREWRATH RAPTURE, THE The position that the true church will be raptured when the great tribulation by Antichrist, inspired by Satan, is cut short by God's day-of-the-Lord wrath, (Matt. 24:22) which will occur between the sixth and seventh seals of Revelation, sometime during the second half of the seventieth week. (cf. Rev. 7:9-17) The persecution associated with the great tribulation of Antichrist is viewed as the wrath of Satan, whereas the events that follow beginning with the seventh seal, are considered the wrath of God.

Rapture Positions Compared

This chart provides a simple comparison of the four general positions that are taken in reference to the timing of the Rapture in relation to Daniel's 70th Week - the seven-year period at the bottom.



Both the Pretrib and Prewrath positions have question marks that indicate that there is no fixed time for when the Rapture will occur. Midtrib places the Rapture at the halfway mark, or three-and-a-half years from the beginning of the 70th Week. Posttrib fixes the Rapture at the completion of the seven-year period.



RAPTURE, THE = The Last Day

Christ's gathering together, the deliverance of, and rescue of the [true living church](#) (by His [angelic "reapers"](#)) to Himself in the clouds at [His second coming](#) (parousia), an event that occurs on the last day when [the day of the Lord](#) commences, between the [sixth seal](#) ([the sign of the end of the age](#)) and the [seventh seal](#) (the day of the Lord). The Rapture cannot occur until sometime during the second half of the [seventieth week](#), when God cuts short the [great tribulation](#) by [Antichrist](#). "But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows."

REMNANT

(A) **Christian** Genuine believers within the church in general.

(B) **Jewish** In regard to the last days, the remnant refers to the divinely predetermined number of Jews who will survive the great tribulation persecution by Antichrist, Jews who will be refined and cleansed by God during the day of the Lord, who will come to belief in Christ as their true Messiah and King several days after the completion of the seventieth week, and who will become citizens of the physical kingdom of God during the millennial rule of Christ.

ANGELS A created order of beings existing in the presence of God and that do His will. The Scripture reveals many activities of angels and identifies only a two by name (Gabriel and Michael) and two orders (seraphim and cherubim).

(A) **Michael**

1. **Guardian of Israel** Daniel informs us that the angel Michael is the prince of the Jewish people (Dan. 10:21; 12:1). In the 12th chapter, his role seems to be that of protector or guardian of the Jews. From the reference in 12:1 we also learn that the "time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time" comes upon the Jewish people following Michael's "arising", or withdrawal of his protection.

2. **The Restrainer** The apostle Paul tells us in II Thessalonians 2: 6-7 of a restrainer who will hold back the intentions/efforts of ["the man of lawlessness"](#) until it's time for his revealing and the subsequent prophesied [Day of the Lord](#). The restrainer can only be Michael the archangel, Israel's prince, who stands guard over Israel as well as the [spiritual kingdom of God](#), Old and New Testament alike. Satan will not have complete freedom to persecute Israel or the church in general - through [Antichrist](#) - until Michael's restraint is removed, permitting the purge of Israel foretold by God through His prophets, and the "fiery testing" of the church foretold by the Apostles of Christ in the New Testament. Contrary to much popular interpretation, there is no scriptural basis for identifying the restrainer either as the Holy Spirit or as the church. On the other hand, Michael is called by Daniel the one who "stands firmly against" or "restrains." The word for "arise" in Daniel 12:1 in the Hebrew is 'amad' and it means to "stand up or stand still". The Midrash (1st Century Jewish commentary of the Old Testament) says of this verse, "The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Michael, 'You are silent? You do not defend my children'". (ca. II Sam. 2:28; II Kings 4:6 for other uses of 'amad')

(B) **Seraphim** The four living creatures who open the first four [seals](#) of the [large scroll](#). These angelic beings have six wings, surround the throne of God, continually praise God and are responsible for the refinement of any and all who come into

the presence of God. In the last days, it will be their responsibility to separate the [wheat from the tares](#) by permitting the fiery testing of the compromising church, so that the faithful can be presented before God, worthy.

CHRIST'S COMING

The great hope of the church down through the ages. (Titus 2:13-14)

(A) First Coming Christ's first coming (at His incarnation) was for redemption, to reconcile God's elect to Himself and to reverse the consequences of sin - primarily death (or separation), which is manifested in two ways: the first is spiritual death, man's separation from God; the second is physical death, the separation of man's physical being from his spiritual. At His first coming Christ overcame both deaths. First, He sacrificed Himself on the cross and shed his blood for the sins of the world, providing spiritual life for those who trust in Him. Second, by His resurrection from the dead, He made provision for renewed and eternal bodies for those believers. As a result of His death and resurrection at His first coming, Christ redeemed the elect of God from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, and is "counted worthy" to judge the unrighteous and to cast out Satan and his kingdom of darkness at His second coming.

