

# ***IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION: SECTION 2: MILLENNIAL, TRIBULATION, RAPTURE***

## **1. Millennial Theology (EDT & McKim)**

- a. Millennial Kingdom: A thousand year reign of Christ...what does it mean? Revelation 20:1-10 it is a time period in which Satan is bound; Christ reigns with the resurrected martyrs. All of mankind will know the peace and prosperity of Christ's righteous rule. There are three views of the millennial theory: Amillennialism, Post and Pre. All contain aspects that we believe. They all take a perspective and emphasize it.
  - i. Amillennialism – Augustine thought the millennial reign of Christ was symbolic not literal. There is not literal period of time in which Christ reigns on earth. Good and evil will always exist on the earth until the second coming of Christ then there will be the resurrection and the judgment. They emphasize that Christ's reign on earth is now. The Kingdom of God is upon us through the rule of Church by the Word and the Spirit.
  - ii. Post millennialism – This view of the millennial reign focuses on the aspects of the Kingdom of God that are among us now will get better in the future and come to fruition someday. Emphasis on preaching and teaching to transform lives and doing good works to change our world. The age of the millennial will not be much different than now. Evil will not be eliminated, but reduced and Christian principles and morality will be embraced by most. The church will play a great role in the millennial age. The millennial age ends with the second coming of Christ then the final judgment.
  - iii. Pre millennialism – Literal reign of Christ on earth. Teaches that Christ will establish an earthly Kingdom ruled by His Divine power. The natural will be connected to the supernatural in a way never before experienced by fallen mankind. The return of Christ precedes the millennial reign. The reign will follow the tribulations spoken of in the book of Revelation. It is more of an abrupt rule in which Christ reigns, rather than gradual. The Jews will play a significant role. The curse will be removed from the earth. Evil will be restrained by Christ's presence and power. Despite the ideal earthly rule of Christ there will be a final rebellion against God after the millennial time is up. Some believe that during this time period the resurrected martyrs will receive glorified bodies and inhabit the earth with all of its inhabitants.
  
- b. WHAT DO I BELIEVE: I believe the Kingdom of God is upon us...Jesus said that and we cannot deny that among God's people it is present. But the Amillennialists fail to capture the literal writings about the millennial reign of Christ as a time period on earth and is literal. I believe that the millennial reign will be a literal 1,000 year period of time. I agree that we need to do our best to make our world a better place to live. Preaching and teaching about holiness and righteous living are worthy causes. Standing up for morality is a must to promote God's Kingdom on earth. But I do not believe that the earth is going to get better and usher in the millennial reign of Christ. I believe mankind will get worse most likely. I believe the Church is supposed to be the example of what can be accomplished when fallen mankind attempts to live in a relationship under the reign of Christ. I believe the millennial reign will come after the tribulations of Revelation. I do believe that it is possible that the martyr's are resurrected and reign with Christ among all the inhabitants. I also believe that the earth will prosper like never before and mankind will flourish. But there will still be lasting effects of sin and evil, but the more Christ literally reigns the less and less this will be. At the millennial's

conclusion we will face the final rebellion, the judgment and then the New Heaven, New Earth, and New Jerusalem.

## 2. Tribulation Theology (EDT & McKim)

- a. The Great Tribulation: refers to the eschatological time period of tribulations. In general tribulation simply means “the suffering of God’s people.” But what Jesus and the book of Revelation reveal are something so great that no one has ever witnessed anything like it before. This tribulation will be worldwide and impact all of mankind.

i. SCRIPTURES:

1. Matthew 24:21 For at that time there will be great tribulation, the kind that hasn't taken place from the beginning of the world until now and never will again!
2. Revelation 2:22; Look! I will throw her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her practices.
3. Revelation 7:14 I said to him, "Sir, you know." Then he told me: These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
4. Daniel 12:1; At that time Michael the great prince who stands watch over your people will rise up. There will be a time of distress such as never has occurred since nations came into being until that time. But at that time all your people who are found written in the book will escape.

ii. TRIBULATION TIME PERIOD:

1. Indicates a dispensation (sequence of events) over a seven year period of suffering that will occur prior to the second coming of Christ and the beginning of the millennial reign.

iii. TRIBULATION VIEWS:

1. Pretribulation – Rapture takes place prior to the 7 years of the great tribulation.
2. Midtribulation – Rapture takes place midway through the 7-years of the great tribulation. Church is not fully exempt.
3. Posttribulation – Church is not exempt. The Great Tribulation is simply an intensification of the tribulations the church has experienced throughout the Church Age. The rapture is after the Tribulation is over. Another view is that the Rapture may occur at any moment and we will view history and see the tribulations were fulfilled throughout the history of the church.

## 3. RAPTURE:

- a. Definition – Greek word (Raptus)...meaning “carried off” (MCKIM)
- i. We believe that this means we will be “carried off” into the sky when Christ returns...literally “raised” from the earth.

b. SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE:

- i. 1 Corinthians 15:51-53
- ii. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17
- iii. Acts 1:11
- iv. (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 13) – address this as well but more discretely.

- c. We have to believe there is a LITERAL, PHYSICAL RETURN – also CAUGHT UP (Rapture) RETURN...Acts 1:11...this is great evidence. As Jesus went, He will return, and so shall we be with Him.
  - i. CAUGHT UP: Daniel 7:13; Matt 24:29-31; 1 Thess 4:17; Acts 1:11
  - ii. When this happens we must know He has come back!
  
- d. The Rapture has some issues:
  - i. Great Mandate - This earth will not be destroyed.
  - ii. Reconciling the Second Coming into the Rapture and the Glorious Appearing.
    - 1. The attempt to reconcile the rapture and the Glorious Appearing is difficult because the Scriptures do not speak of two separate events or at least the distinction is not clear. Does the Rapture and Glorious Appearing represent the Second Coming one in the same or as two separate events?
    - 2. Does the church age end before the tribulation? This is an important question to help us figure out the sequence of events.
    - 3. Does the Rapture occur between Revelation 3& 4? I believe so for the church is never mentioned again. The church age has come to an end and the End Times have begun. This is my view. Therefore, the Rapture ushers in the tribulation time period and the Glorious Appearing concludes it and begins the millennial reign on earth.
    - 4. Or is the Glorious Appearing and the Rapture one event? If so, then post-tribulation doctrine is the correct position; possibly mid-tribulation.
  - iii. Regardless, we need to be ready for the rapture. We will meet our Lord in the air; it will be physical and literal.
  - iv. Let us also be prepared to be persecuted, even martyred for our faith. His Kingdom is bigger than our lives. Christ is worthy for the Lamb was slain for us. Suffering is a part of following Christ. (This is hard for me to reconcile, but we must acknowledge the possibility that we might live through the tribulation.)
  - v. The timing is a tough question...but this does not take away from the Biblical evidence that Christ will return and all believers can agree and embrace this truth.

**NOTES by PASTOR CHRIS McCOMBS, Summer 2009**