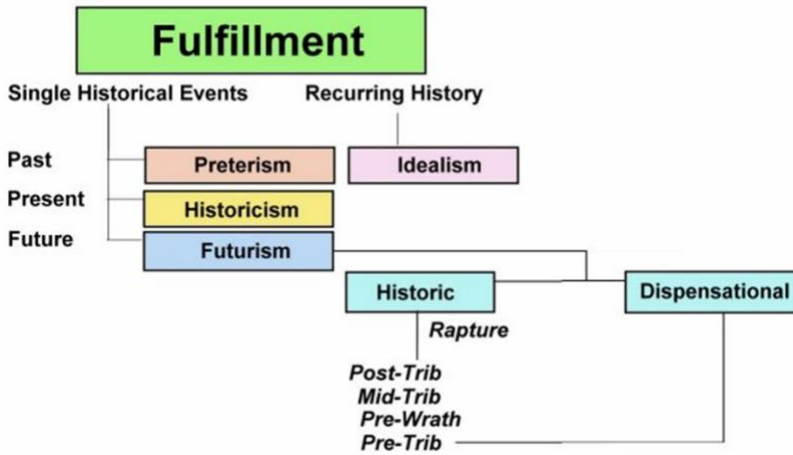
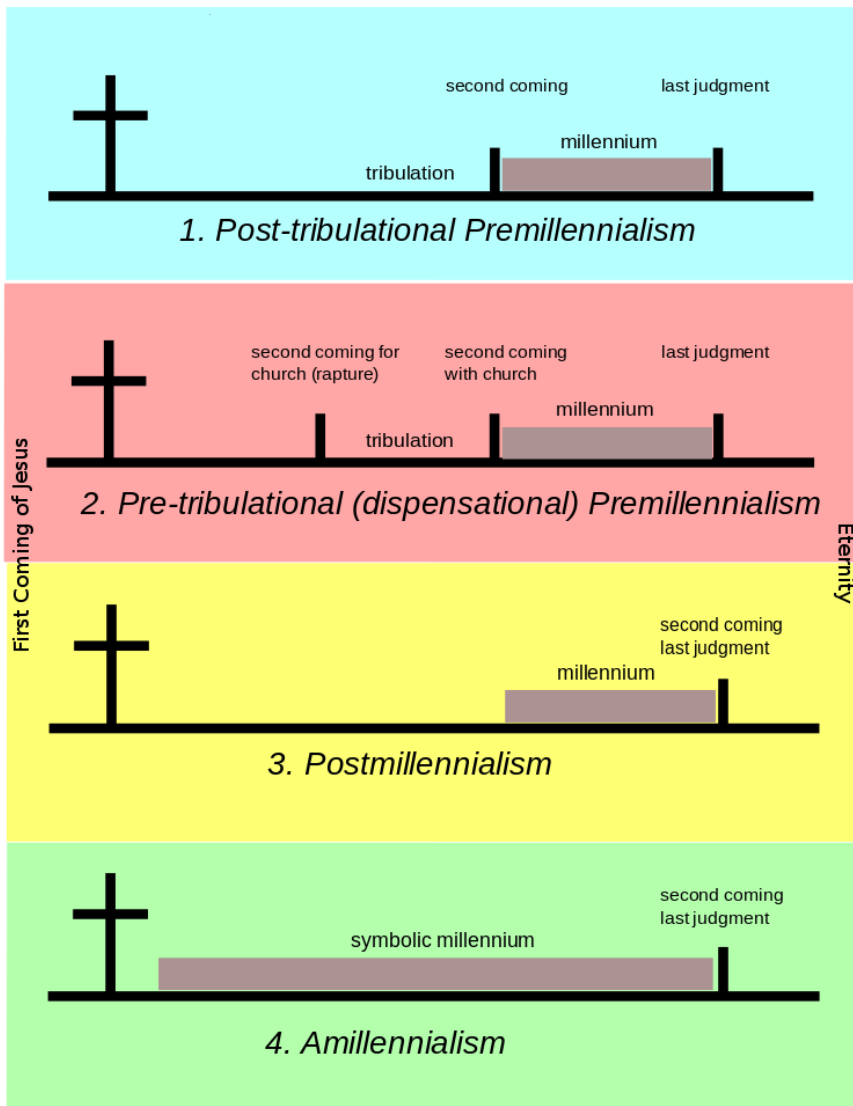


Different Views of Eschatology



Comparison of Christian millennial teachings





1. Revelation is the most “Biblical” book in the Bible.

John quotes from hundreds of passages in the OT often with subtle allusions to religious rituals of the Hebrew people. (There is Levitical symbolism in Revelation.)
 In order to truly understand Revelation, we have to know the OT which is the background of so much of what John has to say.