(B) Second Coming Christ's second coming (parousia) is synonymous with the day of the Lord, during which time He will rapture His saints; refine, save, and restore the natural line of Abraham (Israel); and judge and destroy Antichrist and all of Satan's kingdom of darkness. He will thereby reclaim the rule over earth for God, reclaim physical possession of earth from Satan, and then reclaim His rightful throne in the New Jerusalem on top of Mount Zion when the Millennium begins. The second coming will be initiated by the Rapture (between the sixth and seventh seal judgments), when Christ appears the first time, cutting short the great tribulation by Antichrist. He will then physically appear on earth a second time for the salvation of Israel, immediately after the completion of the seventieth week, and again thirty days later at His final conquest of Antichrist and the eighth beast empire of Satan at the battle of Armageddon. Forty-five days after the battle of Armageddon, Christ will permanently return to earth with His bride to rule over the physical kingdom of God upon earth during the Millennium.

(C) Parousia The Greek word in the New Testament translated "coming". It is a noun indicating that it speaks of an event and not a verb which would indicate motion or action. Most of the uses of this word in the New Testament refer to the time when Christ returns at the end of the age to rapture of the church, orchestrate the Day of the Lord's wrath, bring salvation to the remnant of Israel after the completion of the 70th Week of Daniel, and the completion of God's final judgment at the battle of Armageddon. These various events could represent a timeframe anywhere from 6 months to three years.

(D) Appearances of Whereas the second coming (parousia) of Christ refers to the manifestation of Christ's presence in the affairs of mankind during the day of the Lord, the appearance of Christ refers to the several times when He will actually appear to mankind on earth before He returns to earth permanently to rule over His millennial kingdom. His first appearance will be at His coming in the clouds, when the church is raptured at the beginning of the day of the Lord, when every eye shall behold Him. His second appearance will be at His return to earth to gather the 144,000 at Edom and return through the Judean hills to the city of Jerusalem for the salvation of Israel. Christ's final appearance will be at the battle of Armageddon, when He returns from heaven with His armies for the defeat of Antichrist.

TRIBULATION This term is synonymous with "testing". Various times of testing are mentioned in Scripture:

(A) In General In relation to end-time events, tribulation refers to man's persecution of other men, inspired by the wrath of Satan, and is not a reference to God's judgment or wrath at [the day of the Lord](#). By far the worst tribulation will be the great tribulation by [Antichrist](#), which will occur during (but is not synonymous with) the second half of the [seventieth week](#).

(B) The Great / Jacob's Trouble This term describes Antichrist's persecution of [God's elect](#) beginning at the [midpoint](#) of the seventieth week, but it is not synonymous with the entire second half of the seventieth week. This persecution (also called "the time of Jacob's trouble" by Jeremiah - Jer. 30:7 and "the time of distress such as never occurred" by Daniel - Dan. 12:1) is man's affliction of other men, inspired by the wrath of Satan. The great tribulation, spoken of by Christ in [the Olivet Discourse](#) and in the book of Revelation, refers to the violent persecution inflicted by Antichrist against all his enemies during a part of the second half of the seventieth week, but pertains especially to Antichrist's persecution of God's chosen nation, [Israel](#), and His elect, [the true church](#) which, in part, comprise the [spiritual kingdom of God](#). This time of extreme torment and suffering will begin when Antichrist gains control of the city of Jerusalem, takes his seat in [the Temple](#), reveals his true identity and demands the worship of the world. It will be the greatest time of persecution Jews or the church in general will ever experience - surpassing even the Nazi Holocaust. The great tribulation by Antichrist will be terminated by God's sovereign intervention at the day of the Lord, (Mark 13:20) sometime before the end of that week. If this slaughter were not divinely cut short, no Jew or any of the elect of God (the true church) would survive. As it is, two out of three Jews living back in Israel will still die during this great tribulation.

(C) Purge of Israel The purging and refinement of the divinely chosen [remnant](#) of Israel that will survive the great tribulation by Antichrist. These will be purified further by the day of the Lord, in preparation for becoming citizens of the [physical kingdom of God](#) over which Christ will rule. They will then "look on Me [Christ] whom they have pierced" and will be saved as a nation, immediately after the end of the seventieth week. God's purification of the third part of Israel that survives the great tribulation will include His discarding as dross every Jew who takes [the mark of Antichrist](#) for his or her personal safety during Antichrist's great tribulation. Only one tenth (Is. 6:13) of the nation will survive both the great tribulation by Antichrist and the day of the Lord.

