

Sermon Notes

The Great Tribulation and Christ Followers

Mark 13:9-23

1. Jesus tells His followers beforehand of the coming _____ . (v.9,23)

2. What is the "tribulation"? (v.19, 24)

It is a period of great _____ against Israel and Christians by the enemies of God. (Mark 13:19, 24; Matthew 24:21, Daniel 12:1, Revelation 7:14)

There are differing views of the tribulation:

1) Preterist view: it was the Roman persecution in the first century AD. (held by Postmillennialists)

2) Futurist view: it will be a 7-year period in the future just before Jesus returns. (held by Premillennialists)

3) Symbolic view: it is not literal but symbolic of Satan's affliction against the church. (held by a mix)

4) Eclectic view: it is both the Roman persecution of the first century AND repeated persecutions leading up to Christ's return. (held by Amillennialists and some Premillennialists; Pastor Johnathan holds this view)

3. Jesus says there are _____ reasons behind the tribulation, then, now, and future.

Reason #1 - It will happen because of Satan's _____ of Jesus.
(v.9, 13) "for my sake," "for my name's sake."

v.9 Beaten by religious people and government figures.

v.11 Christianity will be treated as _____.

v.12 _____ members will betray and hate one another.

v.13 The whole world will _____ you.

v.14-18 You will escape to safety or face death.

v.19 This is all-out war against Jesus and His kingdom.

Reason #2 - It will happen to complete Jesus' _____ not to stop it.

v.9 to bear _____ before them

v.10 The gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.

v.11 The Holy Spirit will do the _____ on behalf of Jesus.

4. Christians should respond to persecution by _____ in Jesus.

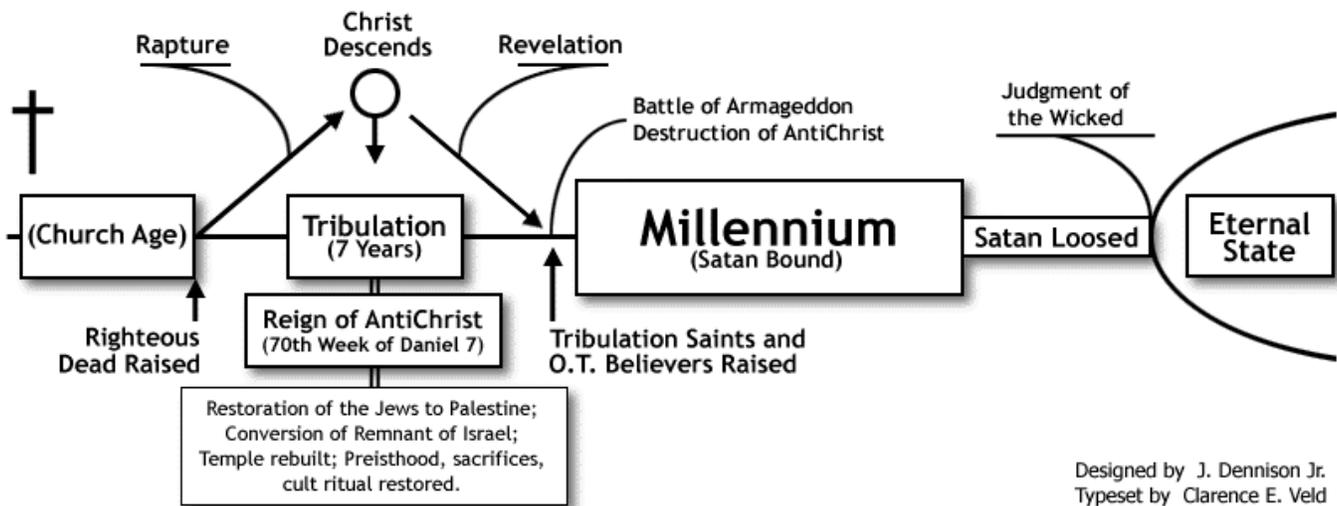
1) Christians should not see persecution as God's punishment.

