

Premillennialism

Variant Views and Key Differences

The Great Tribulation -

Nelson's Bible Dictionary - A short but intense period of distress and suffering at the end of time. The exact phrase, the great tribulation, is found only once in the Bible (Rev 7:14). The great tribulation is to be distinguished from the general tribulation a believer faces in the world (Matt 13:21; John 16:33; Acts 14:22). It is also to be distinguished from God's specific wrath upon the unbelieving world at the end of the age (Mark 13:24; Rom 2:5-10; 2 Thess 1:6).

It should be noted that there are variant views within Premillennialism about the *length, nature and timing of the Great Tribulation*. A few key distinctions would be;

- **Length of the Great Tribulation**
 - Some see the Great Tribulation as a *7 year period* and equivalent to the *Seventieth Week* of Daniel
 - Some see the Great Tribulation as only the *second 3.5 years* of it. (Mid Trib)
 - Some believe the length of this time period is *NOT specifically defined* in scripture, (its length is never clearly defined in scripture)
- **Nature of the Tribulation**
 - Some hold it includes the "*wrath of God*"
 - Some hold it is simply the events connected with the rise of Antichrist to power and subsequent persecution and suffering
 - Some see the section of Revelation from Chapters 6-19 as an outline of this period, others see it only in shorter sections of Revelation
- **Day of the Lord**
 - Some see the events connected to the "*Day of the Lord*" as a part of the Great Tribulation
 - Some make a distinction between the "*Day of the Lord*" and the Great Tribulation as two separate time periods
- **Persecution and the Tribulation Saints**
 - The *presence of Christians during this time period and the persecution of them* is something almost all premillennialists agree on. However, many see these Christians as the *church in general* whereas others see them as a group called "*tribulation saints*" made up of people who are saved during the Great Tribulation by the preaching of believing Jews.
- **Apostasy and Falling Away**
 - Many see a fulfillment of a great *Apostasy and Falling Away* which will take place before the return of Christ happening during the time of the Great Tribulation

The Timing of the Rapture

- **Pretribulational View** – In the Pretribulational view, the rapture happens **before** the 70th week of Daniel and the Great Tribulation. Thus the church does not go through the Great Tribulation. Also, they make a sharp distinction between Israel and the church and insist that God cannot be dealing with both groups during Daniel's 70th week.
- **Midtribulational View** – In the Midtribulational view, the rapture happens at the **mid-point** of the 70th week of Daniel and before the Great Tribulation which is defined as the last 3.5 years of Daniel's 70th week. Thus the church does not go through the Great Tribulation.
- **Posttribulational View** - In the Posttribulational view, the rapture happens **after** the 70th week of Daniel and the Great Tribulation. Thus the church will go through the Great Tribulation. In this view the *rapture and the second coming are the same event*.
- **PreWrath View** - In the PreWrath view, the rapture happens **during** the 70th week of Daniel and after the Great Tribulation which is distinguished from the Day of the Lord, God's wrath on the unbelieving world. Thus the church will go through the Great Tribulation, *but not through the wrath of God*. In this view the *rapture and the second coming are the same event*.

Imminency – Imminency is the belief that Christ could return at any moment with no warning signs prior to it. Scriptures used in this view are (Matt 24:36-39,42-44, 50, 25:13, Mark 13:32-33, Luke 12:40, Phil 3:20, 1 Thes 5:2-6, Titus 2:12-13, Heb 10:25, James 5:7-9, 1 Pet 4:7, 2 Pet 3:10, Rev 22:7, 20). It is clear from these scriptures that in a certain sense, the Lord’s return is *imminent*, but clearly states that we do not know the “*day or the hour*,” but to interpret the times and seasons we should not be unaware or overtaken as the wicked. However, the bible also clearly teaches that *certain signs will precede the Lord’s coming* and that we should be paying attention to these signs as they happen. These signs would include;

- **The Preaching of the Gospel to all Nations** – (Mark 13:10, Matt 24:14)
- **The Great Tribulation** – Matt 24:15-22, Mark 13:7-8, Luke 21:20-24)
- **False Prophets working Signs and Wonders** – (Matt 24:23-24, Mark 13:22)
- **Signs in the Heavens** – (Matt 24:29-30, Mark 13:24-25, Luke 21:25-27)
- **The Coming of the Man of Sin** - (Matt 24:15-22, Mark 13:14-20, 2 Thess 2:1-10)
- **Great Persecution of the Church** – (Matt 24:9-14, Mark 13:9-13, Rev 13:5-10, 15-17)
- **Apostasy, Falling Away and Rebellion** – (Matt 24:10-12, Mark 13:12-13, 2 Thess 2:3)

Therefore we should conclude that as **we see these signs** coming to pass, we should be eagerly awaiting the Lord’s return and our subsequent deliverance. This is explicit in the teaching of Jesus (Matt 24:25,33, Mark 13:29, Luke 21:28).

