

Comparison Of Four Eschatological Positions

By Nate Wilson

NOTE: The distinctions are often not as clear-cut between positions as this chart may make it appear. There really is a whole spectrum, especially if you take into account the fact that there are different camps within each millennial position. For instance, within the Dispensational camp, there are major differences, and the Progressive camp of Dispensationalists may be closer to the Historic PreMil. position on this chart than to the Dispensational PreMil. as represented on this chart. Sources: Lectures from Dr. Dwight F. Zeller, Sangre de Cristo Seminary and the book *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, edited by Robert G. Clouse (IVP 1977).

	Dispensational Premillennialism	Historic/Covenant Premillennialism	Amillennialism	Postmillennialism
Overview	"A golden age of civilization...as described in the Bible...a millennial kingdom will be ushered in by a divine, supernatural and catastrophic manifestation from heaven at the Second	"After the Second coming of Christ, he will reign for a thousand years over the earth before the final consummation of God's redemptive purpose in the new heavens and the new earth of the age to come." G.E. Ladd	"...amillennialists do not believe in a literal thousand-year reign which will follow the return of Christ... the millennium of Revelation 20 is not exclusively future, but is now in the process of realization." A.A.	"..the kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals... the world eventually is to be Christianized and the return of Christ is to occur at the close of a long period of

	coming of Christ....when the conditions of life have reached the depths of great tribulation." H.A. Hoyt		Hoekema	righteousness and peace, commonly called the millenium." L. Boettner
Key Bible Verse(s)	Dispensationalism provides a Comprehensive view of the whole Bible	Rev. 20:1-6--two resurrections	No particular emphasis	Matt. 28:18ff--the whole earth must be discipled Matt. 16:18--church must be triumphant over gates of hell
Hermeneutics	Whole Bible is divided into 7 dispensations/time periods in which God acts in different ways toward man. Interpretation must be literal whenever possible Interpret the New Testament by the Old Testament.	<input type="checkbox"/> "Natural reading" of Revelation <input type="checkbox"/> Context determines whether literal or figurative <input type="checkbox"/> Interpret the Old Testament by the New Testament (Hos. 1:9/Rom 9:25-26, Jer.31:33ff/Heb. 8) <input type="checkbox"/> Millennium must be Christ-Centered	<input type="checkbox"/> Progressive Parrallellism in Revelation (Earth's history repeated 7 times) OR Pretoristic: interpret in terms of meaning to 1st century church--reassurance of Christ's victory over Roman persecutors. <input type="checkbox"/> Context determines whether literal or figurative <input type="checkbox"/> Interpret the Old Testament by the New Testament.	Revelation either mostly figurative or mostly fulfilled in 70ad (Mt. 24:34) Context determines whether literal or figurative Interpret the Old Testament by the New Testament.
History	Dispensationalism Espoused by Darby	Early church chialists (incl. Iraenus and Justin Martyr)	Figurative thousand years embraced by E.	Tychonius (350ad) was early proponent; existed side-by-

	<p>and the Brethren movement beginning in mid-1800's. Continues in Bible School movement and Annotated Bibles (Scofield, Revised Scofield, and Ryrie). Three schools: Classical, Moderate, and Progressive. For a history of Premillennialism, see Historic Premil. History section.</p>	<p>believed in a literal earthly Premillennial reign, but generally abandoned by 400ad. Picked up by Anabaptists in 16th century Reformation</p>	<p>Orthodox church (under Origen's influence), later Espoused by Augustine and embraced by Western church by 400ad. Held by Roman Catholic church as well as by Reformers, and written into the Augsburg and Westminster Confessions..</p>	<p>side with a-mil positions in Roman and Reformation streams because differences are relatively small. Popular among non-dispensational evangelicals in the 19th century before the world wars. Three schools: Traditional, Liberal (Social Gospel) and Theonomic</p>
<p>Millennium</p>	<p>Literal Spoken of throughout the Bible (Isa11: 6-9, Isa. 65: 20-25, Amos 9:15, etc.) Has to do with Christ's physical reign on earth before the end. (Obad. 12ff, Is. 2:3, 24:23, 33:17, 52:10, Dan.2:31, Rev. 22:1ff)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> May be literal or figurative <input type="checkbox"/> Mentioned in Rev. 20 & I Cor 15:23-26 <input type="checkbox"/> Has to do with Christ's reign on earth before the end. 	<p>Figurative. Only mentioned in Rev. 20 Has to do with the age of the church between Christ's First and Second coming, in which Christ rules from heaven. We are in the millennial last days (Acts 2:16, 1 Cor. 10:11, I John 2:18)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> May be literal or figurative <input type="checkbox"/> Only mentioned in Rev. 20 <input type="checkbox"/> Has to do with a gradual appearance (Lk.17:20), of a "golden age" of earth's history in which the nations are disciplined in God's ways, until the earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord (Hab. 2:14) and ends with Christ's Second coming.

