

# THE STORY OF THE FUTURE

What to Believe about the  
End Times...and Why

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## OVERVIEW CONFERENCE

### NOTES

#### **Session 1: The Essentials of Eschatology**

The Three “Rs” of Eschatology  
We Must (and Must NOT) Believe  
Why Does Eschatology Matter?

#### **Session 2: The Options in Eschatology**

Millennial Views  
Tribulation Views  
Rapture Views  
Implications

# Session 1

## The Essentials of Eschatology

### 1.1 The Three “Rs” of Eschatology

- **The RETURN of Christ as Judge and King**—to bring all things to completion and to reign forever (Acts 1:11)
  
- **The RESURRECTION of the dead**—the righteous raised bodily to eternal life and the wicked raised bodily to eternal condemnation (Acts 24:14–15)
  
- **The RESTORATION of all creation**—when all sin, suffering, death, and devil will be banished forever (Rom 8:21–23)

### 1.2 What We Must (and Must NOT) Believe



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## 1.2.A Orthodoxy, Heterodoxy, and Heresy

- **What is ORTHODOXY?** The “correct opinion” on fundamental matters of the faith for which no other opinion can be accepted; the “sine qua non” of the Christian faith; without which Christianity is not Christianity; rule of thumb: “that which has been believed everywhere, always, and by all.”
- **What is HETERODOXY?** “Other opinions” on non-foundational matters, for which diversity and change have been the norm, though heterodoxy can range from harmless to dangerous, bordering heresy.
- **What is HERESY?** The conscious, willful, and stubborn rejection of orthodoxy; the departure from fundamental matters in ways that destroy the faith once for all delivered to the saints.



## 1.2.B Errors to Avoid

- **Heinous Heresy (Getting the “Rs” Wrong)**
- **“This-Is-That” Syndrome**
- **The “Dating Game”**
- **End Times Obsession**

### 1.3 Why Does Eschatology Matter?

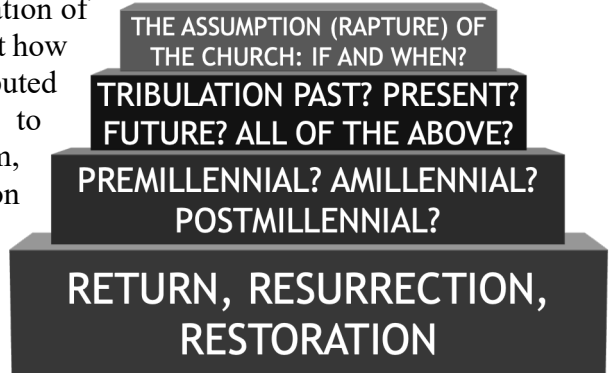
- **Wait eagerly for Christ’s return with a life lived in holiness.**
- **Invest in eternity, not in temporalities.**

<p><b>IN LIGHT OF COMING JUDGMENT</b></p> <hr/> <p>“Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness!” (2 Pet. 3:11)</p>	<p><b>IN LIGHT OF COMING BLESSING</b></p> <hr/> <p>“Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.” (2 Pet. 3:14)</p>
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- **Focus on foundational facts, not on incidental opinions.**
- **Don’t be crushed by present suffering; be comforted by future splendor.**
- **Gather often to exhort one another to love and good works.**

## Session 2 The Options in Eschatology

Though all Christians have always agreed on the foundation of the return, resurrection, and restoration, the details of just how God will accomplish the end of the story have been disputed almost from the beginning. The disagreements relate to three major areas: 1) Millennial Views: Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, or Premillennialism? 2) Tribulation Views: Preterism, Historicism, Eclecticism/Idealism, or Futurism? 3) Rapture Views: Post-Tribulation, Pre-Wrath, Mid-tribulation, Partial/ Multi-Phase, or Pretribulation?



### 2.1 Millennial Views

**2.1.A Amillennialism:** The *Realized* Kingdom—Christ’s millennial reign is present and heavenly/spiritual.

#### Amillennialism

“*Amillennialism*...holds that the millennium is not limited to a thousand years but includes the entire period of time between the first and second coming of Christ....This period is marked by conflict, martyrdom, and revolt against God. Revelation 20 depicts the church militant, not the church triumphant....There is a real millennium despite the *amillennial* nomenclature. The millennial age in which Christ rules, however, is a present reality and not a future hope.”<sup>1</sup>

