

LESSON 3: PROCEED WITH CAUTION

Opening Prayer: Holy Father, sometimes our world seems to be spinning out of control, especially when we see the bad guys winning. Open our eyes to see You in complete control and work through us to open the eyes of our friends and neighbors to put their trust and confidence in Your ultimate victory through Jesus Christ. We pray in His Name. Amen.

- Think about a situation that looked hopeless to you but God turned it out for your benefit.

Precautions:

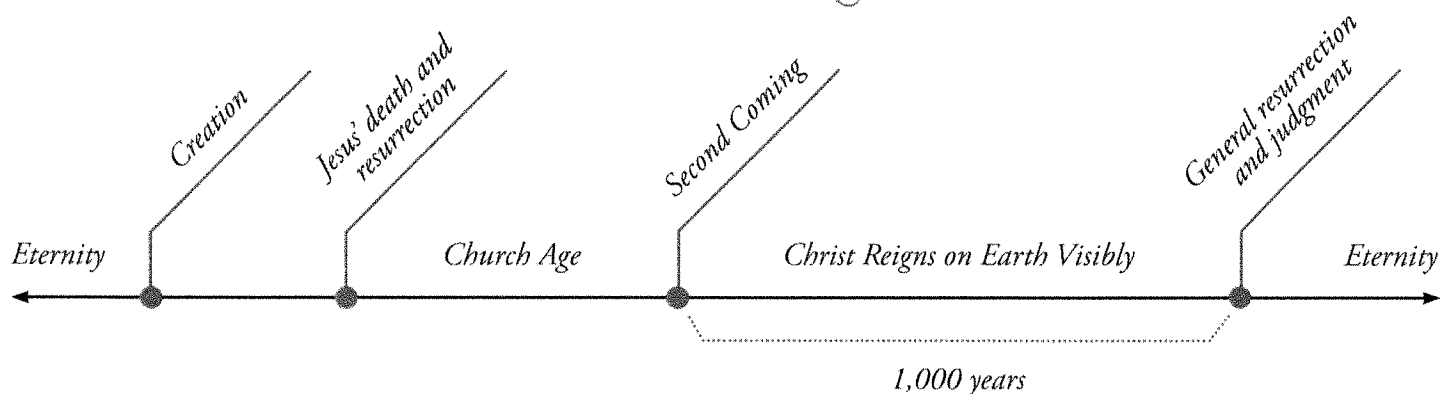
Anyone who reads the Bible and, especially, wishes to study Revelation, should be aware of some precautions:

- Keep Revelation consistent with other inspired writings. In interpreting Scripture, the clear passages always illuminate the unclear.
- Interpret Scripture literally unless you are told not to do so. Revelation is obviously symbolic, not literal. You can't take things literally (e.g., 1,000 years) in one spot and then figuratively in another.
- Avoid the idea that Revelation is chronological, i.e., first this will happen, then that, and then something else.
- Remember, much of what John describes cannot be accurately pictured because of the limitations of human language.
- Do not try to find the meaning of each tiny detail.
- As you study, try to read and understand the message like a first-century believer might have looked at the information.

MILLENNIUM and LEFT BEHIND

Millennial theories fall into three main categories:

