

GIC 101:

Eschatology – The Study of Last Things



Jesus Christ will come again to the earth-personally, visibly, and bodily-to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:20)

EPC Essentials of the Faith #6

Four Views of Revelation

- **the Futurist-** understands everything from Revelation 4:1 forward to be a prophecy of things that are to occur just before the Second Coming of Christ.
- **the Historicist** - understands Revelation to be a prophecy of church history from the first advent until the Second Coming of Christ.
- **the Preterist** – understands most of the prophecies in the book of Revelation were fulfilled not long after John wrote.
- **the Idealist**– understands Revelation to not contain prophecies of specific historical events. Instead, it uses symbols to express timeless principles concerning the conflict between good and evil. (ligonier.org)

Return of Christ

His return is imminent, so we are commanded to be ready and watch.

But we will not know the hour or the day:

Luke 12:40, 1 Cor. 16:22, Phil. 3:20, 1 Thess. 5:2, Titus 2:12-13, Heb. 10:25, James 5:7-9, 1 Pt. 4:7, 2 Peter 3:10, Rev. 1:3, 22:7, 22:12, 22:20

The early church thought Christ was **coming** in their life time – 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2 Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

So why has He not come yet? –2 Peter 3:8 8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a **day**.

Sudden, Personal, Visible, Bodily Return – Jesus, Himself will return to Earth, in the same way he went to heaven. (Matt. 24:44, John 14:3, Acts 1:11, 1 Thes. 4:16, Heb. 9:28, James 5:8, 2 Pet. 3:10, Rev. 22:20)

We Should Long for His Return – (Rev. 22:20) “Come, Lord Jesus!” this means that we need to be ready (Matt. 24:44) Phil. 3:20

Do Not Know When – Mark 13:32-33, no one knows the hour, not the angels, nor the **Son**, only the Father, Watch for you will not know either. (Mat. 25:13, Lk 12:40)

Final Result of His Return – All Evangelicals Agree – Judgment of Unbelievers, and final reward for believers and believers will live with Christ in a new heaven and a new earth for all eternity, where there is no more **sin**, sorrow or suffering.

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Disagreement on Over the Details – Christians differ over specific details leading up to and immediately following Christ's return. - The nature of the Millennium and the relationship of Christ's return to the Millennium, the sequence of his return and the great tribulation and the question of the salvation of the Jewish people.

Signs Proceeding Christ's Return

Preaching of the Gospel to **ALL** Nations – Mat. 24:14, Mark 13:10

The Great Tribulation – Mat. 24:15-22, Mark 13:7-8, 19-20, Luke 21:20-24

False Prophets Working Signs and **WONDERS** – Mark 13:22, Matt. 24:23-24

Signs in the Heavens – Mark 13:24-25, Matt. 24:29-30, Luke 21:25-27

Coming of the Man of Sin and the Rebellion – “the Anti-Christ” – 1 Thes. 2:1-10, 1 John 2:18, Rev. 13

Salvation of Israel – Rom. 11:12, 11:25-26

Conclusion – It appears that none of these signs have taken place **yet**.

Millennium – Rev. 20:2-3, means 1000 years

Three Evangelical Views

Amillennialism

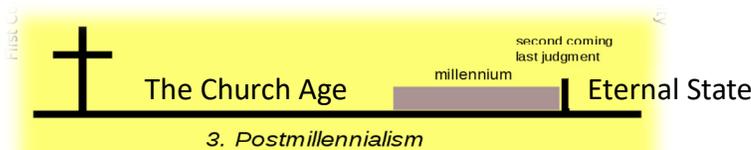


No **Future** Millennium, the Millennium is now, and the terminology is symbolic not literal. They take Rev. 20:1-10 – Christ's reign is already happening in heaven and is not a bodily reign on earth. Thus the Millennium is currently happening.

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Christ's **Return** will bring the resurrection, judgment and the eternal state.

Postmillennialism – Christ will return after the millennium



The growth of the church will gradually **increase** so that a larger and larger portion of the world's population will be Christians. This influence will bring about the “millennium age” of peace and righteousness. It will last for a long period of time, not necessarily 1000 years. At the end of this Christ will return – resurrection, judgment and the eternal state commences.

