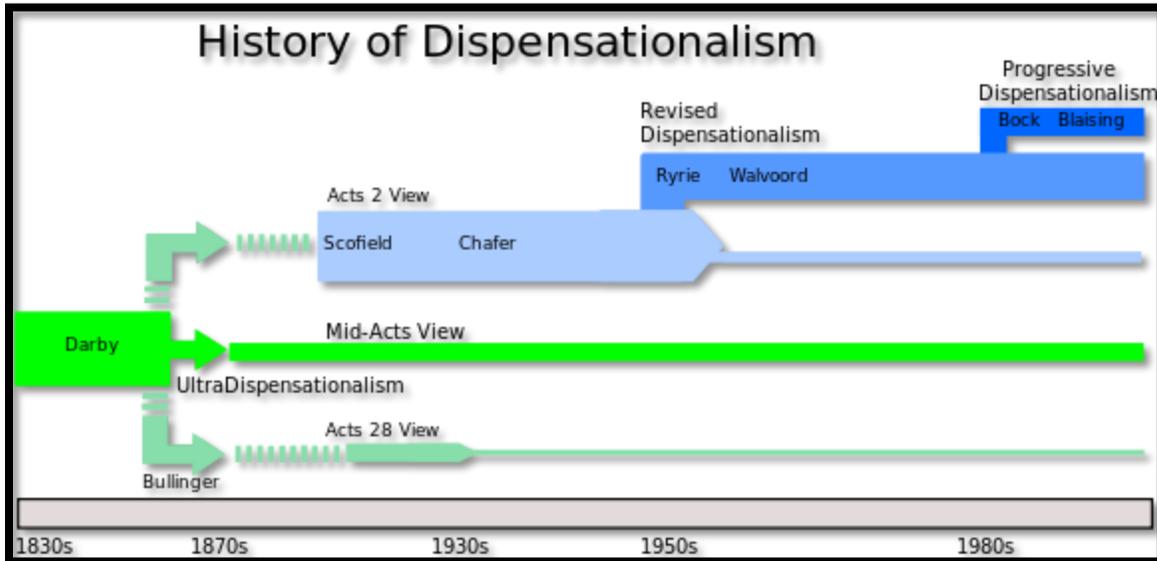


# Problems of “End Times” Doctrines

## I. History of End Times Teaching - DISPENSATIONALISM

- A. John Nelson Darby and the Plymouth Brethren, 1830s
- B. Inclusion in the Scofield Bible, 1909
- C. Popular writers of the 1970s-2000 (Hal Lindsey, Tim LeHaye)
- D. CONCLUSION: It is NOT a doctrine of Biblical origin or ancient church history



## The Rapture?

### I. The common belief regarding the Secret Rapture

- A. The Belief on the Rapture (Latin, *raepitius*, from 1 Thes 4:17 for “caught up”)
  1. The Rapture, when the Church is “caught up” (1 Thessalonians 4:17), does not take place at the visible Second Coming of Jesus Christ, but seven years before it.
    - a. The true Church of today will escape the Tribulation and will not have to face the Antichrist and the Mark.
    - b. Real Christians will be taken up, and all their belongings remain
    - c. Dead Christians will be raised up and taken as well
  2. Those who miss the Rapture will have a second chance during the seven years of Tribulation to be saved.
    - a. The rest of the world will have to wait 7 years for Jesus' return with those Christians, then a 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection for the Old Testament faithful
      - (1) When He returns, He will begin His reign of a 1000 years
      - (2) At the end of that reign will be a 3<sup>rd</sup> resurrection for all
  3. These things may precede

- a. The nations of the world must unify their currency onto a universal standard.
- b. There will be peace in Israel (Ezekiel 38).
- c. There will be a one-world government, to correspond to the 7th beast of Revelation, prior to the Antichrist's 8th beast government.
- d. The Jewish temple in Jerusalem must be rebuilt in its original place.
- e. Observance of Old Testament commandments concerning animal sacrifices must be reinstated.
- f. There will be a great falling away and the AntiChrist will be revealed.

