

**Overall Class Objective:** To intensify our pursuit of a God-centered, Gospel-based life through a deeper understanding of the character and work of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

### Class Overview

1. Explore the current apathy within the Christian church regarding the return of Jesus and the future.
2. Identify the common beliefs held by Bible-believing people regarding the second coming of Christ.
3. Delineate the four major views of the millennium.
4. **Compare and contrast the four views of the millennium.**
5. **Describe the taking up of the church relative to the various views of the millennium.**
6. Determine a biblical rationale for deepening our positive anticipation of Jesus' return.

### Review

Common beliefs held by Bible-believing people regarding the second coming of Christ.

1. Christ will suddenly, visibly, physically return to the earth.
2. All people who have ever lived will be physically resurrected.
3. A final judgment of unbelievers will result in their eternal separation from God.
4. All believers will be rewarded and will dwell eternally with Christ in a new heavens and new earth.
5. Satan will be defeated, judged and punished forever.

What does Catholic theology teach about the coming of Jesus and the millennium?

In brief, Catholic eschatology appears to teach a form of amillennialism. The kingdom of Christ is already present in mystery form on earth and the thousand years of Revelation 20 is taken as symbolic. The judgment of the righteous and the unrighteous occurs in a single last judgment. A literal understanding of the millennium (as held by premillennialists) is expressly rejected as is any progressive triumph of the Church before the end of earthly history (as held by postmillennialists).

(the following direct quotes are from article 7 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church)

- 669 As Lord, Christ is also head of the Church, which is his Body. Taken up to heaven and glorified after he had thus fully accomplished his mission, Christ dwells on earth in his Church. the redemption is the source of the authority that Christ, by virtue of the Holy Spirit, exercises over the Church. "The kingdom of Christ (is) already present in mystery on earth, the seed and the beginning of the kingdom."
- 676 The Antichrist's deception already begins to take shape in the world every time the claim is made to realize within history that messianic hope which can only be realized beyond history through the eschatological judgement. The Church has rejected even modified forms of this falsification of the kingdom to come under the name of millenarianism, especially the "intrinsically perverse" political form of a secular messianism.
- 677 The Church will enter the glory of the kingdom only through this final Passover, when she will follow her Lord in his death and Resurrection. The kingdom will be fulfilled, then, not by a historic triumph of the Church through a progressive ascendancy, but only by God's victory over the final unleashing of evil, which will cause his Bride to come down from heaven. God's triumph over the revolt of evil will take the form of the Last Judgment after the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world.

A clear denunciation of any form of a literal millennium was clarified in a Decree of the Holy Office:

2296 In recent times on several occasions this Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office has been asked what must be thought of the system of mitigated Millenarianism, which teaches, for example, that Christ the Lord before the final judgment, whether or not preceded by the resurrection of the many just, will come visibly to rule over this world. The answer is: The system of mitigated Millenarianism cannot be taught safely. Decree of the Holy Office July 21, 1944

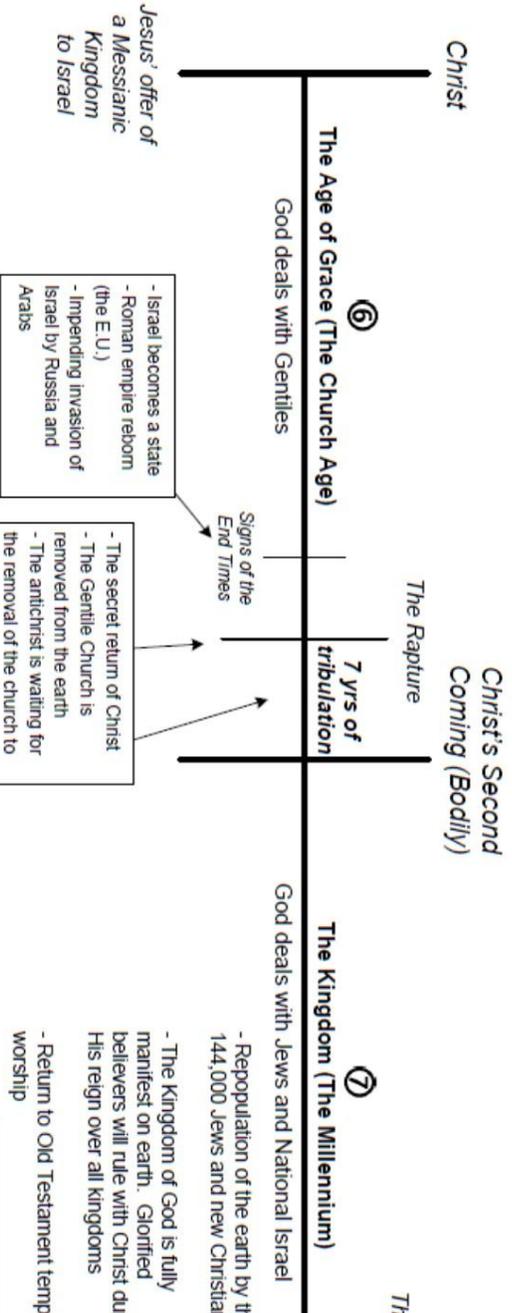
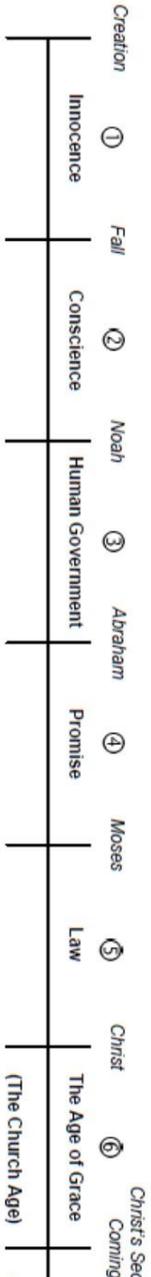
## Notes