<p>Rev. 19-20</p>	<p>Necessarily chronological, Enthroned saints are on earth two physical resurrections</p>	<p>Chronological enthroned saints are on earth "angel came down to earth" (20:1) 2 physical resurrections Describes the destruction of the beast, the false prophet, and the devil.</p>	<p>Not necessarily Chronological. Parallelists say break b/w 19 and 20, Pretorists say just a figurative description of Christ being triumphant over enemies. Purpose is to comfort persecuted believers. Saints reign in heaven (In heaven in Rev.6, and thrones are usually in heaven.) "And I saw" indicates a new vision.--20:1-3 is earthly parallel to the heavenly scene in 20:4-6 going on at same time resurrections spiritual ("souls")</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Chronological <input type="checkbox"/> Ch. 19 speaks not of II coming, but of the church between the two advents of Christ <input type="checkbox"/> Saints reign in heaven <input type="checkbox"/> Rev. 20 speaks of Christ's coming and of Church age <input type="checkbox"/> resurrections are spiritual
<p>New Heavens & New Earth</p>	<p>Realized in the earthly millennium with a curse partly lifted. (Is. 65:17) Jewish temple rebuilt along with sacrificial system</p>	<p>Realized after millennial earthly reign is over and end has come</p>	<p>Set up at Christ's second coming, immediately after the resurrection and the judgement (Is. 65:17, 66:22, Rev. 21:1)</p>	

	(Ez.40-48) After millennium is merged with eternal kingdom (I Cor. 15:24ff, Rev. 21:1ff, 22:1ff)		
Resurrection	<p>Approx. 4 Resurrections: Rapture: Christ will make an incomplete appearance and take the Christians to heaven (I Thes. 4:16), sparing them from approximately seven years of severe tribulation on the earth. (Rev. 6-19). These saints are a "Spiritual Aristocracy/Nobility" who will reign with Christ. Rev. 20:4ff) The second resurrection is of tribulation-era saints and O.T. saints at the beginning of the millennium (Rev. 20:4, Is.26:19ff, Dan.</p>	<p>2 Resurrections as per Rev. 20, first of saints before the millennium, then of everyone else after the millennium</p>	<p>1 resurrection of all the dead, as per Jn. 5:28ff & Acts 24:15. "Resurrections" in Rev. 20 are spiritual. The "First resurrection" is the passing of the soul into God's presence, the "second death" is eternal damnation (Rev. 20:14)</p>

	<p>12:1ff) company of saints after the millennium (I Cor. 15:23ff) finally of the wicked (Rev. 20:11ff)</p>			
<p>Judgment</p>	<p>3 judgements: first of the raptured believers (I Cor. 3:13ff) Second of the nations at the beginning of the millennium (Joel 3:2, Matt. 19:28) Lastly of the wicked at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:15)</p>	<p>One judgment at the end Rev. 22:12, Mt. 16:27, 25:31ff, Jude 14ff, II Thes. 1:7ff</p>		
<p>O.T. Prophecy</p>	<p>Speaks of a coming triumphant reign of Christ on earth (I Chron. 17:1ff, II Sam. 7:14). Isa 11: 6- 9, Isa. 65: 20-25, and Amos 9:15 refer to an earthly Jewish millennial kingdom. O.T. Prophecies</p>	<p>O.T. Prophecy doesn't necessarily predict the millennium. N.T. often interprets O.T. prophecies in a way not suggested by O.T. context (Hos. 1:9/Rom 9:25-26, Jer.31:33ff/Heb. 8). Jesus' 1st coming was unexpected by O.T., but his second will be in the</p>	<p>Prophecies like Isa. 11 and 65, and Amos 9:15 refer to the new heavens and new earth. References to Israel and Jerusalem are often taken figuratively</p>	<p>Messianic Jewish kingdom predictions were conditional upon obedience and thus abrogated by Israel's disobedience (Deut. 28, Jer. 18:9ff, Mt. 21:43, Heb. 8:7ff, 1 Thes. 2:16), to be realized through the church or in the new earth. Prophecies such as Zech. 9:10, Isa. 66, and Hab.</p>