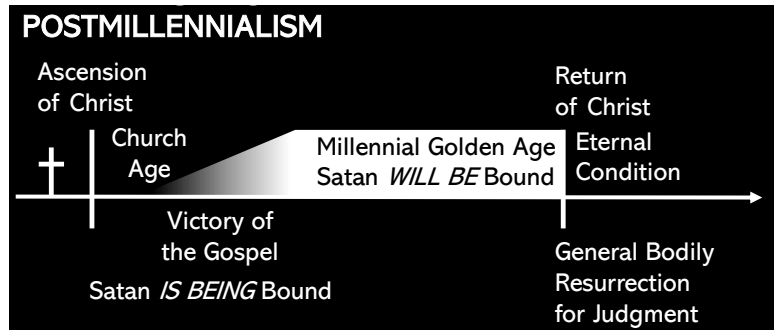


<sup>1</sup> Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times* (Baker, 2003), 29, 234.

**2.1.B Postmillennialism:** The *Realizable* Kingdom—The millennium will begin when the gospel converts the world before Christ’s return.

**Postmillennialism**

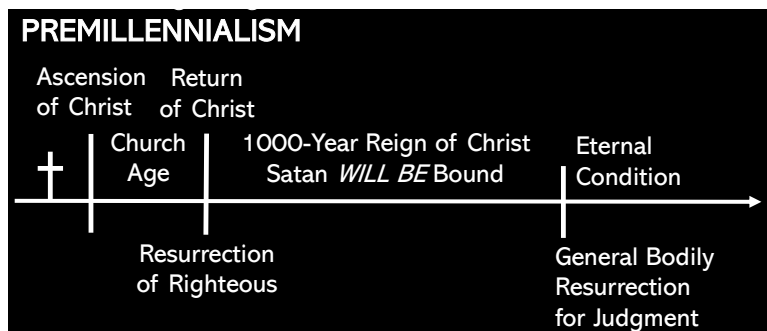
“The thing that distinguishes the biblical postmillennialist, then, from amillennialism and premillennialism is his belief that Scripture teaches the success of the great commission in this age of the church. The optimistic confidence that the world nations will become disciples of Christ, that the church will grow to fill the earth, and that Christianity will become the dominant principle rather than the exception to the rule distinguishes postmillennialism from the other viewpoints.”<sup>2</sup>



**2.1.C Premillennialism:** The *Unrealized* Kingdom—Christ’s millennial reign will follow His second coming.

**Premillennialism**

“Premillennialism...is the belief that the future kingdom that comes with Jesus will undergo a two-stage fulfillment: first, a millennial phase, a one-thousand year reign of Christ and his saints from the time of his coming to the time of the final judgment, and secondly, the final, eternal kingdom of God, extending from the time of the final judgment throughout all eternity, set within the conditions of God’s new creation.”<sup>3</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Greg Bahnsen, “The Prima Facie Acceptability of Postmillennialism,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 3 (Winter 1976-77): 68.

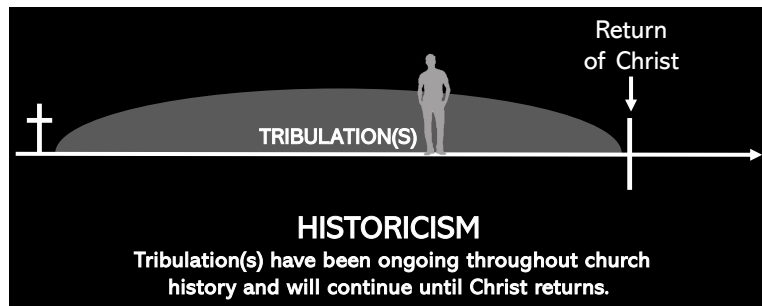
<sup>3</sup> Craig Blaising, “The Kingdom that Comes with Jesus: Premillennialism and the Harmony of Scripture,” *SBJT* 14.1 (2010): 4-5.

## 2.2 Tribulation Views

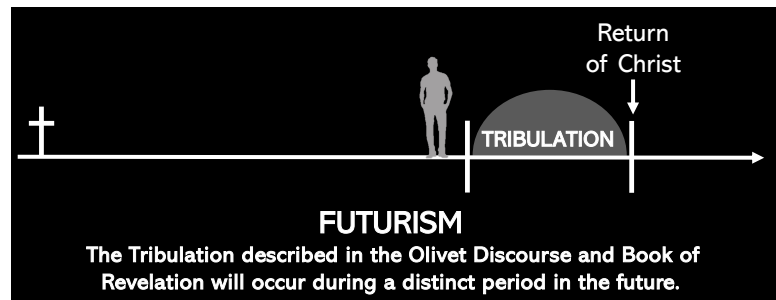
**2.1.A (Partial) Preterism:** The Tribulation described in the Olivet Discourse and the Book of Revelation already occurred in the first century or so.



