

THE GATE CHURCH HIGH DESERT
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WEDNESDAY NIGHTS AT 6:30PM
JAN - APR, 2021

BACK TO THE FUTURE

A STUDY OF REVELATIONS AND THE VICTORY OF CHRIST

A PROPER APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING - THE BOOK OF REVELATION

CHAPTER ONE

Developing the Right Hermeneutic (*Interpretation of Scripture*)

Literal, Figurative, Symbolic and Figurative Language
Systems of Eschatology and the Approach to End Times
Preterism, Futurism, Historicism and Idealism
Amillennialism, Pre-Millennialism and Post Millennialism

CHAPTER TWO

Deciphering the Old Testament Prophecies (*Daniel, Zechariah*)

Zechariah's Description of the Temple
Daniel's Vision of the Four Kingdoms
Daniel's Timeline of the Seventy Weeks

CHAPTER THREE

Discovering the First Century Relevance of Jesus' Prophecy (*Matthew 23-25*)

The Temple Experience and a Walk in the Garden
The Disciples Questions and a Curiosity for the Unknown
The Future Unveiled and the Prophecies Unfold

CHAPTER FOUR

Detailing the Observations as Seen in the Visions of John (*Revelation*)

The Purpose of the Book (Christ and His Church Victorious)

The Person of the Book (*Christ*)

Jesus Christ the Lamb of God | Jesus Christ the Lord of All

The Prophecy of the Book (Warnings, Judgments and Outcomes)

Dating the Revelation: Crucial to Understanding the Book

Warnings to the Churches of Asia Minor

Judgments on the Jews, the Romans Empire and the Nations of Earth

Second Coming, the Kingdom of God and New Creation

LESSON THREE

Systems of Eschatology and the Approach to End Times A-Millennialism, Pre-Millennialism and Post Millennialism

Our basic hermeneutical approach to the book of Revelation should be determined by the nature and content of the book itself.

Secondly, when the genre of the book is taken into consideration, it provides strong evidence for a basically historical approach to the book.

It is also easy to forget when reading the book of Revelation that it is the capstone of the entire narrative of Scripture.

In the first century, Jesus foretold another coming judgment of Israel on account of her rejection of himself, and he connected this coming judgment with his accession to the throne of the kingdom of God.

A-millennialism, Pre-Millennialism and Post-Millennialism

Dispensational Pre-Millennialism

- Which of the four views of the end times one holds has never been a test of orthodoxy.
- The only things concerning eschatology that all Christians agree on are:
 - A Physical Return of Christ
 - A Bodily Resurrection
 - A Last Judgment

- None of the Historic Church Creeds mention Millennium or the Great Tribulation

Dispensationalism is the only view many know, but it never existed until about 1830.

There are considerable differences between historic pre-millennialism and Dispensational pre-millennialism.

Adherents to all four views of eschatology recognize changes of dispensation in God's dealing with men, like the change in the sacrificial system from the Old to the New Covenant. However, "Dispensationalism" draws much sharper lines of distinction between dispensations than others. Covenantal theology is the contrast to Dispensational theology.

Distinctive's of Dispensationalism:

- a) Sharp distinction between Israel and the Church, Age of Law/ Age of Grace.
- b) Pre-tribulation rapture of the Church.
- c) Jewish political rule as in the Old Testament will occur in the Millennium.
- d) Mystery form of the Church in the Old Testament (no prophecies of Church in OT).
- e) Hermeneutic literalism.

Four guiding beliefs behind the Dispensational understanding of Israel and the Church:

- Because Israel rejected "The Kingdom Offer" of Christ as an earthly, military king, Christ then set out to die on the cross to establish the Church as an alternative program.
- The Church Age is a "parenthesis" in God's main plan, which will resume upon Christ's secret return at the beginning of the Great Tribulation (70th week of Daniel).
- Because the Church and Israel are two radically different programs in God's plan, the Church must be removed from the earth before the Great Tribulation.
- Because the Church was not a part of God's original plan, there are no prophecies that speak of the Church in the Old Testament. The Church is a 'mystery.'

From the Tribulation to Eternity:

Dispensationalists have worked out a very detailed view of what will take place in the Tribulation.