2) Christians should expect to face persecution in this life.

3) Christians should trust Jesus to sustain them through persecution. (v.13)

4) Christians should obey Jesus and love those who persecute them. (Matthew 5:43-45, Luke 6:27-36)

Dispensational Premillennialism



Definition:

Dispensational premillennialists hold that Christ will come before a seven-year period of intense tribulation to take His church (living and dead) into heaven. After this period of fulfillment of divine wrath, He shall then return to rule from a holy city (*i.e.*, the New Jerusalem) over the earthly nations for one thousand years. Satan, who was bound up during Christ's earthly reign, will be loosed to deceive the nations, gather an army of the deceived, and take up to battle against the Lord. This battle will end in both the judgment of the wicked and Satan and the entrance into the eternal state of glory by the righteous. This view is called premillennialism because it places the return of Christ before the millennium and it is called dispensationalism because it is founded in the doctrines of dispensationalism.

Features and Distinctions:

- Favored method of interpretation: strict literal.
- Israel and the church: views church and Israel as two distinct identities with two individual redemptive plans.
- The rapture of the Church: The church is raptured before a seven-year tribulation (the seventieth week of Daniel - Daniel 9:24-27). This tribulational period contains the reign of the AntiChrist.
- Millennium: Christ will return at the end of the great tribulation to institute a thousand-year rule from a holy city (the New Jerusalem). Those who come to believe in Christ during the seventieth week of Daniel (including the 144,000 Jews) and survive will go on to populate the earth during this time. Those who were raptured or raised previous to the tribulational period will reign with Christ over the millennial population.
- Miscellaneous: Higher degrees of interpreting present-day events in the light of end-times prophecy. The Millennium will see the re-establishment of temple worship and sacrifice as a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice. From the millennium-ending "white throne" judgment (by which Satan and all unbelievers will be thrown into the lake of fire) Christ and all saints will proceed into eternal glory.
- Major proponents: John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie, Louis Sperry Chafer, J. Dwight Pentecost, Norman Geisler, Charles Stanley, Chuck Smith, and Chuck Missler.

Synopsis:

A strictly literal hermeneutic is foundational to the dispensational premillennialist viewpoint. Interpreting Scripture in this manner will in fact demand such perspectives unique to dispensationalism as:

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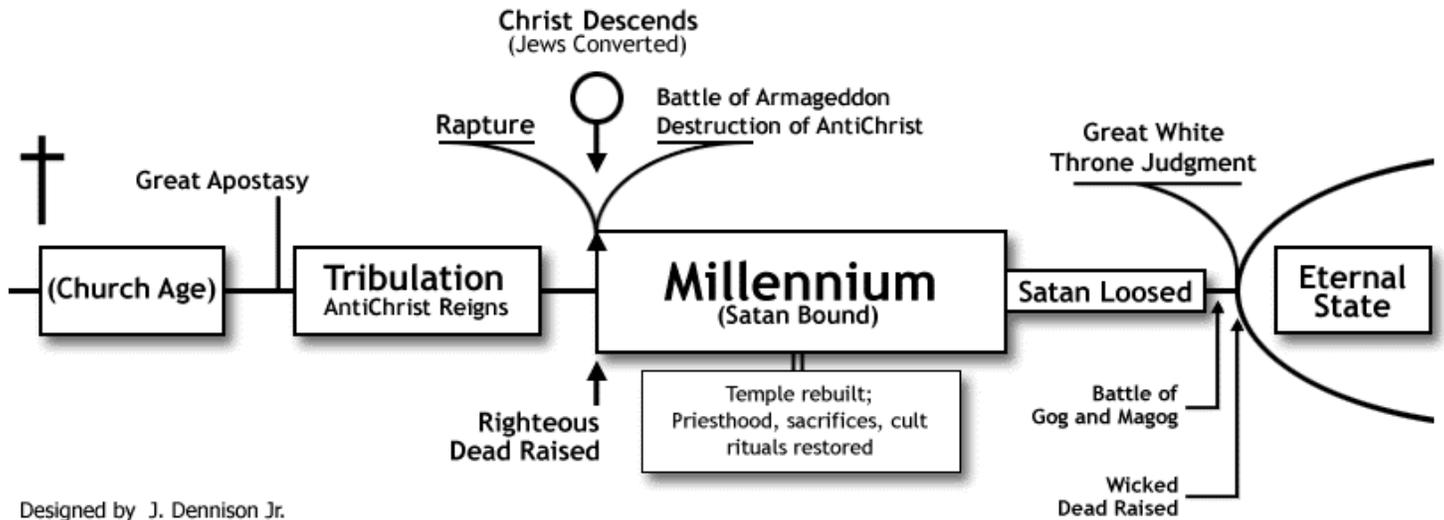
1. an earthly kingdom of God from which Christ will reign
2. a future redemptive plan for national Israel
3. a seven year period of great tribulation

