

What are the end time views of most evangelicals today and how does this influence their political aspirations?

Millennialism

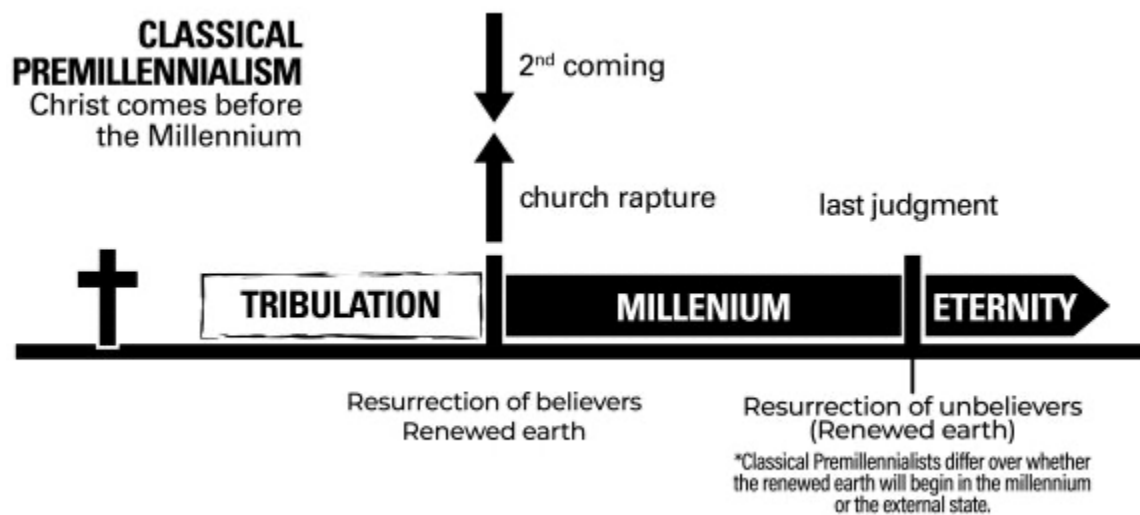
There are three primary millennial views of eschatology:

1. Premillennial
2. Postmillennial
3. Amillennial

Premillennial

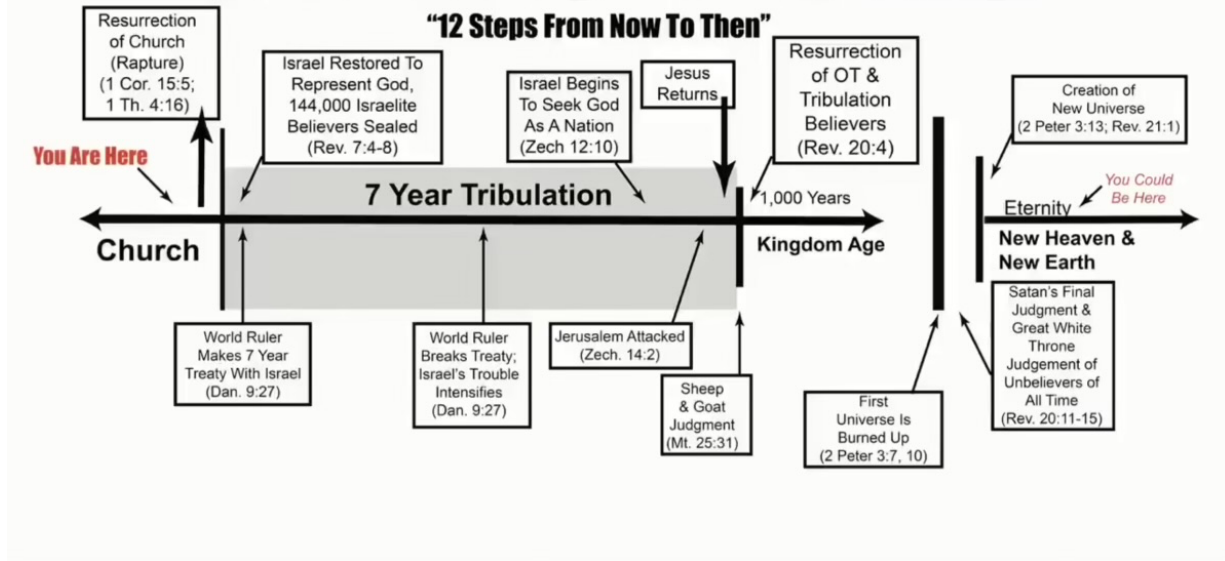
Premillennialists can be divided into two groups: Classic (or Historical) and Dispensational.

Classic premillennialists believe that when Jesus returns, He will establish His kingdom upon the earth for 1,000 years (which may be symbolic or literal). They are post-tribulation adherents and do not hold to the idea that there will be a secret rapture before the great tribulation. This historical perspective understands the people of God to be the church, meaning that the promises God made to national Israel will be fulfilled with the church both before and after the second coming. Some classic premillennialists also say there will be a revival amongst the Jews just before the Lord's return.



According to Dispensational premillennialists, Christ's arrival will not simultaneously herald the end of death and usher in the new heavens and new earth. Instead, unbelieving men and women will have a second opportunity to come to Christ during a tribulation period after a secret rapture of the church. They are pre-tribulation adherents, distinguishing the rapture of the church and Jesus' second coming as two separate events. This premillennialist view puts a lot of stress on national Israel, which they believe remains the remnant people of God. All the promises made to national Israel will be literally fulfilled. About two-thirds of evangelical leaders believe in dispensational premillennialism.