	<p>proclaim God's various blessings upon the Jews "forever" (Gen. 17:8, Ex. 40:15, II Sam. 7:13ff)</p>	<p>anticipated power. (Mt. 12:28)</p>		<p>2:14 are speaking of the work of the church in the millennium.</p>
<p>Israel and the Church</p>	<p>Israel is only the physical nation. Rejection of Christ brought a temporary suspension of the Kingdom during which the church is in place (Mt. 13:11). Will be converted during the tribulation and will become preeminent over Gentile believers in the millennial kingdom. (Is. 49:15ff, 60:1ff)</p>	<p>Israel is sometimes the physical nation (Rom. 11:26) and sometimes the church (Rom 9:25-26, 4:11-16, 2:28-29, Gal. 3:7&29, Phil. 3:3) Physical Israel remains the people of God and will be evangelized.</p>	<p>O.T. Israel is the nation N.T. Israel is the Church (Rom 2-4 and Gal 3) The nation of Israel no longer has any spiritual significance.</p>	
<p>Binding of Satan (Rev. 20:2-3)</p>	<p>Satan is rampant now and the world is getting worse and worse. He will be bound when Jesus comes for the millennium.</p>	<p>Satan bound to some extent by Jesus' work on the cross, but not fully until Christ's coming. Satan will be unbound after the millennial reign, after which comes the judgement</p>	<p>Occurred at the Cross. (Col. 2:14) Knowledge of God was mostly within Israel until this time. After the Cross, satan is no longer able to deceive the nations, hence the Gospel can spread to the ends of the earth. (Mt. 12:29, John 12:31ff, Luke 10:17ff)</p>	

		and the end.	
Kingdom	Physical Main theme of the Bible (Gen. 1:26, Ex. 19:5ff, 7:1, Deut. 18:15ff, II Sam. 7:12ff, I Chron. 28:5ff, Is. 9:6ff, Dan. 2:44, 7:13ff, Lk. 1:32ff, Rev. 11:15) Two kingdoms--God's universal kingdom (Ps. 103:19) and the "mediatorial" or dispensational manner of God's rule with men (Dan. 2:44). The millennial kingdom is all future (Hos. 3:4-5, I Cor. 15:24ff, Rev. 22:3)	Christ has already been made Lord (Heb. 1:3, 2:7ff, 10:12ff, Rev. 3:21, Phil. 2:5ff, Acts 2:36), and reigns in heaven, but it will be visibly realized in the future millennial reign (II Thes. 1:7, Tit. 2:13).	Spiritual (Jn. 18:36) Came with Jesus' ministry on earth (Mt. 12:28, Luke 17:20ff) Both present (Mk. 9:1, Rom. 14:17, I Cor. 4:19, Col 1:13) and future (I Cor 6:9, Gal 5:21, Eph. 5:5, IITim. 4:18)
Second Coming of Christ	First a "rapture" appearance (I Thes. 4:13ff), then a full appearance 7 years later to establish an earthly millennial kingdom Rev. 19:7ff)	One appearance to establish an earthly millennial reign	One appearance to judge the earth and establish the new heavens and new earth. (I Cor 15:23-26, Matt. 25:31-46)

Recommended Reading	Scofield Reference Bibles Ryrie Study Bibles The End Times (Hoyt)	Commentary on the Revelation (Ladd)	More than Conquerors (Hendriksen) The Bible & the Future (Hoekema)	The Message from Patmos (Clark) The Millennium (Boettner) Institutes (Rushdoony)
Dangers	over-spiritualize N.T. Arminianism Predicting the date II coming Separatism (from other Believers and from the culture we live in)	<input type="checkbox"/> ?	Over-spiritualize O.T. "Brother-Bashing" Breaking continuity of Revelation with recapitulations	<input type="checkbox"/> Over-spiritualize O.T. <input type="checkbox"/> Lack fervency in world mission
Problems	Not as literal as claim to be Can only be seen if you put on "dispensational glasses" Bible doesn't define tribulation as 7 years Not Christological Ethnically Jewish, inc. sacrifices (Heb. 8:13) Unrealized kingdom (Mt. 12:28)	<input type="checkbox"/> Earthly reign of heavenly saints <input type="checkbox"/> De-emphasizes power of Christ's victory over satan at the cross	2 physical resurrections in Rev. 20	<input type="checkbox"/> evil isn't abating <input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't deal with Rev. 20
AGREEMENT	All positions agree that: 1) The Bible is the word of God, fully inspired and authoritative and			