4. Passages cited by those who believe:

John 14:3 Php 3:20-21. I Cor 15:53 I Thes 4:15-17 Matt. 24:38-41

- a. all of these passages reference a day of judgment

B. Origin of the belief

1. 1830 – Margaret McDonald

*The rise in belief in the "Pre-Tribulation" rapture is sometimes attributed to a 15-year old Scottish-Irish girl named Margaret McDonald (a follower of Edward Irving), who in 1830 had a vision that was later published in 1861.*

2. The idea was taken by Brethren or Plymouth Brethren organized by John Nelson Darby (1800-1882).

- a. Darby translation of the Bible
- b. Scofield Bible of 1909
- 3. Hal Lindsey, *Late Great Planet Earth* 1970
- 4. *Left Behind*, Tim LeHaye 1995

5. Today:

- a. [www.RaptureReady.com](http://www.RaptureReady.com)
- b. [www.ThePropheticyears.org](http://www.ThePropheticyears.org)

6. The Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran churches deny a rapture apart from "once for all"

II. The Error of Rapture Doctrine

A. The passages used to support it do not

- 1. All Scripture refers to a single day of Judgment - 2 Pet 3:7 1 John 4:17
- 2. All Scriptures refer to one Judgment for all - Mt 25:32, Ro 14:10

B. There are many contradictions to the descriptions of the return of the Lord in Scripture and the doctrine of Rapture

- 1. That it will happen unnoticed (Secret Rapture) - Rev 1:7 Acts 1:11, I Thes 4:16
- 2. That brethren would be removed from tribulation - John 16:33, 17:15, 1 Thes 3:4, Rev 1:9
  - a. note - "the" tribulation occurred 67A, per previous classes
- 3. That when Jesus returns for His own, anything will remain - 2 Pet 3:11
- 4. When Jesus returns, His reign will END, not BEGIN - 1 Cor 15:23

The Tribulation?

I. The Tribulation

A. Jesus spoke of a tribulation

Matthew 24:21 *"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be."*

B. He said it would be:

1. When Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed

Matthew 24:2 *And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."*

2. In the lifetime of His listeners

Matthew 24:34 *"Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place."*

C. John experienced it

Revelation 1:9 *I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ*

D. The Tribulation of Scripture occurred 2000 years ago, when Jerusalem was destroyed

E. CONCLUSION: The Tribulation doctrine in dispensationalism is NOT a Biblical doctrine

## The AntiChrist?

I. Who do people think the anti-Christ(s) is?

A. Modern Evangelical Statements

1. Jerry Falwell – “the anti-Christ (is a man and) is alive on the earth right now. He is probably a Jewish male” – 1999

2. Countdown to Armageddon.org – (Hagee, Lindsey, other protestant leaders)

*“The Antichrist will rise to power on a wave of world euphoria, as he temporarily saves the world from its desperate economic, military & political problems with a brilliant 7-year plan for world peace, economic stability & religious freedom. The Antichrist could well rise out of the current chaos in the former Soviet Union. The prophet Ezekiel names him as the ruler of "Magog", a name that Biblical scholars agree denotes a country or region of peoples to the north of Israel. Many have interpreted this to mean modern day Russia. His power base will include the leading nations of Europe, whose leaders, the Bible says, will "give their power & strength unto the beast." Under the final terms of the Covenant, Jerusalem will likely be declared an international city to which Judaism, Islam & Christianity will have equal rights. Scripture indicates that the Jews will be permitted to rebuild their Temple on Mt. Moriah, where they revive their ancient rituals of animal sacrifice. According to prophecy the Antichrist will not only be a master of political intrigue, but also a military genius. Daniel describes several major wars that he fights during his 7-year reign, apparently against the U.S. & Israel, who will oppose him during the second half of his reign.”*

3. Early belief on the antiChrist was the Pope; some identify the arrest of the Pope by the Napoleonic army as evidence of this (Luther, other reformers; Pentecostal interpretation)

B. Catholic Belief (taken from the Catholic Encyclopedia, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Edited by Robert C. Broderick, 1987

*There is no specific one person or thing indicated by the term. Rather the title of Antichrist may be given to any person, idea, or group of persons who opposed, are opposing, or intend to oppose Christ and His Church. In particular this title is applicable only to the one enemy who will appear before the Last Judgment and draw many faithful away before being defeated by Christ.*

*St. Paul calls this enemy "the man of lawlessness" (2 Thes. 2:3); this is not to be considered literally but as apocalyptic language in keeping with Rv. (12:12). In brief, it is the one who will attempt to substitute himself for God.*

*The opinion of many scholars of Scripture is that the Antichrist is not the incarnation of antichristian hostility but rather an eschatological personage who will appear at the end of the world. The Church that Christ founded is of course guaranteed against any form of Antichrist until the end of time.*

#### C. Mormon belief

1. Early Antichrist: Korihor is an important character in the Book of Mormon whose rise and fall happen in about 74 B.C. and whose entire story is told in Alma chapter 30. Korihor is introduced as Anti-Christ because he preached against the prophecies of the coming of Christ.
2. Latter Days Antichrist: This great antichrist which is to stand as the antagonist of Christ in the last days, and which is to be overthrown when he comes to cleanse the earth and usher in millennial righteousness, is the church of the devil