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- 4) Compare and contrast the four views of the millennium. (See charts for further details.)
- a) Other resources for understanding these views:
- i) The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views, edited by Robert G. Clouse
  - ii) <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/an-evening-of-eschatology> (2 hour video)
  - iii) <http://www.boycecollege.com/2009/09/23/panel-tribulation-and-millennium-a-theology-forum-on-eschatology/> (1 hour audio)
- 5) Describe the taking up of the church relative to the various views of the millennium.
- a) The taking up of the church (by some called the rapture) is described most fully in two passages.
- i) But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
  - ii) I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:  
“Death is swallowed up in victory.”  
“O death, where is your victory?  
O death, where is your sting?”  
1 Corinthians 15:50-55
- b) Postmillennialism and amillennialism see the taking up of the church as occurring at the conclusion of the millennial period when Christ returns to earth and immediately before the final judgment which is followed by the new heavens and new earth.
- c) Dispensational premillennialism includes three views of the taking up of the church as either before (pretribulation), during (mid-tribulation) or after (post-tribulation) the tribulation period. A fourth view is a form of mid-tribulationism called the pre-wrath view which sees the taking up of the church late in the tribulation.

# Dispensationalism

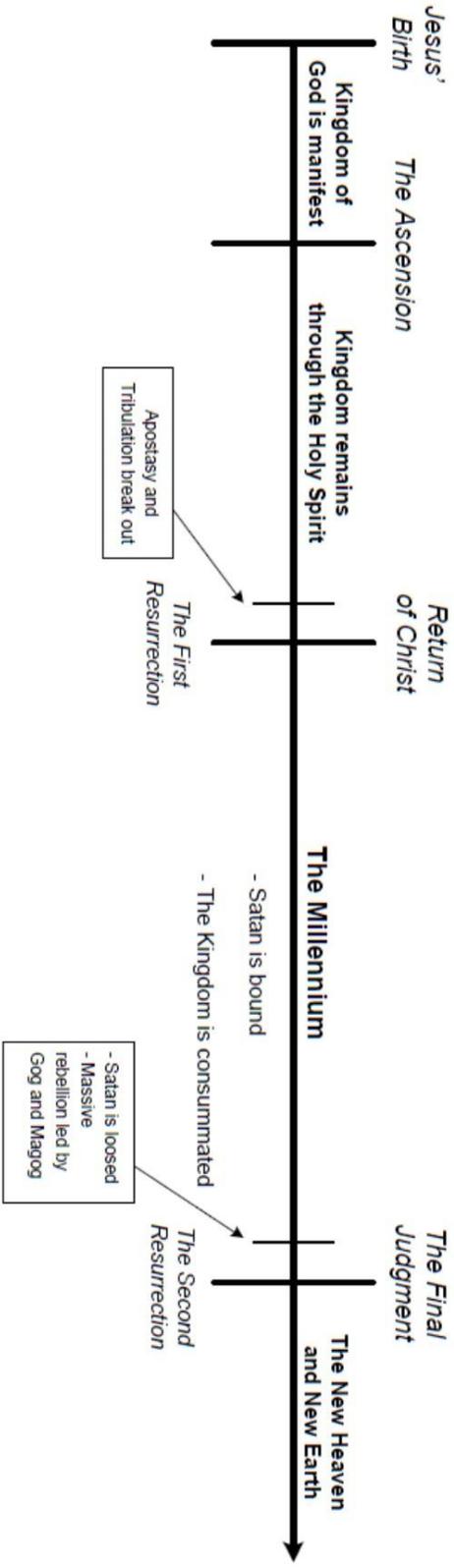
## Overview - The Seven Dispensations



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**Dispensational Theology**  
 (start) J.N. Darby, J. J. Dwight Pentecost,  
**Writers and Pastors**  
 Tim LaHaye, Jerry Jenkins, John Hagee and Hal

Historic Premillennialism



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**Historic Premillennial Theologians:**  
George Eldon Ladd, John W. Montgomery, J. Barton Payne,  
R. Laird Harris, Henry Alford, Theodore Zahn, James Boice

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Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge, B.B. Warfield,  
John Jefferson Davis

## Amillennialism