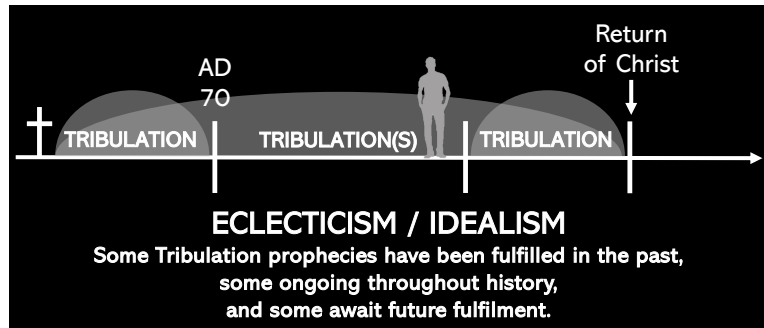
**2.1.B Historicism:** Tribulation(s) have been ongoing throughout church history and will continue until Christ returns.



**2.1.C Futurism:** The Tribulation described in the Olivet Discourse and Book of Revelation will occur during a distinct period in the future.

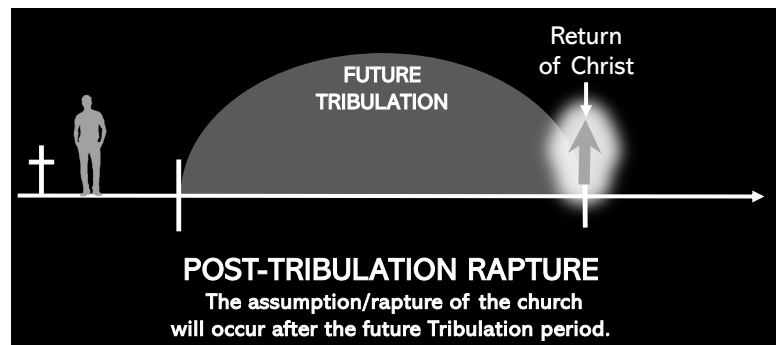


**2.1.D Eclecticism/Idealism:** Some Tribulation prophecies have been fulfilled in the past, some ongoing throughout history, and some await future fulfilment.

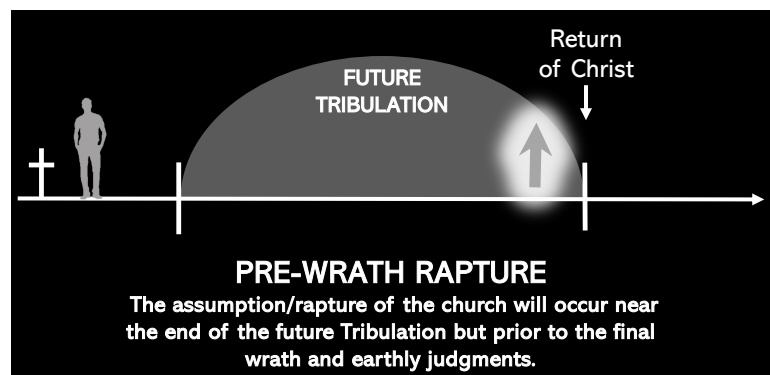


## 2.3 Rapture Views

**2.3.A Post-Tribulation Rapture:** The assumption/rapture of the church will occur after the future Tribulation period.

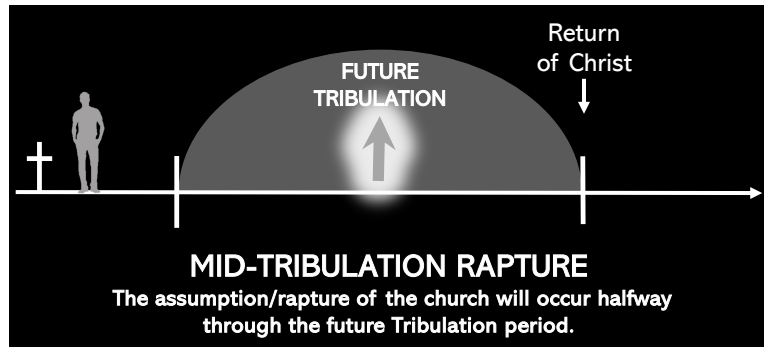


**2.3.B Pre-Wrath Rapture:** The assumption/rapture of the church will occur near the end of the future Tribulation but prior to the final wrath and earthly judgments.