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Psalm 110:1 The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." Lk 20:43, Acts 2:35, Heb 1:13

Matthew 24:14 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

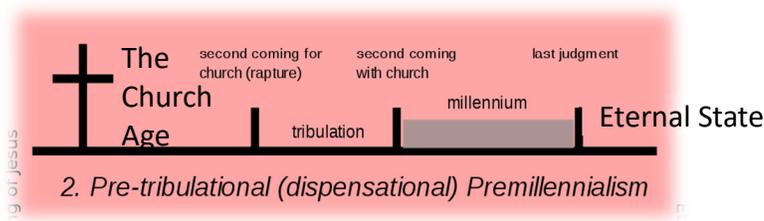
Premillennialism - Christ will come back **before** the Millennium.

Pre-Tribulation – Christ comes back for the church, before the Tribulation

Mid-Tribulation – Christ comes back after some tribulation, but before the wrath of God is poured out on the earth.

Post-Tribulation – Christ comes back, after the Tribulation, and before the Millennium.

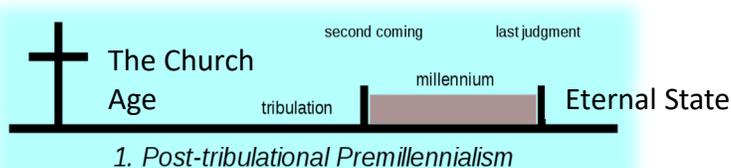
Millennium – is 1000 years of Christ reigning on earth, with the Church or Israel or both. This is before the final battle, judgment and eternal state.



Pre-Tribulation – Christ comes back for the church, **Before** the Tribulation

Christ comes once to rapture the church, then comes again, after the Tribulation with the church to establish the Millennial reign. They will reign with Him for 1000 years, while Satan is bound. 1 Thess. 4:16-17

Post-Tribulation – Christ comes back for the church, **after** the Tribulation



Christ comes once to earth, after the Tribulation. The Church is not taken from it, but endures it and is then part of the Millennial reign.

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Final Judgment, Punishment and Reward

Scripture affirms that there will be a great and final judgment of believers and **un**believers. They will stand before the judgment seat of Christ in resurrected bodies and hear his proclamation of their eternal destiny.

Rev. 20:11-15 and Matt. 25:31-46

Paul speaks of the last judgment Acts 17:30-31, Rom. 2:5 Matt. 10:15, 11:22,24, 12:36;25:31-46, 1 Cor. 4:5, Heb. 6:2, 2 Pt. 2:4, Jude 6

Some Evangelicals see there being more than **one** judgment:

The Judgment of the Nations – all the nations are judged –to determine who will enter the Millennium

Judgment of Believers – bema seat, 2 Cor. 5:10, Christians will receive degrees of rewards

Great White Throne Judgment – at the end of the Millennium to declare eternal punishment for unbelievers. (Lewis Chafer)

Judgment

Jesus will be the Judge - 2 Timothy 4:1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, Acts 10:42, Matt. 25:31-36, John 5:26-27

Unbelievers Will be Judged – It is clear that all unbelievers will stand before Christ for judgment, for this judgment includes “the dead, great and small” (Rev. 20:12, Rom. 2:5-7) There will be degrees of punishment for we read they will be judged “by what they have done” Rev. 20:12, 13 – Jesus also says, 47 “That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. 48 But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. Luke 12:47-48 Every secret of men will be seen – Eccl 12:14, Luke 8:17, 12:2-3

Believers Will Be Judged - Romans 14:10, 12 – Each of us will give an account to God – 2 Cor. 5:10, There will be various degrees of rewards to believers, they should not fear condemnation by Christ in this judgment – John 5:24, Rom. 8:1, 11:18, 1 Cor. 3:12-15

Angels Will Be Judged- Fallen angels will be judged – 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6 – Righteous angels? Believers are to help in the judging of the angels 1 Cor. 6:3

We Will Help in the Work of Judgment – 1 Cor 6:2-3

God will be entirely just in His Judgment and no one will complain against Him on that day.

1 Pt 1:17, Rom 2:11, Rom 3:19, Rev. 19:1-2

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The Eternal State - Hell or Heaven

Hell - What is it going to be like?

FIRE- Matthew 13:42: *"And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."*

Matt 25:41: *"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."*

Mark 9:43-48: *And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched."*

Luke 16:24: *"And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."*

Revelation 20:13-15: *"...hell delivered up the dead which were in them...And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."*

Revelation 21:8: *"But the fearful, and unbelieving ... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."* Brimstone is sulphur. In order for sulphur to form a lake, it must be molten. Thus, its temperature must be at or below 444.6 °C or 832 °F.

