



# The End Times

WEEK 3: THE MILLENNIUM

# Concessions & Clarifications

- ▶ Dispensationalism has evolved, and I presented it largely from dated voices
  - ▶ See Charles Ryrie, Dwight Pentecost, John Walvoord, John MacArthur
- ▶ My argument depended on fringe and/or extreme examples
- ▶ Is Dispensationalism actually modern?

# Concessions & Clarifications

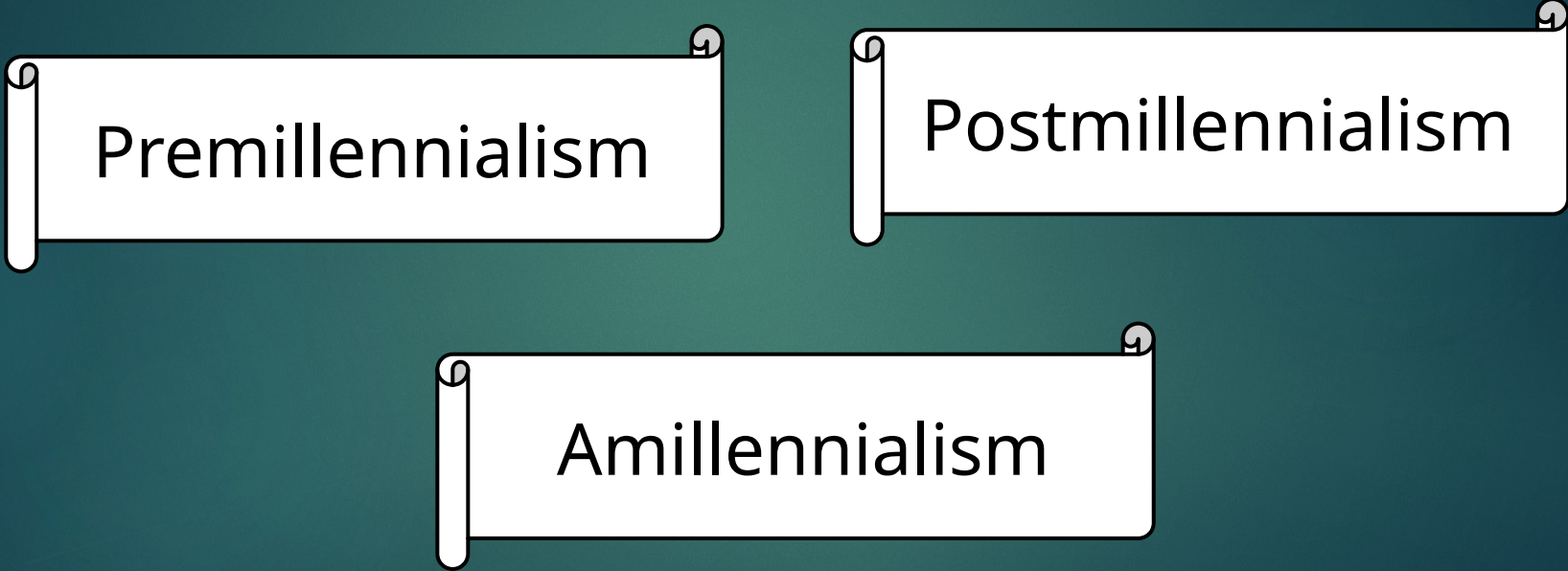


“However, the differences [between the church fathers and modern dispensationalists] are profound, and disqualify any claim that pretribulational, dispensational premillennialism existed in any form in the period. First of all, a consistently applied literal interpretation and a distinction between Israel and the Church are missing, and these are the foundation stones of the modern system. Secondly, there is no concept of dispensations or dispensationalism at all. . . it is quite evident that traces of modern pretribulational, dispensational premillennialism simply did not exist in the immediate post-apostolic period.” – Alan Patrick Boyd

# Concessions & Clarifications

- ▶ Is the Holy Land still holy?
- ▶ Future of ethnic Israel?

# Views of the Millennium



Premillennialism

Postmillennialism

Amillennialism

# The Millennium of Rev. 20



## Revelation 20:1–10

[1] Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. [2] And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, [3] and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

# The Millennium of Rev. 20

## Revelation 20:1-10

[4] Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. [5] The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. (ESV)

# The Millennium of Rev. 20

## Revelation 20:1-10

[6] Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

[7] And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison [8] and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. (ESV)

# The Millennium of Rev. 20

## Revelation 20:1-10

[9] And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, [10] and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (ESV)

# Premillennialism

- ▶ Usually associated with a “futurist” reading of Revelation
- ▶ Christ will return bodily in power and glory to inaugurate a 1,000 year reign
- ▶ Millennium will be preceded by a Great Tribulation → *pessimistic about the future*
- ▶ During Christ’s reign, saints have received their glorified bodies either by resurrection or transformation
- ▶ Sin, sorrow and death still exist
- ▶ At end of Millennium, Satan is unbound for one final struggle