#### II. What does the Bible Say about the Antichrist

##### A. AntiChrist – in Greek *antichristos*, *anti* = contrast / substitute, *Christos* = anointed one

1. Denotes opposition or substitution of Christ

##### B. Places where mentioned:

1. John directly mentions *antichristos* in: I John 2:18, 22, 4:3, II John 7
2. Paul: a man of perdition who substitutes himself for Christ – II Thessalonians 2

##### C. The Bible is plain on the topic of antichrists

1. They are false teachers, NOT world leaders
2. They were present in the times both Paul and John wrote

##### D. What about the beasts of Revelation, 666, or the two false witnesses

1. Revelation 13 – two beasts,
  - a. Daniel reveals that one beast is the fourth world empire from Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 7:23, Revelation 17:9)
  - b. The 2<sup>nd</sup> beast is a man; he controls the first beast (Rev 13:12,18)
    - (1) The number is 666, early on ascribed to a Roman Emperor
2. The Dragon is Satan (Revelation 12:9)
3. The False witnesses are very likely the men of perdition from Paul's letter

## Armageddon

#### I. Armageddon: will it happen?

*"Armageddon is actually a battle. According to the Bible it's the battle where God finally comes in and takes over the world and rules it the way it should have been ruled all along. After Armageddon comes 1000 years of peace and plenty.....But certain things must happen first. The Bible tells us that the world will be run by a dictator heading up a worldwide government. This man (also known as the Antichrist) will rise to power on a*

*wave of world euphoria, as he temporarily saves the world from its desperate economic, military & political problems with a brilliant 7-year plan for world peace, economic stability & religious freedom. How do we know it's going to take place any time soon? Well before leaving the Earth Jesus gave his disciples signs. Things that would precede His return. These signs are greatly expounded on at our site, but suffice it to say that all of them are happening right now and with great intensity....."* quote from Countdown to Armageddon, at [www.Countdown.org](http://www.Countdown.org)

A. Many teach Armageddon is the battle at the end of the tribulation period

1. Jesus will come and destroy the Antichrist
2. He will bring the raptured Christians with him

B. Some Variations

1. Catholic Church: Symbolic of the final defeat of evil (postmillennialism)
2. Jehovah's Witness: Christ began ruling in 1917, and will begin Armageddon while Christians are on earth; then we can rebuild earth as a paradise
3. Mormons: Christ will appear in the Temple at Temple Lot in Missouri, and then the world will amass against Israel (Mormons), and a nuclear war will save them

I. Will This Armageddon Really Happen?

A. No, since there is in fact no:

1. Secret Rapture
2. End of Time Tribulation
3. Single World Ruler AntiChrist

B. What about John's Revelation

1. It is clear that the events in Revelation were meant to be in that time

Revelation 1:1 ....things which must shortly take place;

Revelation 1:3....for the time is near;

Revelation 1:19 (things which have happened, which are happening, and which will happen)

Revelation 22:6 .... the things which must shortly take place.;

Revelation 22:7 "Behold, I am coming quickly!" .....

Revelation 22:10 ....the time is at hand.;

Revelation 22:20 ..."Surely I am coming quickly."

C. What Does the Bible Say?

1. The Bible only mentions this event ONE time
2. In that mention, there is no suggestion of a battle
3. Only the Dragon (Satan), the beast (Ancient Rome), and the false prophet (false teachers) are mentioned
  - a. The Dragon is Satan
  - b. The Beast is Rome and the Roman Emperor
  - c. The False prophet could be either Judaism (Galatians 1, Acts 15) or the false teachers in Christianity (the antichrists of II Thessalonians 2, I John)

D. What Does it Mean?

1. Megiddo is an ancient city
  - a. Deborah and Barak fought there (Judges 5:19)
  - b. Josiah was defeated there (II Chronicles 35:22)
2. In Hebrew: "Harmegedan"

- a. Har = "Hill"
- b. Gedad = "Gathering"
- c. Hill of Gathering

### III. The Symbolism of Armageddon

- A. If one were to invade Judea, this was the route to be taken
  - 1. The Assyrians, Babylonians and Romans all camped here to invade Judah
  - 2. It was possible that the Romans were camped there as John wrote Revelation
  - 3. Symbolic meaning: Drawing the reader to mind of an invasion to conquer
- B. This is the hill of Gathering
  - 1. Here Satan, and his servants, Rome and Judaism, are gathering
- C. This was the hill where the last free king of Judah perished
  - 1. The place where liberty was lost, giving it a fearful emotional context
- D. The Bible Does NOT mention or infer a Battle at that place
  - 1. It is about gathering against Christianity
  - 2. These things destroy themselves in further reading

## **PRE-MILLENNIALISM?**

There are a number of doctrines that could be found in this section pertaining to the interpretation of the prophetic kingdom of Christ, and the variations thereof have themselves been the subjects of many writings. The purpose and intent of this chapter then is to keep to a limited examination of the prophetic kingdom, and to prepare an answer from Scripture for those who might ask our belief.

