

End-Times Terminology

Below is a list of some terms that might come up when talking about the end-times. The list is meant as an introduction, and is not at all exhaustive. Definitions are given in a way to take out any editorial bias leaning toward one view or another.

What is Eschatology?

Eschatology is a Christian term that means the study of the end times. Probably more obscure theological text has been written on this topic than on any other belief in Christendom.

Last Days The entire period between the first and second advents of our Lord Jesus Christ. Since Jesus ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives, 40 days after His resurrection, we have been living in the "last days." Eschatology is the body of knowledge concerning the "last things," or the end of the age and the future.

The Book of Revelation The last book of the New Testament is Revelation.

Apokalupsis (Apocalypse) -- Greek word for "revelation," or "unveiling," or "uncovering." The visible appearing of Jesus to the world in full power and splendor. Also refers to the appearance of the antichrist on the stage of history following the rapture (2 Thessalonians 2).



We have a lot of pieces of the puzzle about the last days, but everyone is looking for the exact right key to unlock it all.

The two basic question people are trying to answer are:

- WHAT will happen?
- WHEN will it happen?

WHAT Will Happen?

While many things will happen during the last days, there are three key events:

- Tribulation
- Rapture
- Second Coming

The Tribulation

The Tribulation or Great Tribulation is an intensification of the battle between good and evil in the last days (2 Thess. 2:1–12; Rev. 3:10, 7:14).

It is a period of intense persecution of the Church by evil forces epitomized by the antichrist, and the judgment of those forces by God.



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The Rapture

The actual word, rapture, doesn't appear in the Bible. It is a Latin translation of the Greek word, "caught up" See Thessalonians 4:13-18.

It is an event in which Christians still living on the earth will be "caught up together with them [deceased Christians who have been resurrected] in the clouds to meet the Lord [Christ] in the air"

The rapture contains within it several aspects of expectation, including the hope for the gathering together of God's people, who have been separated by death, geography, or circumstances, and their being united with their Lord (Matt. 24:31; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:16–17) the hope for God's vindication of his people and judgment of their enemies (Luke 18:7–8; 2 Thess. 1:6–10); the hope for unending life (1 Cor. 15:51–56); the expectation of sudden judgment (Matt. 24:36–44); and the hope of the release of the righteous from a troubled world (Rev. 3:10). Myers, A. C. (1987). In The Eerdmans Bible dictionary (p. 873).

The Second Coming

Also known as the Second Advent, is a term used in Christian theology to refer to the anticipated return of Jesus Christ to judge the living and the dead, and to establish God's kingdom in its fullness. It is believed to be a future event that will mark the culmination of human history and the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation. (Matt 24:29-31, Rev 19:11 – 20:15)



What's the difference between the Rapture and Jesus' Second Coming?

The Rapture	The Second Coming
Jesus will return <i>for</i> His saints.	Jesus will return <i>with</i> His saints.
Jesus will bring a <i>blessing</i> for His saints.	Jesus will bring <i>judgment</i> for those who have rejected Him.

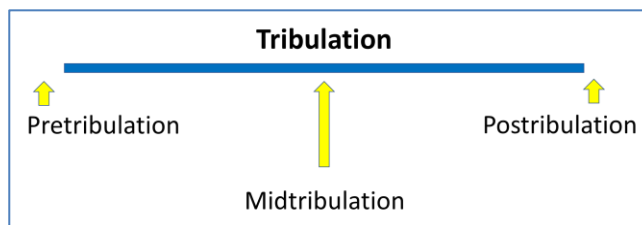
WHEN Will Happen?

There are three main things that will happen:

- Second Coming
- Rapture
- The Millennium

Rapture & Second Coming

There are generally three main views: Pretribulation, Midtribulation, and Posttribulation



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1. **Pretribulation** --. The Rapture happens just before the Tribulation, so that believers will not have to experience any of its disruption and pain.
 - The teaching that Jesus comes for His bride, the true church, at the beginning of the tribulation period. This is the "pretribulation rapture."
2. **Midtribulation** -- The Rapture happens 42 months into the Tribulation.
 - The belief that Jesus raptures the church half-way through the seven-year tribulation period.
3. **Posttribulation** -- The faithful experience the full horrors of the entire Tribulation and are raptured only at the end of the 7 years
 - Belief that Jesus will come for His people at the end of the tribulation period, but prior to the Millennium.

Millennium – 1000 years

The teaching that Christ will literally, physically reign on earth following the present age, for one thousand actual calendar years. This is a literal and plain teaching of Revelation 20:1-6.

There are three main views on WHEN the millennium will happen.

Premillennial -- The belief that Christ returns visibly and bodily at the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth. He will rule the nations from Jerusalem. God will resume salvation work for Israel as a nation immediately after the departure or "rapture" of the true church.

Postmillennial -- The belief that Christ will return at the end of the present age to take over the earth. Meantime, He is assumed to reign on earth through the church now. Postmillennialists do not necessarily believe in a literal millennial age. Satan was defeated at the cross and is now bound, hence the final triumph of the church in history is assured.