# Premillennialism

- ▶ 2 Resurrections: believers first, then non-believers in the second

## Revelation 20:4-5

...Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. **They came to life** and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. [5] The rest of the dead did not **come to life** until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. (ESV)

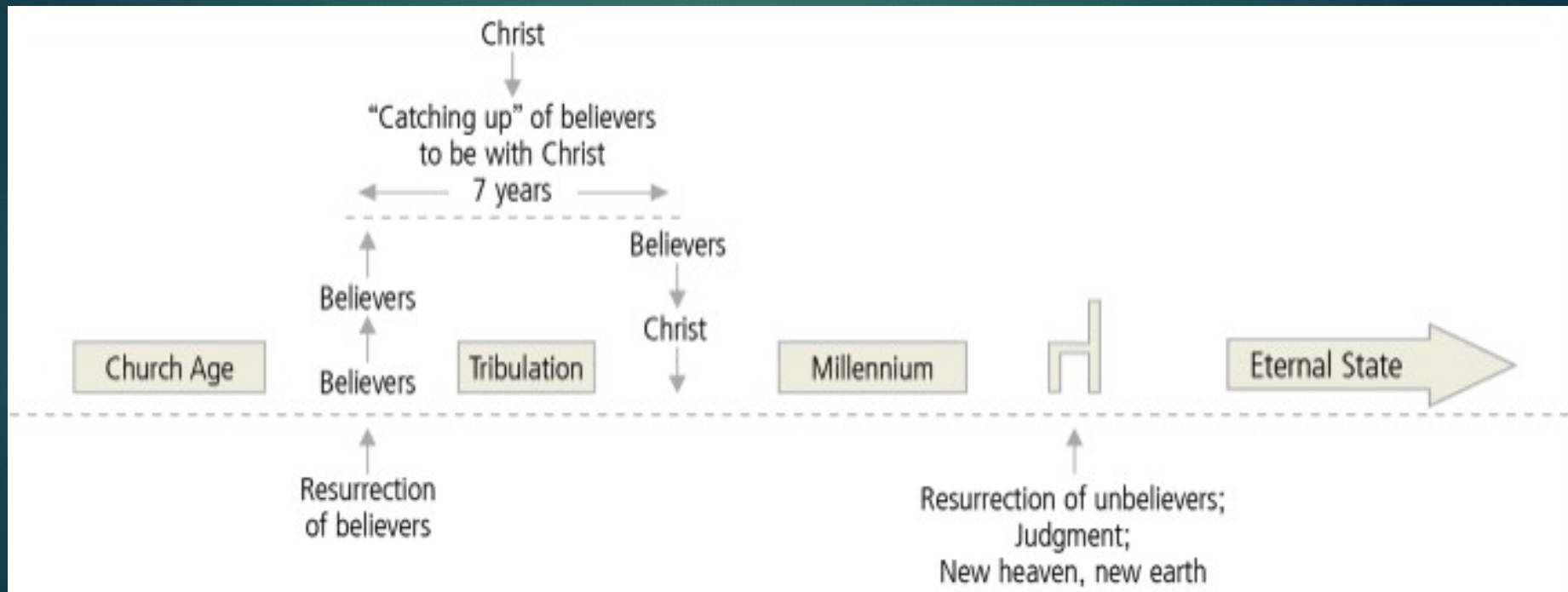
# Premillennialism: The Resurrections

*Alford's Dictum: "If, in a passage where two resurrections are mentioned, where certain souls lived at the first, and the rest of the dead lived only at the end of a specified period after that first,—if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean spiritual rising with Christ, while the second means literal rising from the grave;—then there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything."* – Henry Alford

