



WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL
Volume 17 Number 23
June 15, 2022

What Will the End Times Be Like? - Part 1
By Freddy Davis

What Will the End Times Be Like? - Part 1

Eschatology is the study of last things, or end times. In the grand scheme of things, it is a doctrine that does not relate to essential Christian doctrine. That is not to say that it is not important, or that there is nothing in the Bible about the end times. What it does say is that even if you get it completely wrong, it does not take you out of the Christian faith.

But how can a person know whether or not they are getting it wrong? Well, as a bottom line statement, it is impossible to definitively know the answer to that. You see, while every view of eschatology uses the Bible to support its position, the Bible is actually not the bottom line authority for the various points of view. People who promote their particular approach to eschatological understanding must start with a particular theory of how it works, and from there seek Scripture passages that support their view.

It can hardly be any other way. While the Bible does give definitive explanations on many doctrines, it simply does not give that kind of systematic explanation of last things. As a result, it is left to theologians to find the verses that relate to the topic and try to put them together in a system that seems to make the best sense. There are other biblical doctrines where this same problem exists, and where different Christians (and groups of Christians) come up with very different interpretations – for example, beliefs concerning predestination, tongues, and baptism also fall into this category. This does not mean there is not an

actual right interpretation. It just means that different interpretations are possible, and different groups of people latch on to the various ones. I don't believe we will know exactly how it will go until we reach heaven (and even then there will probably be surprises for everyone when we find out).

The most prominent eschatological theories include Historic Premillennialism, Premillennial Dispensationalism, Amillennialism, and Postmillennialism. While many people are very attached to their particular preference, and will argue for it quite vigorously, certainly no true Christian would go so far as to say that people who hold other views are not Christians. Whether or not a person is an actual believer in Christ is determined on an entirely different basis. In fact, most would even admit that it is possible that a different eschatological view, besides their preferred one, could be correct, and that, in the end, no one truly knows.

As this is one of the more prominent disputes within the Christian community, for the sake of better fellowship, it seems like a good idea to lay out the various points of view so that, at the very least, we can understand one another better.

The word "millennium" means 1000 years and, in a biblical context as it relates to end times, comes out of the twentieth chapter of Revelation. What is found there is:

- Revelation 20:1-3 - Satan is bound for 1000 years.
- Revelation 20:4-6 - Martyrs reign with Christ for 1000 years.
- Revelation 20:7-10 - Satan is released after 1000 years.

Permission to Reprint

If you wish to reprint this article in your own print or electronic newsletter, please include the following text:

*Reprinted from **Worldview Made Practical**; a free e-zine produced by **MarketFaith Ministries** featuring practical teaching and life tools to help Christians become more effective in their faith life. Discover **MarketFaith Ministries** at www.marketfaith.org.*

Speaking Schedule

If you are interested in having Freddy Davis or Tal Davis present one of our **Worldview Seminars** or to share about worldview and its practical implications at your church or organization, please contact **MarketFaith Ministries** to schedule your event. All contact information is at the bottom of this e-zine.

Worldview Resources

It is one of the primary purposes of **MarketFaith Ministries** to provide resources to help Christians understand the practical implications of worldview. You can find many free resources that will help you in your quest at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

There are also other places in the Bible where the idea of 1000 years is mentioned, but each of those have an entirely different context with no relation to the concept of eschatology. It is strictly from this one chapter in Revelation that the term millennium emerges as it relates to end times. Looking only at these verses, it is clear that there is no systematic eschatological explanation as it relates to the millennium.

There are other places in Scripture, of course, where last things are discussed. Some of these places discuss the concept explicitly. There are other places where terminology is used that seems to tie in with vocabulary associated with eschatological teachings, though not stated explicitly.

In order to create a systematic theology of eschatology, various theologians have tried to find all of the verses in Scripture that seem to relate to the topic, combine them together, and form a storyline that seems to correspond to what is taught in the verses they believe deal with the topic.

The problem that has emerged, though, is that it is possible to take the various verses and weave them into more than one storyline. And this is exactly what has happened that has resulted in the various eschatological views that now exist.