Blessings of First or Second Coming

The kingdom and blessings that postmillennialists say were established at Christ's first coming, Dispensationalists postpone until the Second Coming. Both believe Christ's millennial kingdom to be characterized by:

- Gradual advance of Christ's reign to the ends of the earth.
- Righteousness, obedience, holiness, and truth.
- The fullness of the Holy Spirit.

- Peace, joy, glory, and comfort.
- Wise judgment, knowledge, and instruction.
- Freedom from the curse on the earth, sickness, and pre-mature death.
- Free enterprise labor, economic prosperity, and high population.
- Justice and freedom from oppression.

Left Behind? Rejoice!

The Dispensational teaching of a secret, pre-tribulation rapture of only believers has been popularized by Tim La Haye in the *Left Behind* series of books as well as a movie by the same name.

However, the context shows that Jesus meant something entirely different. He compares the event to the days of Noah: "*They did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be*" (v. 39; cf. *Luke 17:27-28*).

Historic Premillennialism

Historic premillennialists believe in a post-tribulation rapture prior to a literal thousand-year reign of Christ. But historic pre-mils make the following arguments against Dispensationalism:

- Historic novelty - Many of the teachings of Dispensationalists, like the radical Israel/Church dichotomy and Temple sacrifices in the Millennium, are unheard of in Christian theology until about 1830.
- Denial of imminency of Christ's return - this follows from the denial of Dispensationalists radical Israel/Church dichotomy and the belief that Scripture teaches that the Church will be on earth during the Tribulation.
- Denial of the mystery form of the Church - The Church is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.
- Promise of tribulation of the Church - Thus the Church will not be raptured before the Great Tribulation.
- Past fulfillment of the 70th week of Daniel - The middle of the 70th week was the crucifixion of Christ, not the war of Armageddon during the Great Tribulation.
- There is only one resurrection of the saints - not a resurrection of the Church before the Tribulation and another one for the Jews at the end of the Tribulation.
- Wheat are resurrected *after* the tares are destroyed - Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43.

Two Other Rapture Views

- Mid-Tribulation Rapture

According to this view, the rapture will occur in the middle of the seven-year tribulation period. The arguments for this are as follows:

- The denial of the imminent return of Christ

- The promise of tribulation for the Church - Luke 23:27-31; Matt. 24:9-11; Mark 13:9-13; John 15:18-19; John 16:1-2, 33; Rev. 1:9.
 - The denial of the Church as a mystery
 - The seals and trumpets of Revelation - The seals and trumpets of the first part of Revelation are not judgments from God. The judgments do not begin until the second half of the book.
 - Rapture in *Revelation 11* - The two witnesses represent the dead and the living at the rapture; the cloud represents the Lord's presence; the voice and trumpet are the shout and trumpet of *1 Thessalonians 4:16*.
 - The identity of the last trumpet - The seventh trumpet of *Rev. 11:15* is the same trumpet as in *1 Cor. 15:52* and *1 Thes. 4:16*.
 - The duration of the tribulation period - According to *Dan. 9:27*, *Matt. 24:8,21*, and *Rev. 11-19*, the last half of the seven year period is the period of great tribulation, when God brings great judgement. The first three and half years are simply the "beginning of sorrows."
- The Partial Rapture Theory

According to this view, only those Christians who are faithfully waiting for the Lord's return at the beginning of the Tribulation will be raptured then. The unfaithful Christians must wait until the end of the Tribulation to meet the Lord in the clouds. This view is based on *Luke 21:36*, *Matt. 24:41-42*, *Heb. 9:28*, *Phil. 3:11*, *1 Cor. 15:23*, *2 Tim. 4:8*, *1 Thess. 1:10* and *4:13-18* with *1 Cor. 15:51-52*.

The Postmillennial Response: The postmillennialist takes sides with the above views against Dispensationalism in some areas like the promise of tribulation for the Church and the denial of imminency and of the mystery form of the Church. But the preterist postmillennialist also denies an assumption of all these views: that the Tribulation and the rapture are anywhere close in time to one another. The Tribulation occurred around A.D. 70 and the rapture occurs at the end of history.