# Premillennialism

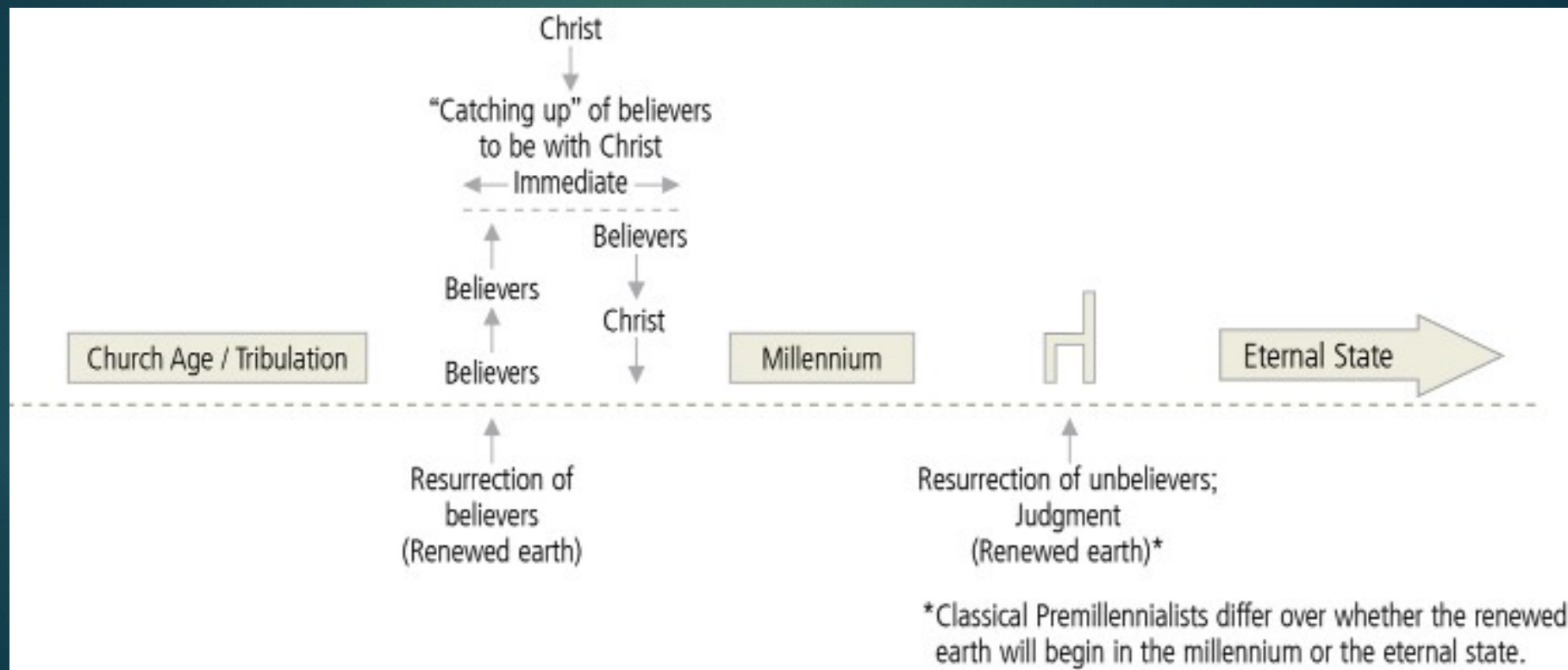
- ▶ Disp. Premil. ("Pre-Tribulation")
  - ▶ Christ will take ("rapture") the church first, then there will be a 7-year tribulation, after which Christ returns to reign for 1000 years
  - ▶ Prophecies of Israel's restoration fulfilled
  - ▶ "Two-Phases" of Christ's return
- ▶ Historic Premil. ("Post-Tribulation")
  - ▶ Prior to Christ's return, believers will go through a great tribulation
  - ▶ "Single-phase" of Christ's return

# Pretribulation Premillennialism



Source: ESV Study Bible

# Historic Premillennialism



Source: ESV Study Bible

# History of Premillennialism

- ▶ Roots of Premillennialism well attested in early church
  - ▶ Justin Martyr (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD), Irenaeus (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD)
- ▶ Augustine takes a symbolic view of 1000 years, premil goes into decline
- ▶ Taken up by Anabaptists after the Reformation
- ▶ Highly popularized with advent of Dispensationalism

# Strengths of Premillennialism



- ▶ Most popular and common view today among evangelical Christians
- ▶ Fairly clear, definite and straight-forward in its reading of Revelation 20
- ▶ Creates “eschatological earnestness”
- ▶ Is held by those who take exegesis very seriously

# Problems with Premillennialism



- ▶ Requires shaping your view of the End Times on eight verses.
- ▶ Requires a very “literal” reading of Revelation and much of OT prophecy
- ▶ Purpose of the millennium is not clear
- ▶ Can lead to obsessiveness about the end times
- ▶ Can lead to apathy / escapism

# Premillennialism Requires Believing:

Physical death will continue beyond Christ's return

Creation will continue to be subjected to the curse after Christ's return

Unbelieving men and women will still be able to come to saving faith after Christ's return

Unbelievers will not be finally judged until at least 1000 years after Christ's return

Unbelievers will not be resurrected until at least 1000 years after Christ's return

The new heavens and new earth will not be introduced until 1000 years after Christ's return