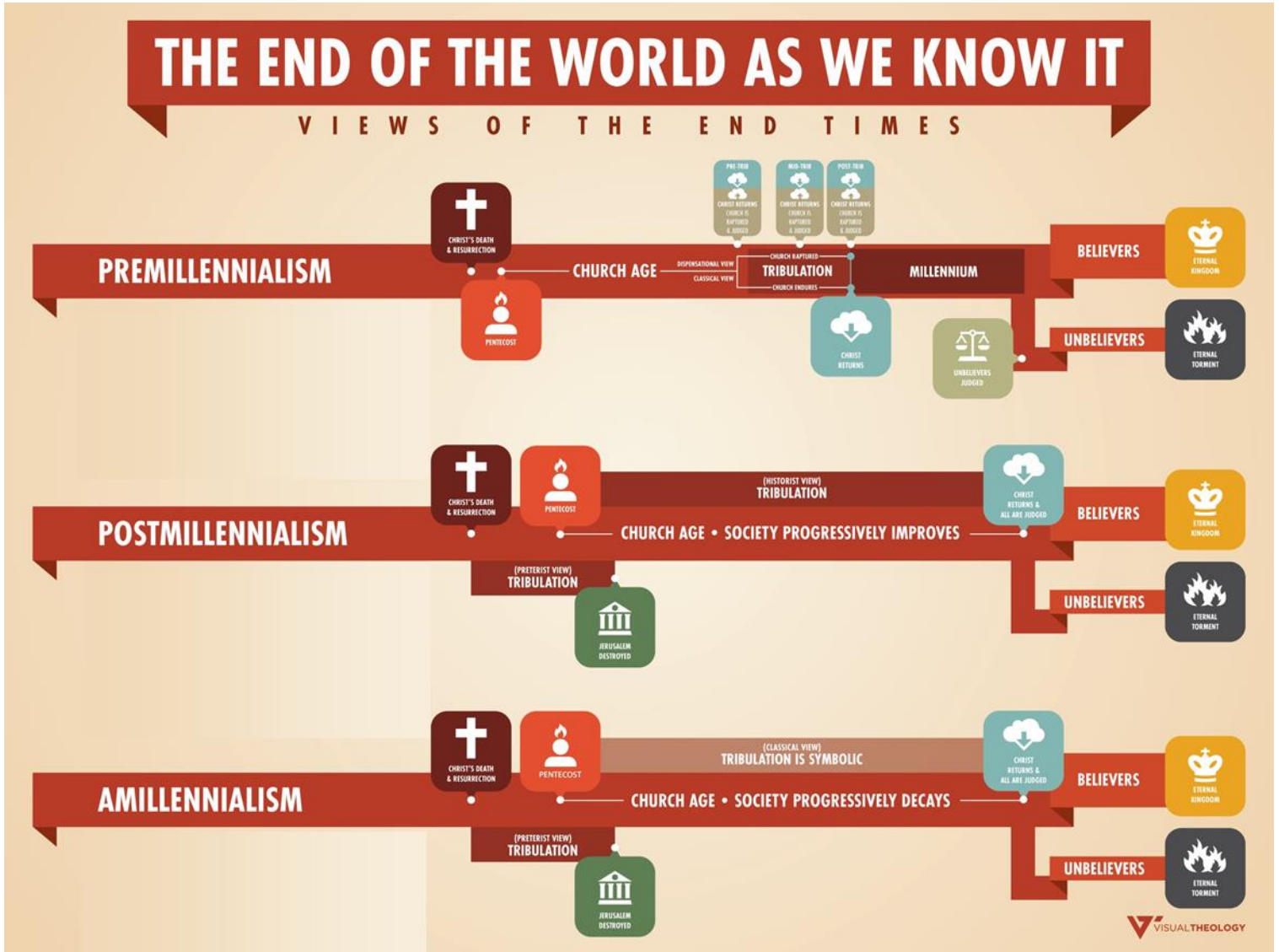
Amillennial -- The belief that there will no literal 1000 year reign of Christ. Thus Revelation 20 is taken symbolically, not literally, by adherents of this view. Amillennialists generally believe that Israel has been permanently set aside for all time and that God's current plan of salvation involves only the church.



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Putting it all together, here are three main views of the end times.

Please note that there can and are variation within the views. This graphic is helpful but not definitive.



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Other Terms that are Sometimes Used

Day of the LORD -- An extended period of time during which God openly intervenes in human affairs both in regard to judgment and blessing.

Dispensationalism -- Teaching that history is divided into various time periods during which God moves in the world in certain distinctive ways. Hence, "dispensation of innocence," "dispensation of government," "dispensation of law," "dispensation of grace," and "kingdom economy," etc. The Greek word means "economy" or "administration." Several different schools of Dispensationalism exist.

Dominion Theology -- Teaching that the church is responsible for taking over the world in the name and power of Christ. Associated with "reconstructionism," also known as "theonomy."

Epiphaneia -- Greek word meaning "A shining-forth," refers to the visible appearance of Jesus at the close of the age. Used in 1 Tim. 6:14, 2 Tim. 4:1,8; Matt. 24:27, 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Titus 2:13. The words parousia and epiphaneia are combined in 2 Thessalonians 2:8, translated "his appearing and his coming."

Great White Throne of Judgment -- This will be the judgment of the dead, the unsaved throughout history. Revelation 20:11-15 gives vivid detail of the events that will happen. The record books will be opened and the wicked shall be judged according to their works. All who's names are not found (and none will be) in the Lamb's book of life will be cast into the lake of fire.

Judgment Seat of Christ -- The judgment of all believers. The Greek word for "seat" is "bema." The bema was the raised area or chair where the judge sat. This judgment takes place after the rapture during the tribulation period.

Parousia -- Greek word meaning "coming alongside and remaining with" someone. Describes the Second Coming of Jesus for His own. Used in Matthew 24:3,27,37,39; 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 5:23, 2 Thessalonians 2:1, James 5:7, 8; 2 Peter 1:16, 3:4; 1 Corinthians 15:23.

Replacement Theology -- Teaching in some circles today to the effect that the church has replaced Israel permanently in the plan of God. Usually associated with an amillennial view of eschatology.

