

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. There are many “end of the world” stories out there both religious and non-religious (although really everything is “religious”). Which ones do you find partly truthful, which ones are a “big-stretch” for you, why? (Think about the fears and hopes politicians, media/movies, and world governments play up).
2. When did you first learn about the second coming of Christ? What did you learn. What did you question? How was it presented?
3. Why do you think some people let themselves get very worked up/ excited about secondary and third-level doctrines, beliefs, and opinions? What good comes from this? What is bad for us and the local church?
4. Reread the core teaching passages and discuss.
5. Jesus said **no one** knows when the end will come. Why do various teachers try to keep “discerning the times” instead of pointing to the clear teachings of Jesus about “be ready”?
6. What does “be ready” look like?
7. Other thoughts?

BIBLICAL BELIEFS OF THE END TIMES

Have you been taught to read the Book of Revelation like a horoscope? Christians with a high view of the Bible have not agreed on how to understand the events that come before the Return of the Lamb/King. This Sunday, we look at three views of “the Millennium”—what can we all agree on, and what should clearly be labelled as secondary. We continue the conversation about the Mark of the Beast, Mark of the Lamb, Anti-Christ(s), and our relationship with our earthly “Babylons”. **Revelation 20:1-10**

Read Revelation 20:1-10; Matthew 25:1-13; Luke 12:35-40

TAKE OFF

“In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, love.” (Comenius, Unum Necessarium, 1668).

NAB STATEMENT OF FAITH

9. We believe God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring all things to their appropriate end and establish the new heaven and the new earth (Ephesians 1:9-10, Revelation 21:1). The certain hope of the Christian is that Jesus Christ will return to the earth suddenly, personally, and visibly in glory according to His promise (Titus 2:13; Revelation 1:7; 3:11; John 14:1-3). The dead will be raised, and Christ will judge mankind in righteousness (John 5:28-29). The unrighteous will be consigned to the everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41, 46; Revelation 20:10). The righteous, in their resurrected and glorified bodies, will receive their reward and dwell forever with the Lord (Philippians 3:20-21; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

FLIGHT

I. A grid for all things Christian - The Great Orthodox Tradition: Know the Heretics (primary/secondary/opinion)

“Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about. All democrats object to men being disqualified by the accident of birth; tradition objects to their being disqualified by the accident of death. Democracy tells us not to neglect a good man’s opinion, even if he is our groom; tradition asks us not to neglect a good man’s opinion, even if he is our father.” -GK Chesterton

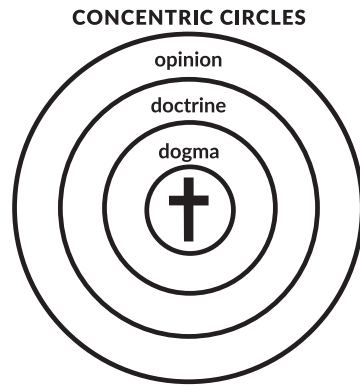
“...the medieval church went overboard on dealing with heresy. However today we’ve gone the other way - therefore making everything - and then nothing is heresy” (Holcomb, Know the Heretics).

Some Christians misuse the word to refer to anyone who does not agree with their particular version of the faith.

Matthew 24:4 tells us we need to be alert to deception, and that we are to guard the basics - the primary things of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 11:2, Galatians 1:8).

Jesus - Dogma - Doctrine - Opinion

The early church developed "rules of faith" that were part of the teaching of the apostles and prophets. These are passed on through songs, scripture, sermons, and baptismal creeds. Way before the developments in Nicaea and Chalcedon. This leads to the Apostles and Nicene Creeds and so on (G. Boyd).



Secondary issues, if left in second place were not labelled heresy, **only when they get wrongly elevated to the primary position.**

(Holcomb 16) Heresy is not anything that does not agree with your own interpretation of Scripture. There are primary and secondary elements - not everything is a pillar. So we don't call people heretics based on debates on the (for example): millennium, baptism, the role of women in ministry, nature of the atonement. "The church of the NT shows us that they walked the line between holding fast to some convictions and being flexible about others."

