

The agreements between all four views are far more important than the differences between them.

Points of unity:

1. At the very end, Jesus will physically return and establish a new heavens and new earth. In the new creation there will be no sin or sorrow, and we will dwell with God forever (Revelation 21)!
2. We should spiritually prepare for the coming of Christ by turning away from sin and false teaching, and increasingly living for Christ (Revelation 1-3).
3. In the end, Jesus will conquer all evil and he will be honored for who he is: the King who is worthy (Revelation 17:14).
4. Every person will have to give an account for what they have done during their earthly lives, whether good or evil (Revelation 20:12-13).
5. Our only hope of escaping judgment and receiving the mercy of God is through the death of Christ on our behalf (Revelation 7:14).

Upcoming Schedule:

12-May-24	Revelation
19-May-24	The Canon of the NT

New Testament Survey

Class 32: Our Future Hope

Spectrum of Interpretation:

Literalistic ↔ Figurative
Physical, tangible, empirical ↔ Representative, metaphorical

NOTE: In all cases, words describe reality, but the question is: *how* are they describing reality? (e.g., John 10:7-18; John 6:31-40)

The Rule of Faith: Scripture Interprets Scripture

When the meaning of a passage is uncertain, we should turn to a clearer passage to help explain it. Clearer passages help us understand more obscure passages.

Key Points of Discussion Regarding Eschatological Events in Rev 20:

1. What does it mean that Satan is bound so that the nations are not deceived? (Consider Matthew 12:25-29; 4:14-17)
2. Who is resurrected and when?
3. Is the millennium described in Revelation 20 an earthly, thousand year reign with Jesus physically present (more literalistic) or is it a description of his reign from heaven (more figurative)?

4 Main Interpretations of the Millenium

1. Historic Premillennialism

- a. The Title: Christ will return *before* (“pre-”) his thousand-year reign on earth.
- b. Definition: When Christ returns he will establish a thousand-year reign on earth. This kingdom will establish widespread peace and justice, followed by a climactic battle with all the forces of evil, and then comes the final judgment and eternal state.
- c. The Millenium: There will be an extended earthly reign of Christ (~1,000 years) before the final judgment and eternity.
- d. Representatives: Tertullian (c.150-230 AD), George Ladd (1911-1982)

2. Amillennialism

- a. The Title: The millennium is a figurative description of the current age (that is, there is not a physical millennial reign).
- b. Definition: “Amillennialists interpret the millennium ... as describing the present reign of the souls of deceased believers with Christ in heaven. They understand the binding of Satan ... as being in effect during the entire period between the first and second comings of Christ, though ending shortly before Christ’s return. They teach that Christ will return after this heavenly reign.”¹
- c. The Millenium: There will NOT be an extended earthly reign of Christ before the final judgment and eternity.
- d. Representatives: Augustine (354-430 AD), Anthony Hoekema (1913-1988)

3. Postmillennialism

- a. The Title: Jesus will return after (“post-”) a time of successful evangelization of the world (i.e., the millennium).
- b. Definition: The main difference between Amillennialism and Postmillennialism is that the latter sees increasing prosperity and Christianization as more and more people are converted to faith in Christ.
- c. The Millenium: There will be a long period of prosperity for the church, but Christ will not be physically present before the final judgment and eternity.
- d. Representatives: John Owen (1616-1683), Charles Hodge (1797-1878)

4. Pretribulational Premillennialism

- a. The Title: Jesus will secretly take away believers to heaven in an instant, before a seven-year time of tribulation on earth (“pre-tribulation”), and then Christ will return to earth for a thousand-year reign before the end.
- b. Definition: During the current “church age,” the world will get worse and worse until the “rapture,” when Christ secretly takes all believers to heaven. Then come seven years of tribulation (Rev 16-19), followed by the second coming of Christ to establish a thousand-year kingdom on earth, and finally the day of judgment and the eternal kingdom.
- c. The Millenium: There will be an extended earthly reign of Christ (~1,000 years) before the final judgment and eternity.
- d. Representatives: J. N. Darby (1800-1882), *Left Behind* books

¹ Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*.