Premillennialism

Premillennialism - Christ will return BEFORE the Millennium. The belief that Christ will return before the millennium, and establish a physical Messianic Kingdom on earth, which He will rule from Jerusalem. This will be a time of unprecedented peace and righteousness on the earth, as Satan will be bound, yet there will still be sin as rebellious nations will be disciplined by Christ and his saints (Psa 2:2-6, Isa 2:2-4, Dan 7:27, Zech 14:9-19). This view is based on a straightforward reading of Revelation 20:1-6. This return of Christ will include the gathering of His people from every age by resurrection from the dead (rapture) to a glorified immortal state (Dan 12:1-3, Matt 24:29-31, Mark 13:24-27, Luke 17:22-37, 1 Cor 15:51-54, 1 Thess 5:15-17, 5:2-4, 2 Thess 2:1-3). In the years prior to this return of Christ there will be a worldwide Great Tribulation period, a world deceiving Antichrist and cataclysmic judgements from God. This also will be the time of the fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies and covenant promises to the ethnic nation of Israel, which will at this time be saved and restored (Zech 12:10-13:2) to the entire original Abrahamic land inheritance (Gen 13:14-18, Jer 3:15-18, Eze 37:20-28) and blessing of God. It should be noted that there are many differences between premillennialists on various issues, typically concerning the time of the rapture and other key end-time events.

Key Points in Premillennialism

- 1000 yrs is literal during which time Satan will be bound
- Resurrected saints will rule and reign with Christ and will never again be subject to sin and death (Dan 7:27, Rev 2:26-27, 20:4-6)
- A time of Great Tribulation, suffering, and Christian persecution directly precedes Christ’s return. Premillennialists differ on the exact nature and timing of this period.
- Promises to Israel of Land, Seed and Blessing shall all be literally fulfilled
- Two resurrections of both believers and unbelievers
  - Believers to Bema Seat judgment for degrees of reward at Christ’s return
  - Unbelievers to final judgment eternal condemnation after Millennium
- New Heavens and Earth begin after Christ’s defeat of Satan and the final judgment
- Nature of the Millennium is utopian with a very limited presence of sin
- Imminency (Christ could return at any moment) – some hold, some do not
- Variant Views - There are many differences between Premillennial believers on various issues (see chart below for a few- Premillennialism – Four Views)

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- Great Tribulation 70th Week of Daniel Antichrist Wrath of God Rapture
- Second Coming Parousia
- 1000 yr. Millennium Christ Rules physically upon the earth from Jerusalem Saints Resurrected
- Eternal Kingdom New Heavens and Earth
- Satan released Deception of the nations Defeated at war Final Judgment
Premillennialism
Variant Views and Key Differences

There are various views of Premillennialists on a host of different issues regarding the nature, timing and sequence, and fulfillment of future prophetic events. Below we will try to discuss briefly what some of those differences are and identify which view holds certain positions on some of the key future prophetic events.

The Great Tribulation

_Nelson's Bible Dictionary_ - A short but intense period of distress and suffering at the end of this current age. 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). Some believe it is also to be distinguished from God's specific wrath upon the unbelieving world at the end of the age (Mark 13:24; Rev 16, 2 Thess 1:7-9).

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 Dispensational)
  - Some see the Great Tribulation as only the second 3.5 years of it. (Dispensational, Historic)
  - 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 see the section of Revelation from Chapters 6-19 as an outline of this period, others see it only in shorter sections of Revelation. (Dispensational, Historic)
  - Some hold it is simply the events connected with the _rise of Antichrist to power_ and subsequent persecution and suffering. The career of the Antichrist is highlighted in Scripture (Dan 7-12, Olivet Discourse, 2 Thess 2"1-12, Revelation 13, 19) and is characterized by certain behavior. This includes public blasphemy and idolatry, persecution of God's saints, worldwide deception, and he is personally killed by Christ at Parousia.

- **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
  - Some see the "Day of the Lord" as _beginning_ at Parousia and _ending_ at Great White Throne. This sees both God's wrath and the age of Millennial peace as the "Day of the Lord."

- **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.
  - Some believe that the church is not present in Revelation 6-19 (because the word "church does not appear there), others say the church is present as saints (those who hold the testimony of Jesus and obey God's commandments, Rev 12:17).

- **Apostasy and Falling Away**
  - Many see a fulfillment of a great _Apostacy and Falling Away_ (Matt 24:9-14, 2 Thess 2:1-3) which will take place before the return of Christ happening just before and during the time of the _Great Tribulation_. This will be marked by a _worldwide deception by Antichrist_ leading to the worldwide idolatry wherein people of the earth will worship the beast and his image or be killed.