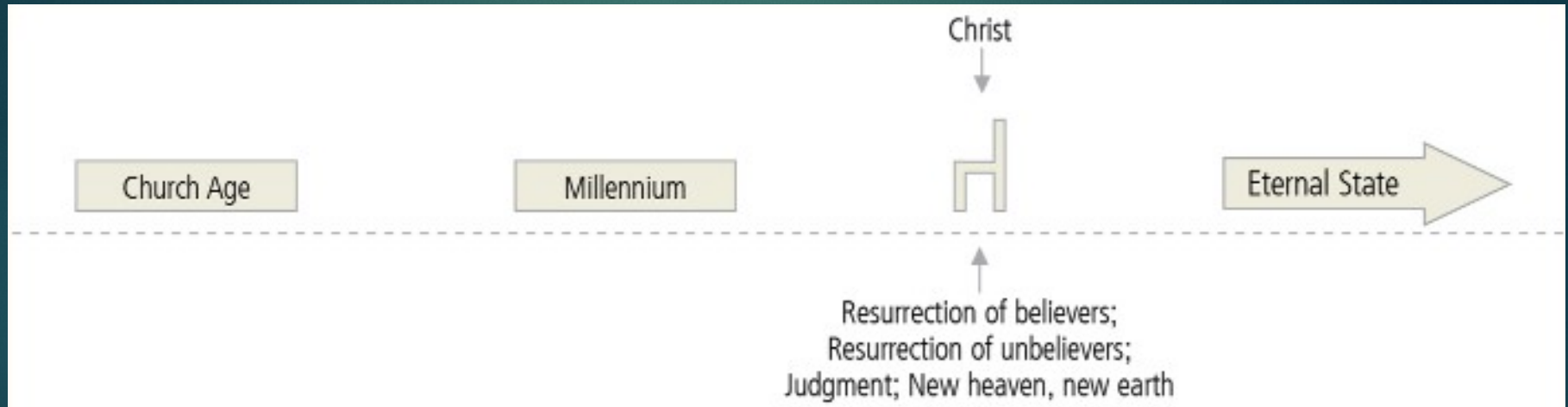
# Postmillennialism

- ▶ Often associated with a partial-preterist reading of Revelation
- ▶ See's the millennium as a reign of Christ in which he is not bodily present
- ▶ The kingdom of God is a present reality → not over a realm, but the rule of Christ in the hearts of men. It grows gradually.
- ▶ Expects the conversion of all nations prior to Christ's return → *Optimistic about the future*

# Postmillennialism

- ▶ The millennium will be a long period of earthly peace (the number 1000 is symbolic)
- ▶ At the end, there will be a time of apostasy and evil associated w/ the anti-Christ.
- ▶ Some believe the Jewish nation will be converted.

# Postmillennialism



Source: ESV Study Bible

# History of Postmillennialism



- ▶ Something that vaguely resembles post-mil was present in the 4th century
- ▶ Became very popular in centuries following the Reformation
- ▶ Eventually embraced by Lutheran, Presbyterian and Reformed denominations
- ▶ Declined sharply in 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 20<sup>th</sup> century
- ▶ ... but on the rise again?

# Strengths of Postmillennialism



- ▶ Considerable Biblical support for the idea that “all nations” will come and worship the Lord
- ▶ Strong focus on the Kingdom of God
- ▶ Encourages civic engagement / activism
- ▶ Pushes back on some escapist fatalism of some Christians

# Misunderstanding Postmillennialism

- ▶ False Accusations:
  - ▶ Affirms inherent goodness of man (It doesn't)
  - ▶ Identified with evolutionary optimism (It isn't)
  - ▶ Linked to theological liberalism (It's not)
  - ▶ Holds salvific universalism (It doesn't)

# Problems with Postmillennialism

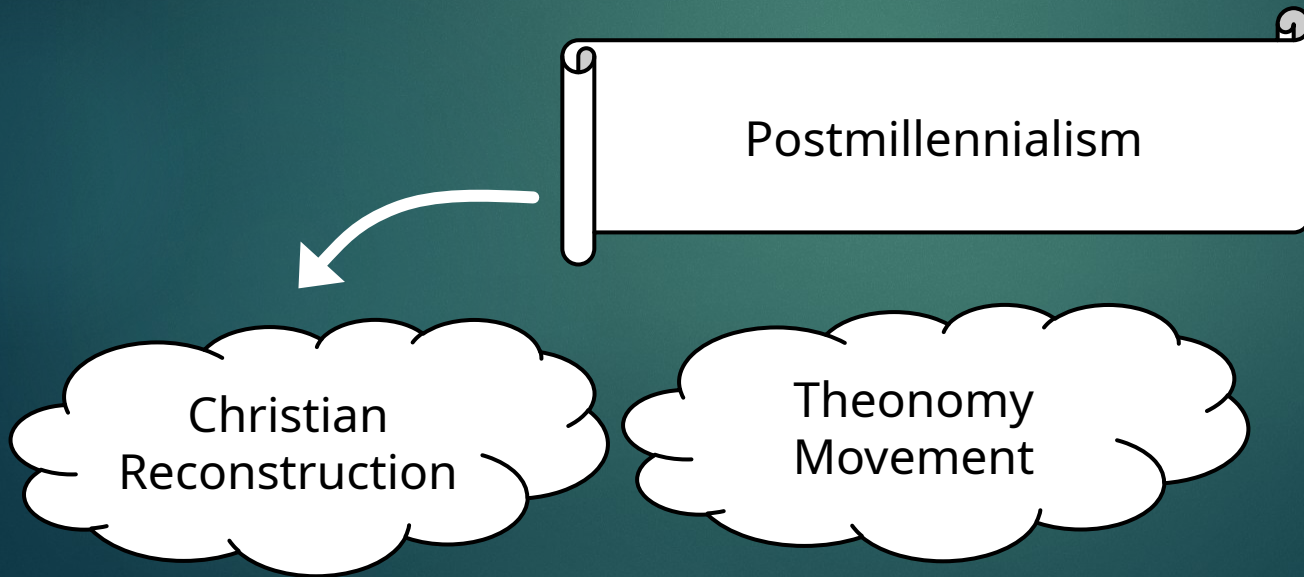
- ▶ World-wide conversion seems out of step with most NT teaching
- ▶ Minimizes the role of suffering in the NT
- ▶ Undermines the need for “watchfulness”
- ▶ In the OT, ultimate triumph is found in a new heavens and new earth (Rev 21-22), thus *after* the millennium
- ▶ Scripture never presents the Christian reconstruction of society