Dispensational premillennialism holds that a seven-year tribulation (foreseen in Daniel 9:27) will precede a thousand-year period (Revelation 20:1-6) during which time, Christ will reign on the throne of David (Luke 1:32).

Immediately previous to the time of great tribulation, all the dead saints will rise from their graves and all the living members of the church shall be caught up with them to meet Christ in the clouds (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17); this is known as "the rapture." During this time of tribulation, there will be three-and-a-half years of world peace under an AntiChrist figure (Daniel 7:8; Revelation 13:1-8) who will establish a world-church (Revelation 17:1-15), followed by three-and-a-half years of greater suffering (Revelation 6-18). At the end of this period, Christ will return (Matthew 24:27-31; Revelation 19:11-21), judge the world (Ezekiel 20:33-38; Matthew 25:31; Jude 14-15), bind Satan for one thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3), and raise the Old Testament and tribulation saints from the dead (Daniel 12:2; Revelation 20:4).

At this time, the millennial reign will begin and Christ will reign politically over the earth at this time from His capital in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3). Throughout His reign, there will be no war (Isaiah 2:4) and even the natures of animals will dwell in harmony (Isaiah 11:6-9). At the end of this era of peace, Satan will be released and instigate a colossal (but futile) rebellion against God (Revelation 20:7-9). After this fated battle, Satan and the wicked are cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10), while the righteous proceed into their eternal state in the realm of the new heaven and the new earth Revelation 21:1ff).

Historical Premillennialism



Designed by J. Dennison Jr.
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Definition:

Historical premillennialists place the return of Christ just before the millennium and just after a time of great apostasy and tribulation. After the millennium, Satan will be loosed and Gog and Magog will rise against the kingdom of God; this will be immediately followed by the final judgment. While similar in some respects to the dispensational variety (in that they hold to Christ's return being previous to the establishment of a thousand-year earthly reign), historical premillennialism differs in significant ways (notably in their method of interpreting Scripture).

Features and Distinctions:

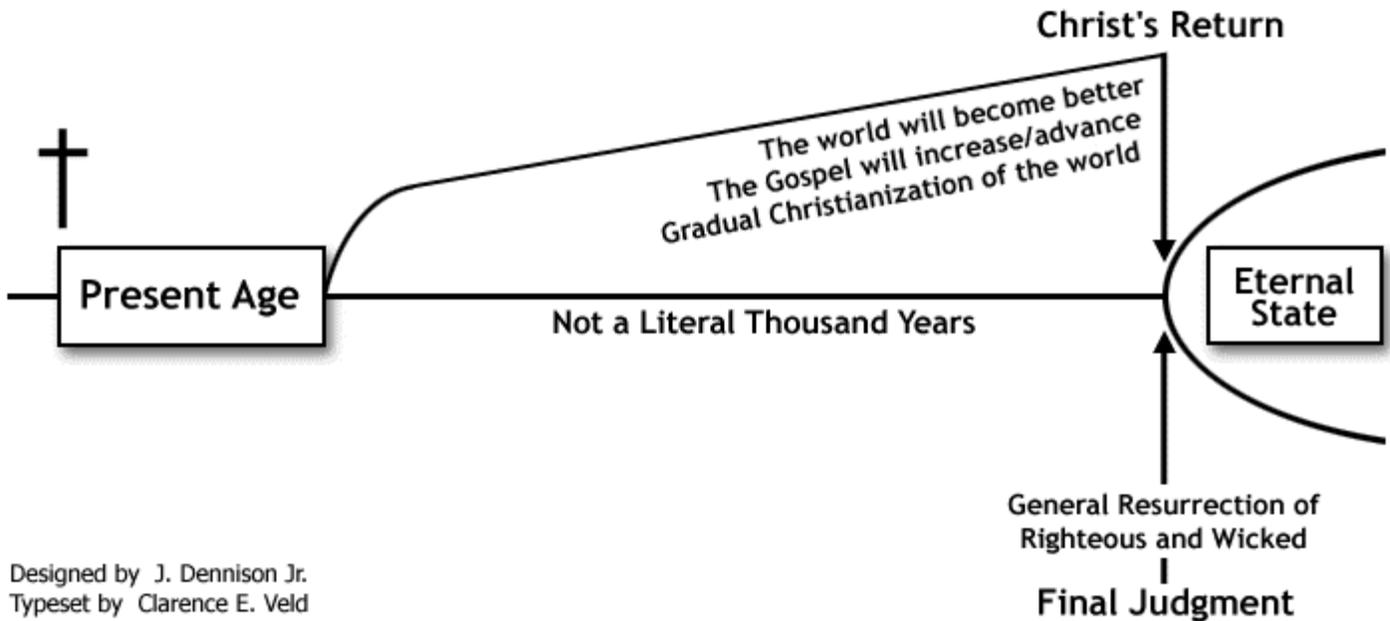
- Favored method of interpretation: grammatico-historical.
- Israel and the church: The church is the fulfillment of Israel.
- Kingdom of God: present through the Spirit since Pentecost - to be experienced by sight during the millennium after Christ's return.
- The Rapture: The saints, living and dead, shall meet the Lord in the clouds immediately preceding the millennial reign.
- The Millennium: Christ will return to institute a thousand-year reign on earth. The Millennium will see the re-establishment of temple worship and sacrifice as a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice.
- Major proponents: George Eldon Ladd, Walter Martin, John Warwick Montgomery, and Theodore Zahn.

Synopsis:

The historical premillennialist's view interprets some prophecy in Scripture as having literal fulfillment while others demand a semi-symbolic fulfillment. As a case in point, the seal judgments (Revelation 6) are viewed as having fulfillment in the forces in history (rather than in future powers) by which God works out his redemptive and judicial purposes leading up to the end.

Rather than the belief of an imminent return of Christ, it is held that a number of historical events (e.g., the rise of the Beast and the False Prophet) must take place before Christ's Second Coming. This Second Coming will be accompanied by the resurrection and rapture of the saints (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18); this will inaugurate the millennial reign of Christ. The Jewish nation, while being perfectly able to join the church in the belief of a true faith in Christ, has no distinct redemptive plan as they would in the dispensational perspective. The duration of the millennial kingdom (Revelation 20:1-6) is unsure: literal or metaphorical.

Postmillennialism



Definition:

The postmillennialist believes that the millennium is an era (not a literal thousand years) during which Christ will reign over the earth, not from a literal and earthly throne, but through the gradual increase of the Gospel and its power to change lives. After this gradual Christianization of the world, Christ will return and immediately usher the church into their eternal state after judging the wicked. This is called postmillennialism because, by its view, Christ will return after the millennium.