When we talk about the end times, it's important to understand the specifics that Dr. John MacArthur, Dr. David Jeremiah, or RC Sproul (insert one's favourite teacher here _____) espouse. Some are central, **but** most are **not** and should **never** be used to judge and divide the church. **Repeat...**

Not all errors are equally serious. The Roman and Reformed churches had/have three categories (Holcomb):

1. Errors directly against a fundamental article
2. Errors around a fundamental or in an indirect contradiction to it
3. Errors beyond a fundamental article

II. Spectrum of End Times Beliefs

Some Key Words/Ideas:

- Eschatology ἔσχατος
- Premillennialism, Postmillennialism, Amillennialism, Moderate Preterism. *The current religious term "premillennialism" did not come into use until the mid-19th century.
- Dominionism, Dispensational-Premillennialism
- Rapture (two-stage vs. one-stage)
- Imminent return
- Parousia παρουσία

- Maranatha Μαράβα θά
- Civil religion - Babylon - Rome
- The Beasts - Mark of the Beast
- The Lamb

Where all orthodox evangelical Christians are united

1. Jesus will...

2. The General, bodily

3. All believers will

What orthodox Christians reject:

-
-

Justin Martyr (2nd Cent) on premillennial view, "...Many who belong to the pure and pious faith and are Christians think otherwise" (Grenz, Millennial Maze, 39).

Three views of Millennium (see graph)

1. Premillennialism - "Return before the Reign"

2. Postmillennial - Working toward and Waiting for a Coming Reign of Peace
Postmillennial view

3. Amillennial View - The Symbolic Thousand-Year Conquest of Satan

LAND THE PLANE

- Check yourself!
- Imminent return
- Be Ready

Final Word

"How do we live in-between the times?" will be the final message.

Sources for Further Study and Used Today
<https://blog.logos.com/4-views-of-the-end-times/> ; <https://ntwrightpage.com/2016/07/12/farewell-to-the-rapture/> ; <https://www.ntwrightonline.org/modern-myth-paul-and-the-end-of-the-world-video/> ; <https://academic.logos.com/covid-19-and-the-mark-of-the-beast/> ; <https://www.christiansandthevaccine.com/> ; Reading Revelation Responsibly, Michael Gorman; I Was In the Spirit on the Lord's Day, Melissa Archer; The Millennial Maze- Sorting Out Evangelical Options, Stanley J. Grenz; Across The Spectrum - Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology, 2nd Ed., Gregory A. Boyd, Paul R. Eddy; Various Revelation Commentaries: NT Wright, NIVAP.

visions grouped in sevens are interrupted visions of the unholy trinity (121-13:18) and a vision of salvation and judgment (141-20), The visions of final renewal and salvation constitute the conclusion (19:11-22:5), "a tour through an eschatological art gallery." 58

This long, main section is preceded by an opening vision of Christ (1:9-20), is both the source and the main subject of the visions, of the seven messages (chaps. 2-3) that follow the opening vision and precede the central, centring heavenly throne-room vision of God and the Lamb (chs. 4-5). All of this introduces the long series of visions of judgment (and salvation) that famously comprise the bulk of the book. The work as a whole opens and closes with bookends (1:1-8; 22:6-21) that envelop the substance of the book, indicating its hybrid character and its liturgical and theopolitical concerns.