2. Revelation has a system of symbolism.

Everyone recognizes John’s heavy use of symbols.
 In order to understand Revelation, we must look for the biblical context in which to understand and know the meaning of these symbols.

3. Revelation is a prophecy about imminent events (not necessarily immediate events).

However, it is not about nuclear warfare, space travel, or computer technology.
 Over and over John specifically warns that “the time is near.”

The fact that revelation was written in and around the time that Jerusalem was destroyed in 70AD is extremely important.

4. Revelation is about more about heavenly worship and less about prophecy.

One of John’s major concerns is that the worship of God is central to everything in life.

We will discover that they are quite a few liturgical aspects of Revelation that have implications for our worship today.

5. Revelation is a book about Christ's Lordship.

Revelation is not a book about how terrible the Antichrist, or how powerful the devil is—it is about the authority and dominion of Jesus Christ.

(Rev 1:1-6) The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, ² who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. ³ Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near. ⁴ John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood-- ⁶ and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father-- to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

6. Revelation, like so much of the New Testament is a letter written to specific people, in a specific place, living under specific conditions.

As such, Revelation was written to reveal to a suffering church the wonder and glory of Jesus Christ. Because they were being persecuted the early Christians could be tempted to fear that the world was getting out of hand ... beyond the control of God.

John's primary concern was to strengthen the Christian community and their faith in the Lordship of Jesus Christ...

... to make them aware that their suffering was an indication that Christ was king.

... If Jesus' Lordship was unimportant the ungodly would have had no reason to bother Christians.

The world's persecution of believers showed the world's unwillingness to recognize supremacy of Christ over all them.

... Jesus on a white horse, doing battle with the nations and kingdom of darkness, showed the persecuted Christians they were not forsaken by God.

Now consider: Here in the first paragraph John makes it clear that his letter is intended for the 7 churches in Asia ... I assume he was being truthful.

So, John clearly expected that even the most difficult symbols in the prophecy could be understood by his 1st century readers.

There is no indication anywhere in the book that John's primary audience was the 21st century audience. This being true we then know several things:

- The general tone of the book has to do with martyrs (6:9; 7:14; 12:11).
- Even though it is a "revelation" John would have written it in a way that his readers could understand what was being written.
- A letter from John, to minister faith and comfort, would deal with matters, issues, and concepts which the audience was involved.

In Revelation 22:10 John writes something that is very interesting.

(Rev 22:10) ¹⁰ And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

This statement (made by an angel) is in contrast to a command that Daniel received when he was told to, "Conceal, the words and seal up the book until the time of the end." (Dan. 12:4)

John was told to NOT seal up and he was told this for a reason... "The time is near."

So, what is Revelation???

Let's begin by looking more closely at author and time of writing.

John, the beloved disciple, author of the gospel of John, is also the author of the Revelation so this identity informs us in regards to author's perspective.

1. There are several biblical indications that John was a priest and came from the high priest's family.

¹⁵ Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple [John] was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest, ¹⁶ but Peter was standing at the door outside. So, the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in. (John 18:15-16)

2. There are numerous references in both the Gospel and Revelation that reveal the author's unusual familiarity with the details of the temple as well as temple worship.

Alfred Edersheim in his book *"The Temple: Its ministry and Services as They Were at the Time of Christ"* writes this:

"...It is specially remarkable, that the Temple references with which the book of Revelation abounds are generally to minutiae. A writer who had not been as familiar with such details (as only personal contact and engagement with them could have rendered him) would scarcely have even noticed, certainly not employed as part of his imagery."

IMPORTANT: John's intimate acquaintance with the minute details of Temple worship (and the expectation of his reader's understanding) indicate that the book of the Revelation as well as the fourth gospel must have been written before Temple services had actually ceased.

3. Temple worship ceased in September of 70AD when Titus led the Romans to sack the city of Jerusalem and destroy the temple... this is important.

The Word of God tells us exactly when special revelation would cease...

... by special revelation I am referring to what Paul is talking about in 2 Tim. 3:16 when he writes that "all scripture is inspired by God etc.

Listen to what the angel Gabriel told the prophet Daniel...

(Dan. 9:24-26)²⁴ "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. ²⁵ "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. ²⁶ "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

In a nutshell the Canon of Holy Scripture was entirely completed before Jerusalem fell.