Olivet Discourse – In regard to eschatological events and their timing and sequence, the most clear passages in all of the bible are recorded in the *Olivet Discourse*. These passages are Matt 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21. **In these passages there are clear chronologies given of events leading up to Christ return and the end of the age.** In fact, these passages are Jesus’ answer to His disciples’ question, “What will be the signs of your coming and of the end of the age?”

Chronology of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24

<p>The Beginning of Birth Pains</p> <p>V- 4-8</p>	<p>Persecution</p> <p>Martyrdom</p> <p>V-9</p>	<p>Falling Away</p> <p>Apostasy</p> <p>V-10-14</p>	<p>The Great Tribulation</p> <p>Antichrist Revealed</p> <p>V-21-22</p>	<p>Signs in the Heavens</p> <p>V-29</p>	<p>Christ’s Return</p> <p>Power and Great Glory</p> <p>Rapture</p> <p>V-30-31</p>	<p>The Wrath of God</p> <p>Day of the Lord</p> <p>V-36-41</p>
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Distinctions between Israel and the Church

Dispensationalism - A theological system that began in the nineteenth century with the writings of J. N. Darby. Among the general doctrines of this system are the distinction between Israel and the church as two groups in God’s overall plan, the Pretribulation rapture of the church, a future literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel, and the dividing of biblical history into seven periods or “dispensations” of God’s ways of relating to his people.

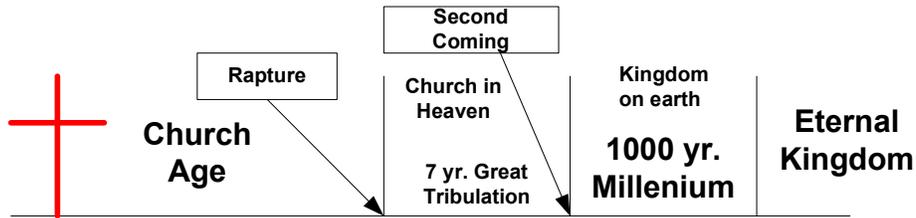
Progressive Dispensationalism – A view of Dispensationalism which takes into account certain principles of continuity commonly found with Covenantalists. Typically there is a less pronounced distinction between Israel and the Church and allows for a mingling of eschatological events for both groups during the 70th week of Daniel.

Covenantal - Covenant Theology believes that there is and has always been only one people of God. They believe that Israel was the Church in the Old Testament, and the Church is Israel in the New Testament, thus the Church has “replaced” Israel. What were promises of land, many descendants, and blessing in the Old Testament to Israel has been converted to spiritual blessings for the Church in the New Testament.

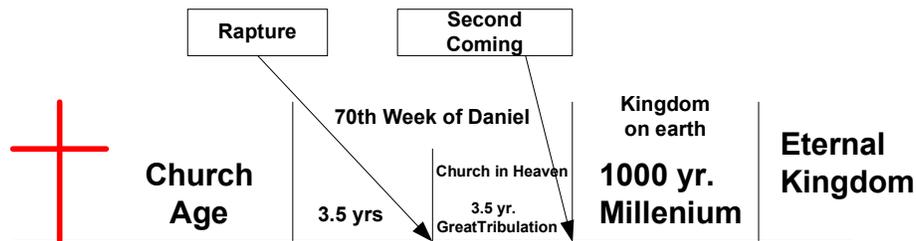
Premillennialism and the Rapture

Four Views on Timing

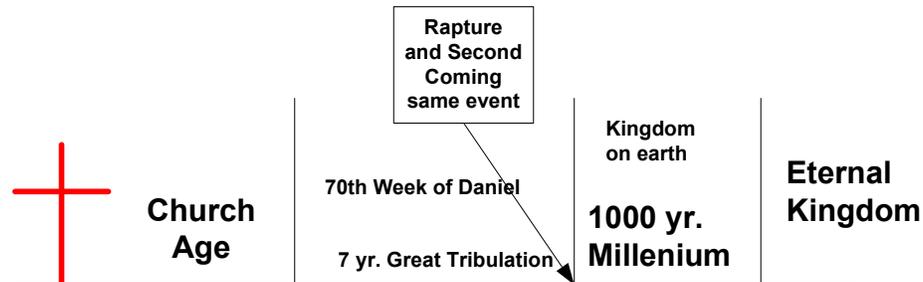
Pretribulational View



Midtribulational View



Posttribulational View



Pre-Wrath View