In order to organize the thoughts of this article in a way that makes it easy to compare and contrast the various points of view, we will explain each of them using three categories.

- Definition and Explanation
- Underlying philosophy
- Storyline

In this part 1, we will look at Historic Premillennialism and Premillennial

Dispensationalism. Part 2 will cover Amillennialism and Postmillennialism.

Historic Premillennialism

Historic, or Classic, Premillennialism was, perhaps, the first attempt to develop a systematic approach to a millennium. It is called "historic" because this was, seemingly, the first systematic effort to develop an eschatological doctrine using the millennial concept, and was held by many of the early church fathers.

Definition and Explanation

Historic Premillennialism is the belief that there is a literal one thousand year period during which time Christ will return to earth and reign as earth's king. Based on this version of eschatology, believers from all the ages are considered part of a single group, and are revealed as the body of Christ (as opposed to Dispensational Premillennialism where Israel and the Church are considered separately). Historic Premillennialism is, generally, post-tribulational, meaning that they believe the rapture of the church will occur after a period of tribulation.

Historic Premillennialism teaches that Old Testament prophecy envisioned the emergence of the church as an age of grace. This is believed to be most vividly expressed in the prophecies about the coming of the Messiah.

This view expects a second coming of Christ but does not envision other epochs of history. It teaches essentially that at God's appointed time, the Antichrist will appear on earth and inaugurate a seven-year period of tribulation. The tribulation will then be followed by the rapture and the return of Jesus to earth, along with His church, where He will rule as king for a thousand years. This millennial rule will be characterized as a time of peace when all will live under the authority of Christ. After the millennium, Historic Premillennialists believe Satan will be loosed and allowed one last attempt to rally the

Subscription Information SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE:

A subscription to **Worldview Made Practical** is complementary for anyone interested in receiving it. If you received this email as a forward from a family member or a friend and wish to subscribe for yourself, you may do so at www.marketfaith.org. If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, simply follow the instructions found at the bottom of each edition.

Contact Information

If you wish to contact us directly, you may do so by the following methods:

321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312

E-mail:

info@marketfaith.org

Phone: 850-383-9756 (Tallahassee, Florida)

Fax: 850-514-4571

You can order our products and examine our services at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

This issue of **Worldview Made Practical** is a production of **MarketFaith Ministries**, © 2022. All rights reserved.

nations in battle against Christ. With that, Gog and Magog will rise against the kingdom of God and initiate a brief, final battle where Satan will be permanently conquered. This battle will be immediately followed by the final judgment. At that point, the great white throne will descend followed by a general resurrection of all people who ever lived, and everyone will be judged. After that, God will create a new heaven and new earth where He will dwell with His people for eternity in the New Jerusalem.

Underlying Philosophy

One of the important features of Historic Premillennialism has to do with the hermeneutical approach of its adherents. It favors a grammatico-historical approach to biblical interpretation in which interpreters seek to discover the original intended meaning of the biblical authors in the text.

Historic Premillennialism also holds to the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of the Bible. Based on this belief, adherents are convinced of the future fulfillment of prophecy – especially a literal, visible, glorious, and victorious return of Christ to Earth. That said, as they interpret Scripture, Historical Premillennialists do view some prophecies in Scripture as having a literal fulfillment, while others must be interpreted using a more symbolic approach. This distinction is made based on context and the distinct features of their millennial philosophy.

A second important principle in Historic Premillennialism has to do with the identity of Israel and the church. Dispensationalism clearly differentiates the church and Israel and proposes that the nation of Israel will have a special place in God's kingdom. In opposition to that, Historic Premillennialism sees the church as the fulfillment of Israel – there is no separate distinction. The church is,

literally, the new Israel. They don't see a need for a pretribulation rapture because the new covenant makes all believers in Jesus the spiritual descendants of Abraham (the true Israel) and, therefore, covenant members of the people of God (Rom. 11:1-24; Eph. 2:11-22; Gal. 3:28-29).