# Postmillennialism, Cultural Engagement, and Politics

- ▶ Evangelical political retreat has created an appetite for more assertive Christian leadership

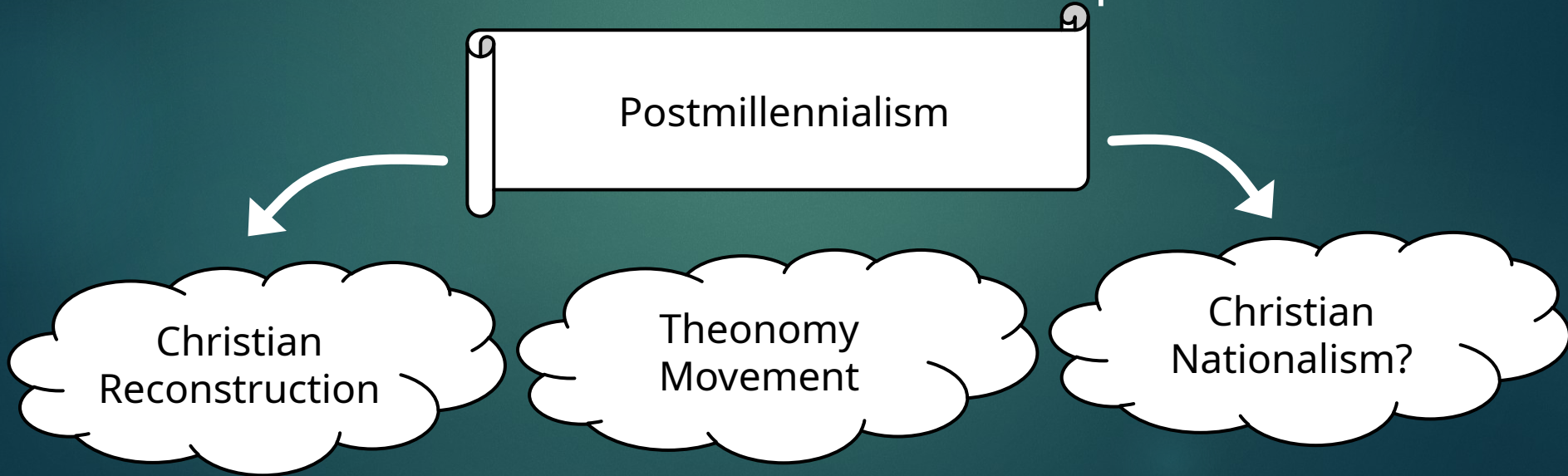
# Postmillennialism, Cultural Engagement, and Politics

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# Postmillennialism, Cultural Engagement, and Politics

*"No longer do Christian Nationalists in America seek to establish official state churches or religions, but rather we seek to reestablish states that recognize Jesus Christ as King, the general Christian faith as the foundation of state government, and state laws that reflect (in every way possible and reasonable) Christian morality and charity." – Torba and Isker, Christian Nationalism: A Biblical Guide to Taking Dominion & Discipling Nations*