In the 4th century some of the churches were using and preaching from books and letters written 2 and 3 hundred years after Jesus so around the end of the 4th century all churches met to talk about what was and was not part of the bible.

... one of those bishops was a man named Athanasius.

“When did prophet and vision cease from Israel? Was it not when Christ came, the Holy One of holies. It is, in fact, a sign and notable proof of the coming of the Word that Jerusalem no longer stands, neither is prophet raised up nor vision revealed among them. So, of course, once the Holy One had come, both vision and prophecy were sealed and the kingdom of Jerusalem ceased ... The plain fact is, as I say, that there is no longer any king or prophet nor Jerusalem nor sacrifice nor vision among them; yet the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of God.”

The death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ marked the end of the Old Covenant and the beginning of the New Covenant...

...The Apostles were commissioned to deliver Christ’s message in the form of the New Testament and when they were finished God sent the Edomites and the Roman armies to destroy utterly the last remaining symbols of the Old Covenant—the Temple and the Holy City...

... This fact alone is enough to establish the writing of Revelation as taking place before A.D. 70.

So, Revelation was written by John the disciple before A.D. 70

What is it??

Allow me to begin with an obvious statement: The book of Revelation is part of the Bible.

Recognizing that Revelation is a biblical document forces us to ask the obvious question: What is the Bible?

The bible is a book about the revelation of God and the covenant that He has made with humanity.

In the Old Testament it was clear that God had made a covenant with Israel...

I use the term “covenant” because I want you to see the legal nature of God’s relationship with man.

(Col. 2:13-14)¹³ When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴ having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Allow me to explain how the covenant worked.

“After a war, the victorious king would make a covenant with his defeated foe, making certain promises and guaranteeing protection on condition that the vassal-king and all under his authority would obey their new lord. Both lord and vassal would swear an oath, and they would thenceforth be united in covenant.” [David Chilton, Day of Vengeance p. 69]

The covenant usually consisted of:

- **Preamble** identifying the lordship of the king stressing his greatness, power, nearness and presence.
- **Historical Prologue** recounts the history of the king’s relationship with the vassal reminding him of the lord’s authority and faithfulness and the blessings the vassal has received from the king.
- **Ethical Stipulations** explaining the vassal’s obligations to the king.
- **Sanctions** outlined the blessings for obedience and the judgment/curses for disobedience.
- **Succession Arrangements** showing the continuity for the continuing relationship over future generations.

This is called a covenant. In fact, this exactly how Deuteronomy is organized because Deuteronomy is the covenant that God made with Israel.

Deuteronomy

- Preamble 1:1-5
- Historical Prologue (1:6-4:49)
- Ethical Stipulations (5:1-26:19)
- Sanctions (27:1-30:20)
- Succession Arrangements (31:1-34:12)

Now if the nation of vassals violated the terms of the covenant the king would send a letter or messengers to the vassals warning the disobedient offenders of coming punishment in which the judgments and curses of the covenant would be enforced.

This letter/message of warning was called a **Covenant Lawsuit**.

In every case this was the function of the Old Testament prophets...

... they were God's prosecuting attorneys bringing God's covenant lawsuit to the offending nations of Israel and Judah.

The Structure of the Covenant Lawsuit was always patterned after the original structure of the covenant.

So, if you look at HOSEA you will see the same outline as Deuteronomy.

I say all of that to make this point...

... It seems that the book of Revelation is a prophecy of Covenant punishment against Israel specifically and against all humanity generally.

God's relationship with Abraham's children has always been defined in terms of the Covenant, the marriage bond by which God joined Abraham's children to Himself as His special people.

The part that we miss is that Abraham's children are not defined by those who came from Abraham's loins.

This is what we learned in our recent study in Romans.

Ishmael and the children of Keturah came from that fountain but only Isaac was the promised son. Jacob and Esau both came from that fountain but only Jacob did God love.

Israel as a nation has disobeyed God and Humanity has disobeyed God... This is what Revelation is about.

Big Point Outline of Revelation

1. Preamble: Vision of the Son of Man (1)
2. Historical Prologue: The Seven Letters (2-3)
3. Ethical Stipulations: The Seven Seals (4-7)
4. Sanctions: The Seven Trumpets (8-14)
5. Succession Arrangements: The Seven Chalices (15-22)

As far as Israel is concerned the Great Tribulation was the holocaust and destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 when temple worship was ended forever.