In spite of the flames, Hell is totally **DARK**: Matthew 8:12: *"But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness..."*

Matthew 22:13: *"...take him away, and cast him into outer darkness."*

Matthew 25:30: *"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness..."*

Revelation 14:10: *"...and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."*

WORMS-- apparently flesh-eating: Mark 9:44-48: *"Where their worm dieth not..."* The immortal worm is repeated three times in this passage for emphasis. One point of interest is that the author of Mark refers to *"their worm"* not to *"the worms."* That seems to imply that each prisoner has his own worm.

Extreme **THIRST**: Luke 16:23-26: *"And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."*

Reaction to thirst: Matthew 8:12: *"...there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

Matthew 13:42: *"... there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."*

Matthew 13:50: *" there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."*

Matthew 25:30: *"... there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

The punishment in Hell lasts **FOREVER**:

Matthew 25:46: *" And these shall go away into everlasting punishment."*

Mark 9:43-48: *"...it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched"* The unquenched fire is mentioned three times in this passage for emphasis.

Revelation 14:11: *" And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night..."*

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Hell – is a place of eternal conscious punishment for the wicked.

Daniel 12:2, Matthew 8:11-12, Mark 9:42-48, Luke 16:19-31, Jude 1:3-13, Revelation 20:11-15

- The suffering of hell is beyond any experience of misery found in this WORLD.
- Hell is clearly included in the teaching of Jesus.
- If the biblical descriptions of hell are symbols, then the reality will be worse than the symbols.
- Hell is the presence of God in His wrath and judgment.
- There is no cruelty in hell. Hell will be a place of perfect justice.
- Hell is eternal. There is no cruelty through either repentance or annihilation.

Is Hell's punishment cruel or unjust?

It is impossible for God to be cruel. Cruelty involves inflicting a punishment that is more severe or harsh than the crime. Cruelty in this sense is unjust. God is incapable of inflicting an unjust punishment. The Judge of all the earth will surely do what is right. No innocent person will ever suffer at His hand.

Hell is an eternity before the righteous, ever-burning wrath of God, a suffering torment from which there is no escape and no relief. Understanding this is crucial to our drive to appreciate the work of Christ and to preach His gospel. – R. C. Sproul

New Heaven and New Earth – Believers will enter into the full enjoyment of life in the presence of God forever.

Heaven during this present age is the place where God dwells, but it does not contain Him.

Isa. 66:1 – throne, Matt. 6:9 – Our Father who art in heaven – This blessed place is where God's greatest manifestation of his presence is, and where he makes his glory known, where angels, and other heavenly creatures, and redeemed saints all worship him and enjoy him.

Heaven is an actual place (Acts 1:11, 7:55-56) not just a state of mind.

There is a place waiting for all God's redeemed believers, for Jesus promised, "I go to prepare a place for you and when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." – John 14:2-3

At the time of the final judgment the dwelling place of God, Heaven, will be somehow made new and joined with the new earth.

2 Peter 3:10, 13, Rev. 21:1, Rom. 8:19-21, Heb. 1:11-12, 12:26-27

A New Earth will be created by God. The old will pass away (Rev. 20:11, 21:1)

Disagreement – New creation, or renewal of existing

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New City – New Jerusalem – Rev. 22:10-11, 21-26

Streets of gold, many jewels, water without limit, no night lit by the glory of God, 1,400 miles in length, width and height (Rev. 21:21-26)

Nothing unclean shall ever enter it, only those written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Rev. 21:27)

God himself will reign over it forever and we will have fellowship with him forever (Rev. 22:5)

God dwelling with man and comforting him! – Rev. 21:3-4

We shall see his Face - John 22:4

We will also enjoy his presence for evermore – Psalm 27:4

Our Resurrected Bodies – We will enjoy this new life in our resurrected bodies.

We shall eat and drink (Rev. 19:9), drink (Luke 22:18), and live in a city (Rev. 22:10).

These bodies will be made to last in the New City, on the New Earth which is joined to the New Heaven, in the very presence of God, forever.

Then our hearts and voices will join with all the redeemed from all ages and with the mighty armies of heaven we will sing,

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come! (Rev. 4:8)