Features and Distinctions:

- Favored method of interpretation: covenant-historical.
- Israel and the church: the church is the fulfillment of Israel.
- Kingdom of God: a spiritual entity experienced on earth through the Christianizing affect of the Gospel.
- The Millennium: a Golden Age previous to Christ's second advent during which Christ will virtually rule over the whole earth through an unprecedented spread of the Gospel; the large majority of people will be Christian.
- Miscellaneous: Higher degrees of interpreting First Century events in the light of prophecy; preterism often goes hand-in-hand with postmillennialism. Of the several versions of postmillennial eschatology, the reconstructionist's seems to be gaining the most popularity in the world today.
- Major proponents: Rousas J. Rushdoony, Greg L. Bahnsen, Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., David Chilton, and Gary North.

Synopsis:

There are several different versions of postmillennialism, but one of the views gaining the most popularity, is that of the theonomists. Generally speaking, the postmillennial theonomist viewpoint holds to a partial-preterist interpretation of Revelation and the various judgment prophecies in the Gospels, believing that the majority of those prophecies were fulfilled in 70 A.D. at the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.

The postmillennialist sees the millennial kingdom as the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that he would become "a great nation" and that "all peoples on earth would be blessed" through him (Genesis 12:2-3). This holy reign will come about via gradual conversion (rather than premillennialism's cataclysmic Christological advent) through the --over--

spread of the Gospel – this incremental progress is drawn from many pictures found throughout Scripture (e.g., Deuteronomy 7:22 and Ezekiel 47:1-12).

Postmillennial optimism is also nurtured through many of prophetic psalmody. The Psalms often speak of all nations fearing Him, salvation being known among all nations, the ends of the earth fearing Him, *et cetera* (e.g., Psalms 2; 22:27; 67:2,7; 102:15; 110:1). Another passage that well feeds this earthly optimism is Isaiah 2:2-3 in which the nations will stream to the righteousness of God.

Amillennialism



Definition:

The amillennialist believes that the Kingdom of God was inaugurated at Christ's resurrection (hence the term "inaugurated millennialism") at which point he gained victory over both Satan and the Curse. Christ is even now reigning (hence the term "nunc-millennialism" – *nunc* means "now") at the right hand of the Father over His church. After this present age has ended, Christ will return and immediately usher the church into their eternal state after judging the wicked. The term "amillennialism" is actually a misnomer for it implies that Revelation 20:1-6 is ignored; in fact, the amillennialist's hermeneutic interprets it (and in fact, much of apocalyptic literature) non-literally.

Features and Distinctions:

- Favored method of interpretation: redemptive-historical.
- Israel and the church: The church is the eschatological fulfillment of Israel.
- Kingdom of God: a spiritual reality that all Christians partake in and that is seen presently by faith, but will be grasped by sight at the consummation.
- The Rapture: The saints, living and dead, shall meet the Lord in the clouds and immediately proceed to judge the nations with Christ and then follow Him into their eternal state.
- The Millennium: inaugurated with Christ's resurrection. In an "already/not yet" sense, Christ already reigns over all and is already victorious over Satan.
- Miscellaneous: Higher degrees of interpreting prophecy in light of Christ's advent, death, resurrection, and glorification. Relies heavily on a two-age theology.
- Major proponents: Meredith Kline, Richard Gaffin, Robert B. Strimple, Gregory K. Beale, and John Murray.

Synopsis:

Eschatology is the study of the eschaton; the eschaton is equated with "last things." While other views focus on the final days of humankind on earth, amillennialism sees "the last things" as having been initiated at Christ's resurrection and so, being applicable from the earliest days of the Christian church (cf. Acts 2:16-21; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 1:1-2; and 1 Peter 1:20). The amillennialist perspective sees the whole of God's redemptive revelation as twofold - promise and fulfillment; it also emphasizes that a strict-literal interpretation of Old Testament is not necessarily the most accurate way of determining what the text means.