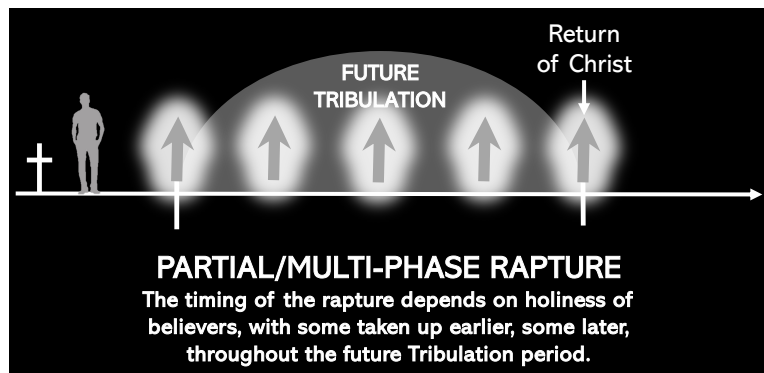




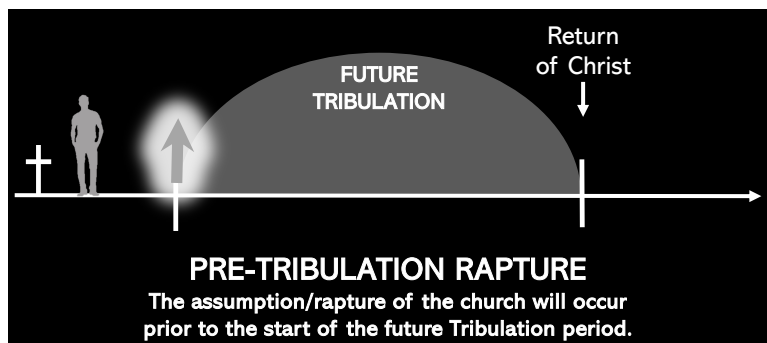
**2.3.C Mid-Tribulation Rapture:** The assumption/rapture of the church will occur halfway through the future Tribulation period.



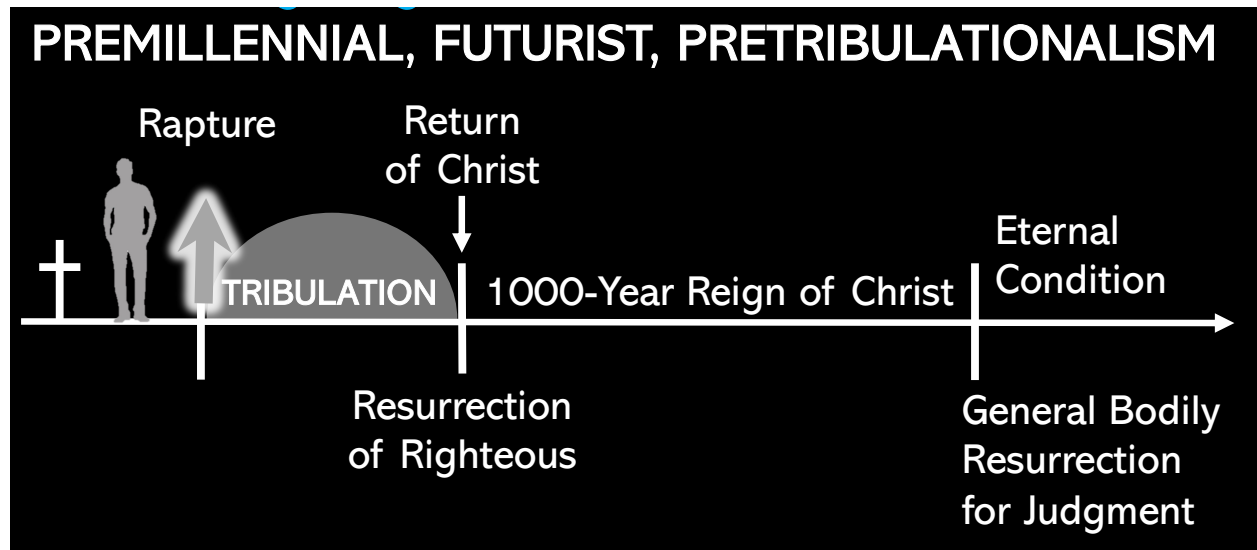
**2.3.D Partial/Multi-Phase Rapture:** The timing of the rapture depends on holiness of believers, with some taken up earlier, some later, throughout the future Tribulation period.



**2.3.E Pretribulation Rapture:** The assumption/rapture of the church will occur prior to the start of the future Tribulation period.



## 2.4 Implications



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