The narrative of the main section of Revelation is not strictly chronological. As Mitchell Reddish says,

A progression is certainly intended in the events described, as evidenced by the opening of the seventh seal, which introduces the seven trumpets. Yet the progression is not strictly linear. Rather, later events sometimes retell earlier events... Instead of a straight linear progression, the structure of Revelation presents a movement that is spiral earlier events are presented in different forms and use different images." 59

This narrative movement is called recapitulation. This is not to negate the claim that Revelation has a plot. Rather, we must recognize that the plot unfolds like a symphony, with variations on the main theme as the piece moves toward its goal. This non-linear movement means that an outline of the book is more like a spiral, a series of connected circles that moves forward. 60

One aspect of the content of Revelation that needs to be stressed once again is that, although the rapture is the theological starting point for the "Left Behind" series and many other popular interpretations of Revelation, there is no rapture in the book of Revelation.61 (It is supposedly narrated at 4:1, the introduction to the book's central vision). When I pointed this out in one of my classes, a student nearly accused me of heresy for denying the second coming of Christ. I said to her, and I repeat now, that the book of Revelation clearly teaches, and calls on its readers to pray for, the return of Christ. It is not the second coming of Christ that is absent from Revelation but the alleged rapture of the Church by Christ in a kind of secret prequel to the real second coming. The former Christ's second (and final!) coming is part of the book of Revelation, the rest of the New Testament, the creeds, and the historic teachings of the Christian faith. The present book affirms that future coming without hesitation.62

Revelation outline from Reading Revelation Responsibly

Uncivil Worship and Witness Following the Lamb into the New Creation, Michael J. Gorman.

The Structure of Revelation

- Many interpreters of Revelation have noted the many groups and sequences of seven in the book. The following outline, in fact, does not look terribly different from the ones proposed by Primasius and especially Bede in the sixth and eighth centuries, respectively.
- What Are We Reading? The Substance of Revelation

Chapters Main Content

1:1-8 Prologue: Apocalyptic/Prophetic/Epistolary/Liturgical/Theopolitical Introduction
1:9-20 Opening Vision: Christ Present Among the Churches
2-3 7 Pastoral-Prophetic Messages from Christ to the Churches
4-5 Central and Centering Vision: God and the Lamb (Christ) in the Heavenly Throne Room
6:1-8:1 7 Seals (7:1-17 = interlude between 6 and 7)
8:2-11:19 7 Trumpets (10:1-11:13= interlude between 6 and 7)
12:1-13:18 The Foe in the Conflict: Visions of the Unholy Trinity
14:1-20 Interlude: Visions of Salvation and Judgment
15:1-16:21 7 Bowls of Judgment
17:1-19:10 7th Bowl Expanded: The Fall of Babylon and The Heavenly Celebration
19:11 22:5 7 Scenes of the End Culminating in the Final Vision: New Heaven, New Earth, New Jerusalem (21:1-22:5)
22:6-21 Epilogue: Apocalyptic/Prophetic/Epistolary/Liturgical/Theopolitical Conclusion

The book's structure may be simplified as follows:

- I. Revelation 1-3** / Opening Vision of the Risen Lord and His Seven Pastoral-Prophetic Messages
- II. Revelation 4-5**/Central and Centering Vision of God and the Lamb
- III. Revelation 6-20**/ Visions of the Judgment of God, with Interludes
- IV. Revelation 21-22** / Final Vision of the New Creation This abbreviated structure provides the framework for four of the main chapters of this book (chs. 5, 6, 8, and 9).

The bulk of Revelation's content is an otherworldly journey, somewhat typical for apocalyptic literature, consisting of a series of "discrete visions and revelatory narratives" 7 (4:1-22:5). The main visions and narratives are about divine judgment, with interludes (providing breathing room for the hearers readers of various heavenly scenes, hymns, and foreshadowings of the eschatological conclusion: These various visions and episodes reveal both the invisible present and the future that is still to come. Rather than being one extended linear narrative, the sequence of short visions and narratives is somewhat repetitious, though also always intensifying, with the seven seals and trumpets of judgment (61-11:19) paralleled by the seven angels and seven bowls (146-19:10). These two groups of judgment

COMPARISON OF CHRISTIAN MILLENNIAL TEACHINGS



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2. Pre-tribulational (dispensational) Premillennialism



3. Postmillennialism



4. Amillennialism

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