# Postmillennialism, Cultural Engagement, and Politics

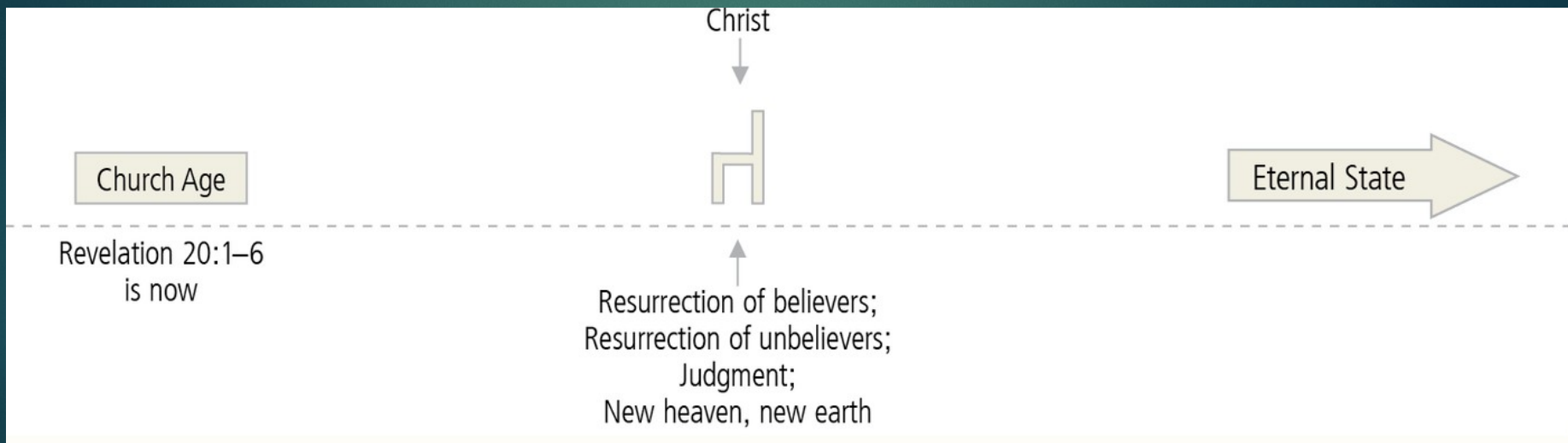
*"Any movement determined to obey Christ's command to disciple our nation cannot be rooted in pessimism and an expectation of failure. You cannot simultaneously hope for a revival of Christian faithfulness in our nation while expecting the world to end at any moment. Thankfully, there is another way. For centuries Christians believed that Christ reigned over earth from Heaven and that they were a part of His heavenly kingdom here on earth. This meant faithfully building households, businesses, churches, schools, and yes, nations under the authority of Christ." – Torba & Isker*



# Amillennialism

- ▶ Often associated with Idealist / Preterist interp of Revelation
  - ▶ Recapitulation / Prog. Parallelism > Chronological sequence
- ▶ The millennium = the church age NOW
  - ▶ 1000 is symbolic, but the (spiritual) reign is literal
- ▶ Similar to postmil in chronology: no rapture, no “two-stage” return of Christ, etc
- ▶ Similar to premil in outlook: no worldwide conversion of nations, more expectant of the end
- ▶ Less optimistic than postmil, less pessimistic than premil
- ▶ Two resurrections: first spiritual, second physical?

# Amillennialism



Source: ESV Study Bible

# History of Amillennialism

- ▶ Possibly held by some in early church (debated)
- ▶ Augustine earliest advocate who attempted to systematize this approach
- ▶ Amil and postmil not distinguished until 19<sup>th</sup> century
- ▶ Amil blossomed in 20<sup>th</sup> century from the downfall of postmil
- ▶ Many Reformed denominations are now amillennial

# Strengths of Amillennialism



- ▶ Is less prone to sensational interpretations of Biblical prophecy
- ▶ Harmonizes more easily with other NT texts (1 Cor 15, 2 Peter 3, Rom. 8, etc.)
- ▶ Has “a realistic philosophy of history” – Millard Erickson

# Problems with Amillennialism



- ▶ More known for what it *denies* than what it *affirms*
- ▶ Explained differently by many of its adherents
- ▶ Explanation of two resurrections unpersuasive to many

# Amillennialism: The Binding of Satan

- ▶ Rev. 16:13-16, 19:11-21 and 20:1-3; 7-10
  - ▶ → Chronological or parallel?

# Revelation 16:13–16

[13] And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. [14] **For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for [the war] on the great day of God the Almighty.** [15] (“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”) **[16] And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. (ESV)**

# Rev 19:11-26



[11] Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. [12] His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. [13] He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. [14] And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. **[15] From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron.** He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. [16] On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. (ESV)

# Rev 19:11-26



[17] Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, **“Come, gather for the great supper of God, [18] to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.”** [19] And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make **[the war] against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.** [20] And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. [21] And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh. (ESV)

# Revelation 20:1-3



[1] Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. [2] And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, [3] and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. (ESV)

# Revelation 20:7–10



[7] And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison [8] **and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for [the war]; their number is like the sand of the sea.** [9] And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, [10] and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (ESV)

# Amillennialism: The Binding of Satan

Rev. 16:12-16

Rev. 19:11-21

**Rev. 20:1-3**

Rev. 20:7-10

# Amillennialism: The Binding of Satan

Rev. 16:12-16

Enemy:  
Kings of the whole  
world

Rev. 19:11-21

Enemy:  
Kings, Captains,  
Mighty Men, all men,  
both free and slave,  
small and great

**Rev. 20:1-3**

Rev. 20:7-10

Enemy:  
The nations at the 4  
corners of the earth,  
Gog and Magog

# Amillennialism: The Binding of Satan

Rev. 16:12-16

Enemy:  
Kings of the whole  
world

Conflict:  
“the war”