A third underlying concept relates to the Kingdom of God. Historic Premillennialists assert that God's Kingdom was established after Christ's resurrection and ascension, and has been present in this world through the Spirit since Pentecost, though not yet fully realized on Earth. They believe that we now live between "this age" and the "age to come" in that the Kingdom is already a reality, but not yet fully consummated. They believe this current spiritual presence will be replaced by a physical kingdom after Christ's return during the period of the millennium.

Another key concept of Historic Premillennialism relates to the rapture. According to this view, the saints (all believers throughout the ages) shall meet the Lord in the clouds immediately preceding His millennial reign.

A final key principle involves the millennium itself. Historic Premillennialists believe that during Christ's one thousand-year reign on Earth, temple worship and sacrifice will be re-established as a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice.

Storyline

The historical premillennial storyline is as follows:

1. Christ's death.
2. Tribulation (from Christ's death until the second coming).
3. The rise of Anti-Christ, and persecution of the Church (the great tribulation).
4. The return of Christ at the end of the age.

5. The resurrection of all believers who have died and the simultaneous rapture of the living saints.
6. The institution of the millennial kingdom.
7. The loosing of Satan and the final revolt of the unbelieving at the end of the millennium.
8. The resurrection of the wicked and the final judgment.
9. The eternal state in the new heavens and the new earth.

Premillennial Dispensationalism

Premillennial Dispensationalism is an approach to understanding the end times that breaks history down into various time periods. Additionally, it has its own particular underlying theology.

Definition and Explanation

While Historic Premillennialism is the oldest millennial theory, Premillennial Dispensationalism is the newest. This version came to the United States following the Civil War after having gained a footing in Britain among the Plymouth Brethren. Brethren leader and former Anglican priest John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) came up with this novel new millennial theory around 1830.

Darby's approach identified dispensations (time periods) using Scripture by asserting changes in God's method of dealing with mankind – particularly as it related to sin and man's responsibility. According to dispensationalism, each age of God's plan is administered in a certain way, and humanity is responsible to serve as God's steward during the dispensation they live in. C. I. Scofield later popularized Darby's system in America.

Over the years, dispensationalists have disagreed over the number and names of the various time periods, and the timing of the tribulation. Various adherents have promoted systems that ranged between three and seven (or eight) dispensations. Those in America have mostly followed Scofield's seven-fold approach.

Underlying Philosophy

Dispensationalism, in its essence, is a system for interpreting the Bible based on a strictly literal translation of certain passages assumed to pertain to the end times. Dispensationalists begin with the presupposition that throughout biblical history, God has acted progressively toward mankind in the different dispensations – each period giving more insight concerning God's self-revelation and His plan of salvation.

Dispensationalism asserts that the church, as it emerged in the New Testament, is not even conceived of by the Old Testament prophets. It is believed that God's desire was that the Jews in the Old Testament period would accept God's kingdom. When they rejected it, however, the church age was introduced by God as a means of overcoming that rejection.

Importantly, dispensational eschatology views the church and Israel as two distinct identities with two completely different redemptive plans. Using this approach, it is believed that God's redemptive plan for national Israel is distinct from His redemptive plan for the Gentiles.

Storyline

Dispensational Premillennialism promotes a view that there will be a seven-year tribulation period (foreseen in Daniel 9:27) followed by a thousand-year period (Revelation 20:1-6) during which time Christ will reign on the throne of David (Luke 1:32).

Immediately prior to the great tribulation, they believe that all the dead saints will rise from their graves and all living believers will be caught up with them to meet Christ in the clouds in what is called "the rapture" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). Following the rapture, there will be a three-and-a-half year period of world peace under the Antichrist (see Daniel 7:8 and Revelation 13:1-8) who will establish himself as one to be worshiped (Revelation 17:1-15). Following the 3½ years of peace, there will be another 3½ years of greater suffering (Revelation 6-18). At the end of that period, Christ will return (Matthew 24:27-31; Revelation 19:11-21), judge the world (Ezekiel 20:33-38; Matthew 25:31; Jude 1:14-15), bind Satan for one thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3), and raise the Old Testament and tribulation saints from the dead (Daniel 12:2; Revelation 20:4).