Millennium is a term used to encompass the event John describes in Revelation 20:

*Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

This thousand years (millennium) is mentioned six times in Revelation 20, but nowhere else in Scripture. The mention here is tied to a number of events. It begins with the binding of Satan. It is described as the reigning of Christ and His saints. It concludes with the ultimate judgment. The reign is identified with the first and second resurrection, and ends with the second death.

The book of Revelation contains a number of symbolic emissions which are themselves the sources of countless false doctrines which are accepted to varying degrees by multiple persons.

These doctrines, including the Rapture, the Antichrist, and the Tribulation, will be dealt with as individual appendages to the doctrine of pre-millennialism subsequent to that topic.

Pre-millennialism could be summed up as the belief that Jesus Christ, upon His future and certain return, would establish a kingdom on earth, and reign with His saints. Often, terms such as “end times” or “last days” are liberally applied these doctrines, and proof texts cited include in addition to Revelation, Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21.

There are a number of problems these doctrines present. The fair-minded Bible student would soon find themselves burdened down with a number of contradictions in ideas, and would either reject the doctrine as false, or accept that the Old Testament prophets, the apostles, and even Jesus Himself were false prophets.

To begin, the prophets spoke of the kingdom of Christ as an event at a specific time. Daniel saw this kingdom being established in the days of the Roman Empire, the fourth kingdom after Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon:

*Daniel 2:44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.*

Other prophets spoke of this coming kingdom:

*Isaiah 2:1-4 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD'S house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.*

These prophecies promised a kingdom that spanned the world, that was the source of understanding, and that heralded peace.

Since the timeframe of these promises clearly pointed to the coming of Jesus Christ in the first century AD, the question becomes, did Jesus establish the kingdom? For many, the answer is “no”, because they are minded towards a kingdom that was physical and literal. But what did Jesus say?

*John 18:33-36 Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew?"*

*Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."*

This solves the need for a literal kingdom to be manifested. But many still reject the prophetic fulfillment of a kingdom because they do not see the established promises of a kingdom met. Yet if we examine Scriptures, we find that the mountain has been set, and the Jerusalem is a spiritual one:

*Hebrews 12:22-23 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,*

We can look and find that the great peace has been established, a peace between the nations of men in Christ, and with the greatest enemy a sinful man could have:

*Ephesians 2:14-16 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.*

*Romans 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*

So we see that the prophetic promises were kept in Christ. This leads us to ask, "what is the kingdom"? The word we translate as "kingdom" (in Greek, *Basileia*) is more rightly understood as an authority or rule, rather than a place. Thus, Jesus proclaims He had received the kingdom when He emerged from the grave and said:

*Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*

But what of John's Revelation, particularly chapter 20? It is not of great difficulty, if we again approach the Bible as students and not masters. John tells us seven times that the text of Revelation was of immediate occurrence, not one in the far future:

1. "Must soon take place" (1:1)
2. "The time is near" (1:3)
3. "Things which must shortly take place" (22:6)
4. "I am coming quickly" (22:7)
5. "The time is at hand" (22:10)

6. "I am coming quickly" (22:12)  
7. "I am coming quickly" (22:20)

We cannot mistake the immediacy of this prophetic vision, and to apply a long term application is to commit a textual violence to the clear theme.

Too, if we examine the 20th chapter independently, we could find clues to the events that again place us in a historical context, not a future one.

John said that the millennium began with the binding of Satan. We can find this event mentioned in the Gospels as an event that occurred with Jesus' death and resurrection:

*John 12:31 "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.*

*Matthew 12:28-29 "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.*

John said that the millennium is characterized by the saints reigning with Christ. John and others described this reigning as an event all believers partake of when we are walking in the doctrine of Christ:

*Revelation 1:5-6 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen*

*1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

*Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.*

Scripture gives us an understanding of these passages, teaching us that this kingdom of prophecy was manifested in the authority of Christ, and in the church of Christ. Thus, we can perceive that the millennium is the period of this new covenant of Christ.