Rev. 19:11-21

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**Rev. 20:1-3**

Rev. 20:7-10

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The nations at the 4  
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Conflict:  
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# Amillennialism: The Binding of Satan

19:19; 20:8

19:19: τοὺς βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς ... συνηγμένα ποιῆσαι τὸν πόλεμον (“the kings of the earth ... gathered together to make [the] war”);

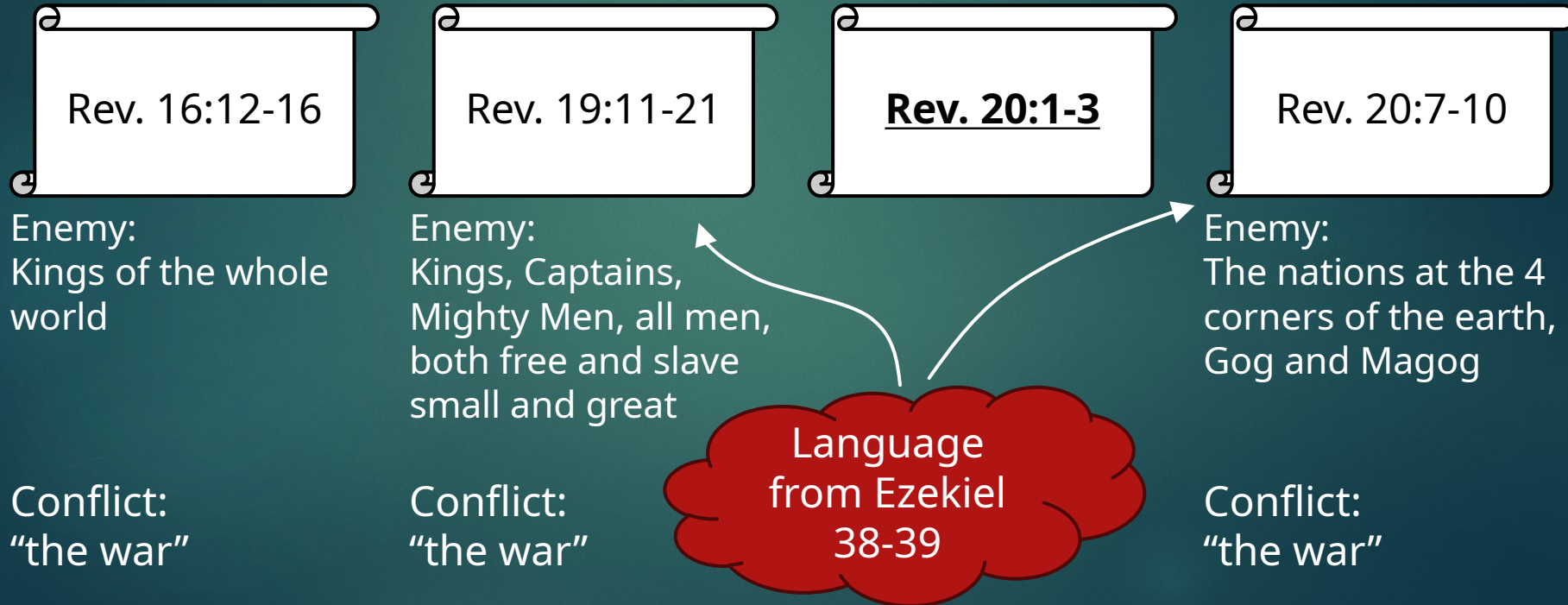
20:8, τὰ ἔθνη ... τῆς γῆς, τὸν Γὼγ καὶ Μαγὼγ, συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον (“the nations ... of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war”)

16:14

τοὺς βασιλεῖς τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης ... συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον (“the kings of the whole inhabited earth ... to gather them together for the war”).

Source: G.K. Beale

# Amillennialism: The Binding of Satan



# Amillennialism: The Binding of Satan

**Rev. 16, 19, and 20 are all describing Armageddon**



# Amillennialism: The Binding of Satan

Rev. 16, 19, and 20 are all describing  
Armageddon

Rev. 16:12-16

Rev. 19:11-21

**Rev. 20:1-3**

Rev. 20:7-10

So, what is the binding of Satan?

- ▶ vs. 3 says: "so he shall not deceive the nations any longer"
- ▶ **not** "so he shall not persecute, harm, divide, etc."

# Amillennialism: The Binding of Satan

Rev. 16, 19, and 20 are all describing  
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Rev. 16:12-16

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So, what is the binding of Satan?

- ▶ vs. 3 says: "so he shall not deceive the nations any longer"
- ▶ not "so he shall not persecute, harm, divide, etc."

*Thus, the binding of Satan means that Satan cannot deceive the nations and prevent the gospel from spreading to all people.*

# Amillennialism: The Resurrections



The “First Resurrection” of Rev 20:5 is the heavenly reign and bliss of the martyrs in the intermediate state.