(D) Time of Testing The great time of testing in the [last days](#) referred to directly by John and Peter in particular will occur during the great tribulation by Antichrist when every human being will be expected to worship [the beast](#) or his [image](#) and obey him alone. (II Pet. 2:9; Rev. 3:10) This time of testing will be the test of Satan, not the test of God, and will primarily become a test to those of the professing church who claim the name of Christ. Those who refuse to worship the beast or his image will face death and/or persecution that will make the Holocaust pale in comparison. Christ taught that at that time "many" will fall away from the faith, and "most" people's love will grow cold, accomplishing the separation of the [wheat from the tares](#). On the other hand, those who fail to pass this test of Antichrist will suffer the immediate wrath of Satan through his minion Antichrist, but will live eternally in the presence of their King. Every true believer will refuse the mark and refuse to worship Antichrist or his image, but untaught and compromising Christians who will not have prepared themselves during the first half of the week will nevertheless experience the full brunt of Antichrist's fury, purifying, as it were, the soon-to-be bride of Christ. Some unbelievers - namely God's protected remnant of the [natural line of Abraham](#) (Israel) and unbelieving Gentiles who assist Israel during her time of great distress - will also refuse the mark and eventually come to salvation after the completion of the seventieth week.

(E) "Cut Short" The great tribulation by Antichrist will begin at the midpoint of the 70th week of Daniel. This time of testing will be "cut short" by Christ (Mark 13:20), or "amputated". The 3 1/2 years given to Antichrist will continue, but he will be rendered useless against the elect at the parousia of Christ when He comes to rapture believers.

DAY OF THE LORD, THE

A consistently described event in both the Old and New Testaments referencing a time of devastating judgment by God upon wicked and rebellious mankind, [Antichrist](#), and an [8th Beast empire](#) ruled by Antichrist at the end of the age and before the [millennial reign of Christ](#) for 1,000 years.

(A) The End of the Age / Final Harvest / God's Wrath Synonymous with the [second coming \(parousia\) of Christ](#). Also called the "end of the age," the "final harvest," and the "seventh seal," which includes God's [trumpet and bowl judgments](#) and is culminated in the battle of [Armageddon](#). The most prophesied event in the Old Testament concerning the [last days](#), the day of the Lord is marked by God's fiery judgmental wrath against the earth's wicked. The primary purpose of the day-of-the-Lord wrath will be to destroy the kingdom of darkness, giving specific attention to the final beast empire of Satan which will then dominate the world. It will begin on the same day that [the Rapture](#) occurs, cutting short the [great tribulation](#) by Antichrist, sometime during the second half of the [seventieth week](#). It will be announced with a sign divinely displayed in the heavens (see [Sign of the End of the Age](#)). A secondary purpose of the day of the Lord will be to refine the third part of the [nation of Israel](#) who will survive the great tribulation by Antichrist, in preparation for the salvation of the surviving [remnant](#) of the nation (one tenth - Is. 6:13) after the seventieth week is complete thus completing the [spiritual kingdom of God](#). If the day of the Lord did not cut short the great tribulation by Antichrist, none of [God's elect](#), Jew or Gentile, would survive. (Matt. 24:22) The day of the Lord's wrath is composed of two major parts. The first is the series of God's trumpet judgments against the earth's wicked, including unsaved Israel, that will occur while the seventieth week is in progress. The second part is the series of bowl judgments, "which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished." These will begin after the seventieth week is complete, after the surviving remnant of Israel is saved and the Lord has hidden them in [Azel](#) for protection. (Zech. 14:5) The day of the Lord will be climaxed and ended at the battle (or campaign) of Armageddon.

(B) Sixth Seal / Sign of the End of the End of the Age The cataclysmic and terrifying changes in the sun, moon, and stars, with all the natural lights of the world being extinguished, plunging the earth's atmosphere into total darkness. This sign will be accompanied by worldwide earthquakes and will occur at the opening of the 6th seal, immediately before the sign of Christ's coming. (Rev. 6:12-16)

(C) Seventh Seal The opening of the final seal spoken of in Revelation 8:1-7. The 7th Seal ushers in the 7 Trumpet judgments of God's divine wrath.

(D) Survivors of People (Jews and Gentiles) who survive the most devastating time in the history of the world, the Day of the Lord's wrath. (cf. Micah 7:17; Rev. 20:4) This group will be divided into (1) Sheep - those who sought to defend/protect Jews during Antichrist's persecution and, (2) Goats - those who did not help the Jewish people during their hour of greatest need.