From Today To Eternity:



NOTE: Millennial fever is the catalyst for today's neo-prophets. The futurist methodology of interpretation (see below) is the primary cause of all the attention on Israel and the millennial reign of Christ on earth.

Postmillennial

Postmillennialists believe in a symbolic 1,000 years. They do believe that the world will become gradually worse before the return of Christ. Since the Bible speaks of the Millennium as a time of great prosperity for the kingdom of God, they are inherently optimistic. The world, as they see it, is about to go through a golden process of progress.

Along with this they anticipate an explosion of belief immediately before God removes the limits to Satan's power. Eventually, peace will come as people choose to live by God's commands and are rewarded with greater prosperity. Those who hold to this view are few in number today due to the growing strife the world has been suffering through over the past century.

Amillennial

Amillennialists mean "no millennium." They believe there is a present reign of the souls of deceased believers with Christ in heaven that is ongoing today. This is obviously not a literal thousand years since Christians have been living in the millennial kingdom for roughly two thousand years. Christ will not establish a 1,000-year reign on the earth after His second coming because that even brings the new heaven and new earth. They do not believe that there will be a secret rapture.

Methods of Prophetic Interpretation

Before you study prophecy, you must choose a methodology. Each is completely incompatible with the others.

Every self-proclaimed teacher of prophecy has a methodology. Scholarly ability means nothing; what matters is whether the method of interpretation is biblical.

Preterism – Prophecy was fulfilled during the first century.

- Spanish Jesuit theologian, Luis del Alcázar.
- Prophecy was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, and Roman persecution of Christians up to the early fourth century.
- The Antichrist was Antiochus IV (Epiphanes).
 - He achieved nothing in his battles. He was humiliated and forced to swear allegiance to Rome (tucking his tail between his legs). He doesn't fit the description of the little horn that rose up after a divided Rome.
- The mark of the beast doesn't matter because it's past history.

Futurism – Prophecies in the book of Revelation, have yet to be fulfilled.

- Spanish Jesuit theologian, Francisco Ribera. In 1585, during the counter-reformation period, he wrote a commentary on the Book of Revelation espousing these futurist views.
- Manuel de Lacunza was a Jesuit priest in the mid to late 1700s who wrote under the pseudonym Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra. He taught the idea of a 1000-year reign of Jesus on earth and the establishment of new society of justice and peace.
- Edward Irving was the main figure behind the foundation of the Catholic Apostolic Church. He translated Lacunza's work into English, which was published in 1827.
- These ideas gained momentum through the influence of John Nelson Darby in the 19th Century; popularized by Hal Lindsey in *The Late Great Planet Earth*, and Jerry Jenkins and Tim LaHaye, co-authors of the *Left Behind* series. Cyrus Scofield advanced this method of interpretation through his popular Scofield Reference Bible.
- Became complimentary with dispensational theology.
- Prophecy is mostly literal; as are time prophecies.
- The Antichrist will appear in the future in the middle of a seven-year tribulation after the church is secretly raptured to heaven.
- The mark of the beast is guesswork: tattoo, credit card, implanted chip, Covid vaccine, etc.; newspaper interpretation.

NOTE: Futurism has grown to become the most popular, especially over the last two hundred years.

Idealism – The central concept is that the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation do not point to any specific thing.

- Prophecies are merely allegorical.
- Foretell no actual events.
- Give us stories from which to draw spiritual lessons.

Historicism – Prophetic fulfillment is observed through sequential events that unfold over time.

- Historicism has its roots long before the Reformers and Protestants widely adopted it. These include John Wycliffe, John Knox, William Tyndale, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, Philip Melancthon, Isaac Newton, Jan Hus, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, C. H. Spurgeon, and Matthew Henry.
- Method is endorsed by Scripture itself.
- Prophecy has a chronology that is anchored in history and extends *unbroken* down to the end.
- Highly symbolic [**IMPORTANT**]; interpreted by the Bible itself.
- Use of prophetic time; day = year principle.
- The Antichrist has been present through history.

- The mark of the beast is related to false worship.

NOTE: The benefit of historicism is that it can be verified by history; we have the benefit of hindsight, which in turn gives us foresight.

Chronology of Futurist-Dispensationalist Interpretation

Futurist-Dispensationalist interpretation also holds to a premillennialist view of eschatology.

Here is the futurist-dispensationalist general chronology of end-time events:

1. Signs of the coming of Christ (wars, strife, disasters, economic collapse, etc.).
2. Pre-tribulation rapture of the church, living and resurrected saints (described in 1 Thess 4).
3. Seven years of tribulation (found in the last week of the seventy-week prophecy in Dan 9):
 - a. Calamity, lawlessness, creating a need for one-world government.
 - b. Antichrist appears for form that government.
 - c. After 3.5 years, he breaks a covenant with the Jewish nation and becomes their enemy.
 - d. The global government under the Antichrist establishes a single world religion and forces unified worship.
 - e. Everyone who worships the beast receives a mark on the right hand or forehead.
 - f. Everyone who does not will be threatened with death; some killed.
 - g. 144,000 Jewish men will preach the true gospel to warn the world.
 - h. Many Jews accept Jesus as the Messiah; many non-Jews believe.

NOTE: At the end of the seven years of tribulation, the Battle of Armageddon will take place where Israel come under assault by the combined forces of the world under the leadership of the antichrist.

4. Jesus returns to earth with all His saints in the second coming. He comes to save Israel and additional believers from the global forces aligned against it.
5. The church then reigns with Jesus over the nations of the world for a thousand years. National Israel has a functional role in this leadership as well.

There is considerable disagreement on the details among those who believe this general futurist-dispensationalist view of the last days.