# Amillennialism: The Resurrections

Revelation 20:4-5

[4] Then I saw **thrones**, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw **the souls of those who had been beheaded** for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. [5] The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the **first resurrection**. [6] Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such **the second death** has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years

# Amillennialism: The Resurrections

## **Revelation 6:9**

“And ... I saw” (*kai eidon*)

“the souls of those who had  
been slain” (*tas psuchas ton  
esphagmenon*)

“because of the word of God”  
(*dia ton logon tou theou*)

“and because of the testimony  
which they had maintained”  
(*dia ten marturian hen eichon*)

## **Revelation 20:4**

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“because of the testimony of  
Jesus” (*dia ten marturian  
Iesou*)

Source: Sam Storms

# Amillennialism: The Resurrections

Martyr's  
in the  
intermediate  
state

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Martyr's  
in the  
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Source: Sam Storms

# Amillennialism: The Resurrections

- ▶ In Revelation, the thrones are always heavenly.
- ▶ What does “First” in the “First Resurrection” mean?

# Amillennialism: The Resurrections

## Revelation 21:1–4

[1] Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the **first** heaven and the **first** earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. [2] And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. [3] And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. [4] He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the **former** things have passed away.” (ESV)

# Amillennialism: The Resurrections

- ▶ In Revelation, the thrones are always heavenly.
- ▶ What does “First” in the “First Resurrection” mean?
  - ▶ “First” → belongs to the present age that is passing away
  - ▶ Thus, in Rev 21: “first” corresponds to “old” and “second” corresponds to “new”
  - ▶ “Whatever is *first* or *old* pertains to the *present* world...whatever is *second* or *new* pertains to the *future* world... thus, whenever *first* is used in conjunction with *second* or *new* the idea is of a *qualitative contrast* (not a mere numerical sequence).” – Sam Storms

# Amillennialism: The Resurrections

Implied

First  
death

Stated

First  
resurrection

Implied

Second  
resurrection

Stated

Second death

# Amillennialism: The Resurrections

Implied  
*Physical,  
bodily death  
(martyrdom)*

First  
death

First  
resurrection

Stated

Implied  
*Physical,  
bodily  
resurrection*

Second  
resurrection

Second death

Stated  
*Spiritual,  
eternal  
punishment*

# Amillennialism: The Resurrections

Implied  
**Physical**,  
bodily death  
(martyrdom)

First  
death  
"this age"

First  
resurrection

Stated

Implied  
**Physical**,  
bodily  
resurrection

Second  
resurrection  
"next age"

Second death  
"next age"

Stated  
**Spiritual**,  
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punishment

# Amillennialism: The Resurrections

Implied  
**Physical**,  
bodily death  
(martyrdom)

First  
death  
"this age"

Implied  
**Physical**,  
bodily  
resurrection

Second  
resurrection  
"next age"

First  
resurrection  
"this age"

Stated  
**Spiritual**  
life of martyrs  
in heaven

Second death  
"next age"

Stated  
**Spiritual**,  
eternal  
punishment

# Amillennialism: The Resurrections

- ▶ The “First” resurrection does not suggest numerical sequence of events of like character, but a qualitative contrast between events of a different character (contra Alford’s Dictum)
- ▶ In 20:11-15, John does not use the word “resurrection” when describing the bodily resurrection of the lost. Instead, refers only to second death.
- ▶ In 20:4-6, John does not use the word “death” when describing the bodily death of the saved. Instead, he refers only to the first resurrection.
- ▶ “The believer DIES PHYSICALLY but experiences SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION! The unbeliever is RESURRECTED PHYSICALLY but experiences SPIRITUAL DEATH!” – Sam Storms

# Amillennialism: Summary

“John has a vision of the binding of Satan that is designed to prevent our ancient enemy from leading the unsaved nations into a premature provocation of the final battle, Armageddon. In addition, so long as Satan is restrained in this way the gospel may spread beyond the borders of Israel to bring salvation to the Gentile world. John also sees the martyred saints: those who had refused to worship the beast but instead remained faithful to Jesus Christ. In spite of having lost their physical lives, they are raised to life together with Christ in the intermediate state (as disembodied souls) where they rule and reign with the Lord for the duration of the present church age.”

# Amillennialism: Summary

"These faithful servants are truly blessed and holy, as they will never suffer the second death. Indeed, they reign as priests of God and of Christ. Near the close of the current church age, as the "1,000" years approaches its end, Satan will be released from the abyss and all restraints will be lifted. He will deceive the unbelieving nations into thinking that an assault against Christ and his Church will succeed, only to suffer sudden and decisive defeat when the Lord Jesus returns from heaven with those believers who have until now shared his dominion and rule." – Sam Storms

# Resources



Kingdom Come: The Case for Amillennialism by Sam Storms

A Basic Guide to Eschatology: Making Sense of the Millennium  
by Millard Erickson (a premillennialist)

G.K. Beale's commentary on Revelation



Questions?

# Access to Slides