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The amillennial perspective emphasizes that the coming of the Kingdom of God is a two-part event. The first portion dawned at Christ's first advent (John the Baptist proclaimed at this time, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" – Matthew 3:2). At the cross, Christ won final victory over death and Satan. And then He ascended to reign upon the throne of David forever (Luke 1:32-33; Acts 2:30-31). Now because we "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18) – because of this, the amillennialist sees the final things already accomplished, though not yet seen by sight, but by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7).

An important note is the amillennialist's view of the church in this world: a role of suffering. The Christian will be hated by all, just as was Christ (Matthew 10:22), for a servant is not greater than his master. Seeing this as the church's role on earth – to suffer as did Christ – the amillennialist can hold no hope for an earthly exaltation and longs for the fulfillment of the second stage of the coming of the Kingdom.

This second stage of the amillennial perspective is the final consummation of all the heavenly promises. The Christian will no longer see by faith alone, but by sight. All the shadowy things will pass away and our eternal reign with Christ will begin. The amillennialist, expecting no earthly glory for the church, places all his hope on this heavenly glory.

Glossary of terms related to the end times

Eschatology This is the study of biblical theology concerning how the end of the world as we know it will come about and the second coming of our Lord Jesus to judge the world and then set up His eternal kingdom.

Last Days The end times or the entire period between the first and second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Since Jesus ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives, 40 days after His resurrection, we have been living in the "last days." Eschatology is the body of knowledge concerning the "last things," or the end of the age and the future.

Apostasy In the last days there will be many false teachers causing a falling away from the faith by many into willful rejection of Christ and His salvation. See 1 Timothy 4:1, 2 Timothy 3:1, Matthew 24:24, Mark 13:6. God's elect will be kept and will not fall away.

Millennium (Latin, *mille* = thousand; Greek: *chilloi* = thousand). The belief based on Revelation 20 that Christ will rule on the earth for a long period of time, one thousand years. This period is viewed literally by some, one thousand, actual calendar years, and symbolically by others, as a long period where His work is done on earth. Following are three views on the millennium.

Amillennial (prefix "a" means no). The belief that there will be no literal 1000 year reign of Christ. Thus Revelation 20 is taken symbolically, not literally, by adherents of this view. Amillennialists generally believe that Israel has been permanently set aside for all time and that God's current plan of salvation involves only the church. The millennium is Christ ruling on the earth for a long period through the work of the church.

Premillennial The belief that Christ will return visibly and bodily at the beginning of the literal thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth. He will rule the nations from the actual city of Jerusalem. God will resume salvation work for Israel as a nation immediately after the departure or "rapture" of the true church.

Postmillennial This is the belief that Christ's thousand-year reign is a long period occurring now where the world is being progressively Christianized through the work of the church. Christ will return at the end of this age to take over the earth. Meantime, He is assumed to reign on earth through the church now. Satan was defeated at the cross and is now bound, hence the final triumph of the church in history is assured.

Rapture (In the Latin Bible *rapere* meaning "to catch up," is the translation of the Greek *harpazo*, 1 Thess. 4:17). The coming of Jesus to take His church out of the world, "like a thief in the night", i.e., suddenly, unexpectedly. Dates for this event can not be predicted from the Bible. All Christians affirm Christ's rapture of the church but differ on the timing according to their view of the millennium. Premillennialists are divided among three different views as to when the rapture will occur as related to the tribulation period.

Tribulation Period Postmillennialists and Amillennialists believe this time of trouble and persecution to have already taken place in the first few centuries of the church. Premillennialists see it as still in the future, the end-time period of judgment of the earth with great outpouring of wrath on mankind from God. They see this as the 70th Week of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27,

Revelation 6-18) where this period is said to be 7 years in length. The first-half is normally assumed to be relatively peaceful. The last half of this "week" (3-1/2 years) is "the great tribulation," or "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7) when most of the terrible judgments in the Book of the Revelation occur. The first half of the tribulation period is marked by apparent world peace, especially in the Middle East as Israel's false prophet and the political/military leader of the Western confederation of nations contrive a "successful" peace plan. Isaiah 28:15 calls this treaty Israel's "covenant with death." The onset of the Great Tribulation is marked by failure of this peace treaty and the desecration of the Third Temple in Jerusalem by the "man of sin." During the tribulation period Israel is once again the focus for events in the Bible. All believers hold that the tribulation period will be followed by the millennium.

