

**General Eschatology (utilizing the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* as a guide)**

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**Initial Conclusions from the last two classes (prior to looking at the "Millennium"):**

1. The Bible speaks of a singular return of Jesus Christ.
2. The Bible speaks of this singular return of Jesus Christ including the resurrection of both the just and the unjust.
3. The Bible speaks of this singular return of Jesus Christ ushering in the Day of Judgment in which all shall be judged.
4. The Bible speaks of this singular return of Christ ushering in the new heavens and the new earth.
5. The Bible Speaks of this singular return of Christ ushering in the eternal state.
6. Christ's return is the culminating event of history in which He and His cause shall be vindicated once and
7. Christ's return is the "blessed hope" of Christ's church - of every true child of God. We shall be vindicated with Christ and shall enter into glory and eternal rest.
8. The Bible's teaching on Christ's return is often accompanied with urgent exhortations to watchfulness and eager expectation.
9. The Bible's teaching on Christ's return presents a fearful prospect for the wicked, for those not trusting now in Christ as their Lord and Savior.

**Christ's Return in Relation to the "Millennium"****Two Broad Positions on the Timing of Christ's Return**

1. Christ will return \_\_\_\_\_ the "millennium."
2. Christ will return. \_\_\_\_\_ the "millennium."

Everything hinges upon how we interpret Revelation 20:1-10, specifically, how this passage relates to the rest of Revelation, the rest of the New Testament, and the rest of the Bible.

**Two Specific Schools of Thought within Each of These Positions**

Before the "millennium"

1. Historic (classic) pre-millennialism
2. Dispensational pre-millennialism\*\*\*

After the "millennium"

1. Post-millennialism
2. A-millennialism

**Dispensational Pre-millennialism**1. Sketching out the Position ^

A. Historically this is a view that arises in the middle of the 19 century and is popularized in the United States by the publication of the Scofield Reference Bible in 1909. J.N. Darby (1800-1882) appears to be the first to introduce this system. Recent authors who hold to this view include: H.A. Ironside, Leon Wood, John Walvoord, Dwight Pentecost, Charles Ryrie, Hal Lindsey, Paul Feinberg, Gleason Archer, and Herman Hoyt. Institutions which embrace dispensationalism include Dallas Theological Seminary, Grace Theological Seminary, Talbot Theological Seminary, Bob Jones University, Pensacola Bible College, and Moody Bible Institute. Popular preachers who have advanced the dispensationalist view over radio/TV include: Charles Swindoll, J. Vemon McGee, John MacArthur, Adrian Rogers, and John Hagee. The "Left Behind" series has popularized this view.

## B. Summary of Distinctives

1. Israel and the Church are distinct entities with distinct promises made to each.
2. The Church is a "parenthesis" in God's plan. As Israel "rejected" the kingdom, Christ introduced the "mystery" of the Church-age, a parenthesis between Daniel's 69th week and 70th week before unseen (Daniel 9:24-27).
3. The Church-age will be brought to a close at the beginning of the great tribulation. At this point the last "week" of Daniel's 70 weeks in Daniel 9:24-27 will be introduced.
4. Most dispensationalists hold to a double return of Jesus Christ: (1) Christ returns for His Church, i.e. the rapture; (2) Christ returns with His Church to inaugurate the

- millennial reign on earth. Those who hold to this are identified as either "pre-trib/pre-mil dispensationalists" or "mid-trib/pre-mil dispensationalists." A small minority holds to a singular return of Christ and is hence "post-trib/pre-mil dispensationalists." (This last view comes very close to the Historic Pre-millennial view discussed last week.)
4. The "rapture" is imminent, it can take place at any moment - there are no precursors whatsoever to the beginning of the last week of Daniel's 70 weeks.
  5. The seven year tribulation is "the Day of the Lord" and a pouring out of God's wrath upon the world. This tribulation is set forth in detail in Revelation 6-19.
  6. There are three (perhaps four) distinct and different resurrections.
  7. There are seven distinct "days of judgment."
  8. The millennium will not only be populated with Christ and His glorified saints, but it will also be populated with believers who became saved during the tribulation. These ones will enter into the millennium without resurrection bodies, and hence will propagate, and die. Many of their children will become believers, but not all - hence, Satan's little season at the end of the 1,000 years.
  9. The millennium is the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel found in the Abrahamic covenant (land) and the Davidic covenant (rule).
  10. All Scripture must be interpreted literally - the "literal hermeneutic".

### **C. Graphically**

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#### 2. Alleged Biblical Support for the Position

- A. Daniel 9:24-27 - The Church is a parenthesis.
- B. 1 Corinthians 10:32 - The Church is distinct from Israel
- C. The pre-trib rapture of the Church. (1) The Church is not a part of the 70th week of Daniel 9. It only refers to Israel. Therefore the Church must be gone. (2) The Church has been promised exemption from divine wrath - 1 Thessalonians 1:10 & 5:9. (3) The Church has been promised exemption from the time of wrath - Revelation 3:10. (4) There is a necessary interval between the rapture of the Church and the Second coming of Christ - otherwise there could be no non-glorified saints to enter the millennium.
- D. The double return of Christ - one for His Church and one with His Church, i.e. 1 Thessalonians 1:10 verses 3:13.
- E. The pre-mil return of Christ (see arguments from last week) - chronological exegesis of Revelation 19-20.

#### 3. Positive Contributions of this Position

- A. There is the desire to take the Bible seriously, authoritatively and literally.
- B. There is a desire to carefully understand the prophetic teaching of the Bible.

#### 4. Biblical and Theological Challenges to this Position

- A. There is only one, singular, people of God - Romans 11:16-24; Galatians 3:7-9; Ephesians 2:14-22; Galatians 6:10 - not two.
- B. The Church is not a parenthesis in God's plan, but the fulfillment of God's promises made to His old covenant people - Genesis 12: 3, Psalm 22, Psalm 67, 1 Peter 2:9,10.
- C. The land promises to Abraham - Romans 4:13, Revelation 21.
- D. The kingdom promises to David-Luke 1:32-34, Matthew 28:18, Acts 2:32-36.
- E. There is no biblical basis for a two-phased return of Christ.
- F. There is no biblical basis that anyone will be saved after Christ returns.
- G. The "literal hermeneutic" is a wax nose in the hands of the dispensationalist. I.e what of the symbolism of the book of Revelation? What do we do with the entire book of Hebrews and its robust typological fulfillment of at things OT? (Priesthood, Wilderness, Sabbath, New Covenant/Old Covenant, Tabernacle/Temple, Sacrifices, Land, City, Heavenly Country, Mount Zion, Heavenly Jerusalem, etc.)

Critique of the pre-mil return (same as against the historic pre-mil position last week)

- A. Does Christ's return merely usher in a provisional state of affairs? How does this align with the dozens of other NT passages which contradict this?
- B. What is the millennium? It does not seem to be either "this age" or "the age to come," but some sort of "in-between age."
- C. Who inhabits the earth during the millennial reign of Christ? How do glorified saints dwell in a sin-cursed earth? What of marriage and propagation? Whom will Satan deceive at the end of the millennium?
- E. Revelation 20 is the only explicit reference to the millennium in the Bible. This passage is found in an apocalyptic book known for its profuse symbolism. Are we to take Revelation 20 (the less clear) and force all of the other NT passages (the more clear) on Christ's return through this grid? This is not using good rules of biblical interpretation.