During that one thousand year period, Christ will reign politically over the earth from His capital in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3). Throughout His reign, there will be no war (Isaiah 2:4) and even the animals will dwell in harmony (Isaiah 11:6-9).

At the end of this thousand year era of peace, Dispensational Premillennialists believe Satan will be released and initiate a massive rebellion against God. (Revelation 20:7-9). With his ultimate defeat, Satan and the wicked will then be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10), while the righteous will move on to their eternal state in the new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21:1ff).

Dispensational Schemes

The number of dispensations vary from three to eight according to different schemes that have been offered.

Three Dispensational Scheme

1. Freedom - The period before the Fall.
- 2a. Grace - The period of God's grace through the giving of the Law.
- 2b. Grace - The period of God's grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
3. Kingdom - The period of God's rule in eternity.

Four Dispensational Scheme

1. Patriarchal - From the creation through the period of the patriarchs.
2. Mosaic - The period of the Law after God gave the Law through Moses.
3. Ecclesial - The period of the church following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
4. Zionist - The period of God's kingship after Christ's return.

Seven Dispensational Scheme - This is the more popular and well known scheme in America based on Scofield's ideas.

1. Innocence - Adam prior to the Fall of Man. This dispensation ends with Adam and Eve being expelled from the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3. This is also sometimes referred to as the Adamic period, the dispensation of the Adamic covenant, or Adamic law.
2. Conscience - From the Fall to the Great Flood. This dispensation ends with the worldwide flood in which Noah builds the ark and saves life on earth.
3. Human Government - After the Great Flood, God gives humanity the responsibility of governing human affairs – symbolized by the enacting of the death penalty. This dispensation ends with the dispersion of mankind throughout the world based on what happened at the Tower of Babel. Some use the term Noahide law to designate this period.
4. Promise - From Abraham to Moses. This dispensation ends with Israel's refusal to enter Canaan and the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. It is also sometimes called Abrahamic law or Abrahamic covenant.
5. Law - From Moses to the crucifixion of Christ. This dispensation ends when Israel is scattered throughout the world in 70 AD, and sometimes referred to as Mosaic law.
6. Grace - From the cross to the rapture of the church. This dispensation is also referred to as the Age of Grace or the Church Age. It ends with the rapture followed by the Great Tribulation. This represents the dispensation that currently exists.

Would You Consider Supporting Us?

Would you consider financial support for **MarketFaith Ministries**? I feel confident that what we are doing is consistent with your beliefs about spreading the gospel and equipping the saints for ministry. Would you let us be one element of your hands and feet in this process? **MarketFaith Ministries** is a 501 (c) (3) not for profit corporation, so your contributions are tax deductible. If you would consider this we would be very grateful. Also, if you would like to know more about the ministry, it would be my pleasure to share with you personally what we are working on and how you can plug in. I can be reached at 850-383-9756 or by e-mail at Freddy@marketfaith.org. As for any donations, they may be sent directly to **MarketFaith Ministries** at 321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312, or you can contribute through our secure website at www.marketfaith.org. Simply click on the "Donate" button at the bottom of the homepage. We are deeply grateful for your support of this ministry.

And, as always, if you have any thoughts, opinions or suggestions about how **MarketFaith Ministries** can help you, please feel free, at any time, to call (850-383-9756) or e-mail (info@marketfaith.org). We are here to serve you.

7. Millennial Kingdom - The seventh and final dispensation is characterized by Christ's 1000 year reign on earth (Revelation 20:1–6) from his throne in Jerusalem. It ends with a final rebellion by Satan in which he is defeated and sent, along with all unbelievers, to eternal condemnation in Hell.

* 8. Eternal State - Some dispensationalists add an eighth dispensation in which believers are transported to live eternally in the new heavens and new earth. Others combine this one with number seven.

In part 2, we will continue this study by looking at Amillennialism and Postmillennialism.