Pretribulation rapture The view held by premillennialists that Jesus will return to take from the earth His church at the beginning of the tribulation period when believers will be taken from earth to heaven.

Midtribulation rapture The view held by premillennialists that Jesus will return to take from the earth His church half-way through the seven-year tribulation period before the severity of God's wrath is poured out on the earth.

Postribulation rapture The view held by premillennialists that Jesus will return to take from the earth His church at the end of the tribulation period, but prior to the beginning of the Millennium.

The Anti-Christ According to 1 John 2:18, 4:3 and 2 John 7 there will be many antichrists who come denying the deity and authority of Jesus. But many Christians believe there will be one antichrist, far greater and worse than all the rest known as the "man of lawlessness" in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, who will exalt himself above God. He will set himself up in the temple to be worshipped as God. He is also known as the beast (Revelation 13). He will have power from Satan to deceive all nations. He will be defeated by Jesus in the final battle.

The Battle of Armageddon This is spoken of in Revelation 16:16 and 20:1-3 as the final battle where Jesus defeats the Anti-Christ and all his forces. This final victory will lead to the final judgment by Christ of all mankind, the destruction of the current heavens and earth and the establishment of new heavens and new earth where believers will live with Jesus forever.

Day of the LORD An extended period of time during which God openly intervenes in human affairs both in regard to judgment and blessing. In the present age justice is deferred or works out only slowly, judgment is largely withheld or restrained and God's people await the fulfillment of his promises and plans for them. Although Jesus the Lord rules over the universe He has not yet *reigned* on earth. This makes the famous prayer Jesus taught the disciples the most-often prayed and as yet unanswered prayer in the Bible, "...Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven..."

Eternal state The endless state following God's judgment when God's people (true followers of Jesus) will forever be like Jesus with glorified bodies and with Him ruling over the new heavens and the new earth. At the same time unbelievers will be consigned to eternal punishment, the lake of fire.

Parousia Greek word meaning "coming alongside and remaining with" someone. Describes the Second Coming of Jesus for His own. Used in Matthew 24:3,27,37,39; 1 Thess. 4:15, 5:23, 2 Thess 2:1, James 5:7, 8; 2 Peter 1:16, 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:23.

Epiphaneia Greek word meaning "A shining-forth," refers to the visible appearance of Jesus at the close of the age. Used in 1 Tim. 6:14, 2 Tim. 4:1,8; Matt. 24:27, 2 Thess. 2:8; Titus 2:13. The words parousia and epiphaneia are combined in 2 Thess. 2:8, translated "his appearing and his coming."

Apokalupsis The Greek word for "revelation," or "unveiling," or "uncovering." The visible appearing of Jesus to the world in full power and splendor. It also refers to the appearance of the antichrist on the stage of history following the rapture (2 Thess. 2).

Dominion Theology Teaching that the church is responsible for taking over the world in the name and power of Christ. It is held by those who are post-millennialists and is associated with reconstructionism, also known as theonomy.

Replacement Theology The teaching of some who hold that the church has replaced Israel permanently in the plan of God. Usually associated with an amillennial view of eschatology.

Dispensationalism The teaching that history is divided into various time periods during which God moves in the world in certain distinctive ways. There is the "dispensation of innocence," "dispensation of government," "dispensation of law," "dispensation of grace," and "kingdom economy," etc. The Greek word means "economy" or "administration." Several different schools of dispensationalism exist. Dispensationalists hold that the nation of Israel will have a key role in the end times and remains as God's chosen people separate and distinct from the church.