PREMILLENNIALISM

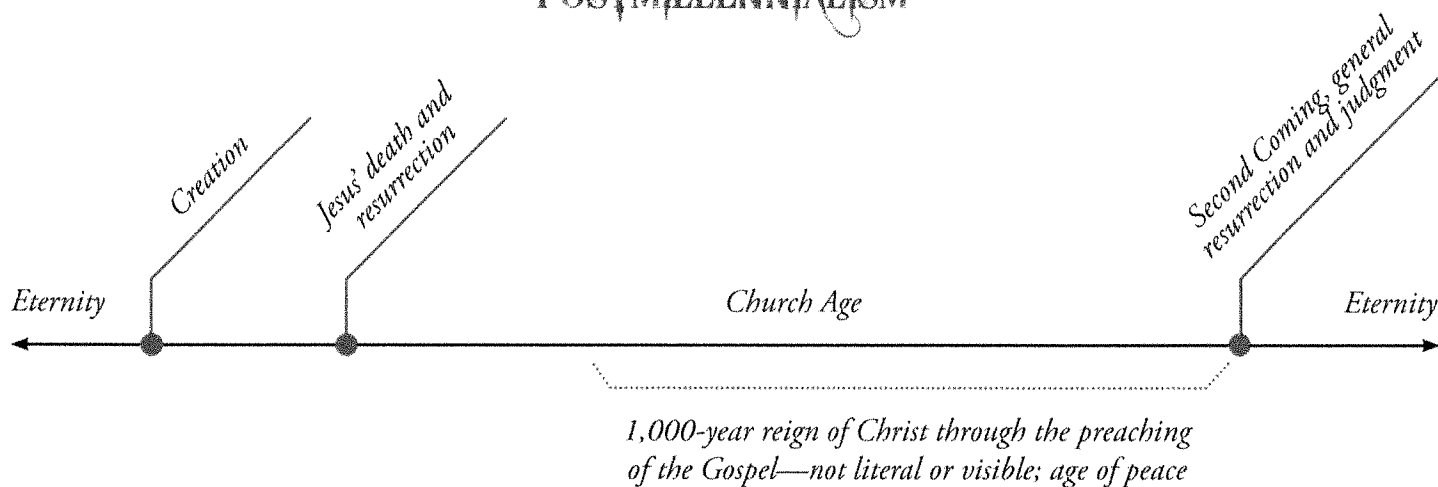


- It interprets the Bible, even symbolic writing, literally.
- It expects God's kingdom to be restored in Israel.
- It has Jesus reigning from Jerusalem for 1,000 years.
- Then will come the judgment.

There are problems with premillennialism:

- Apocryphal language can't be consistently literal.
- For example, does heaven really have gold streets? Is the devil really a dragon?
- With Jesus reigning in Jerusalem, wouldn't everyone convert?
- Scripture consistently reports Jesus will return for the purpose of judgment. (Read Matthew 24.)

POSTMILLENNIALISM



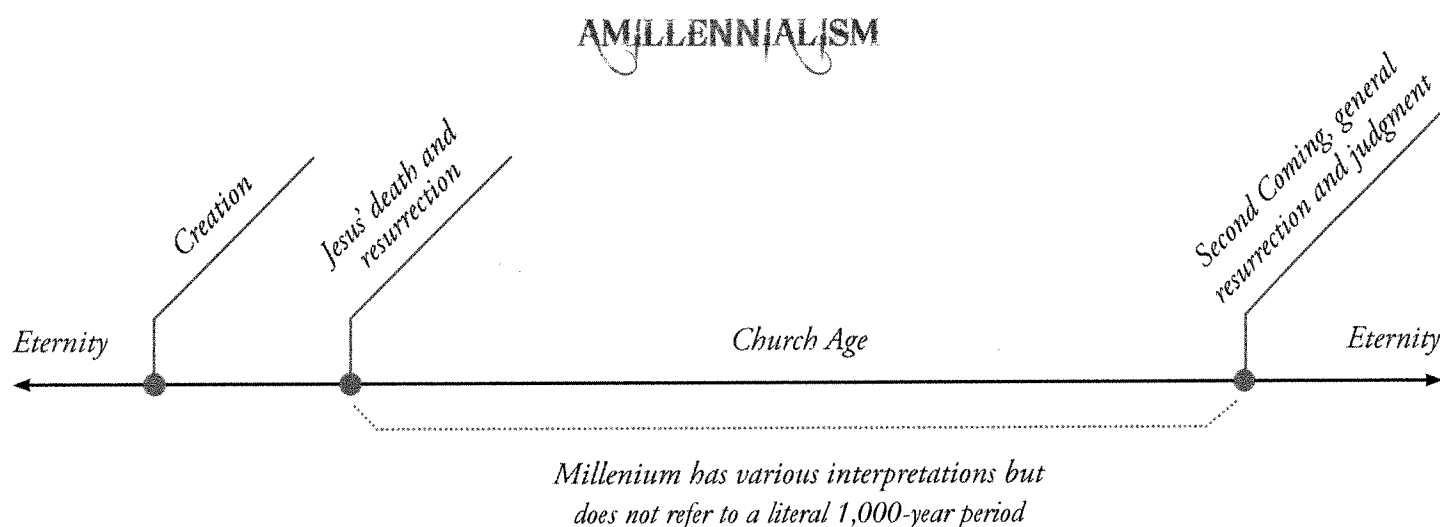
- The world will be converted to Christ.
- The Jews will be restored to Israel.
- A millennial period of peace will be enjoyed for 1,000 years.
- At the end of this period of peace, Christ will return.

There are problems with postmillennialism.

- Apocryphal language can't be consistently literal.
- God alone knows when the end is coming. In the end times, the world will be on a downhill skid—not enjoying a 1,000-year period of peace.

Read Matthew 24:21-23.

- 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.
- 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.
- 23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There He is!' do not believe it.



This approach interprets literal passages literally and apocalyptic passages symbolically.

It maintains the 1,000 years can be interpreted properly using appropriate definitions of symbols.

- Most conservative theologians view the “thousand years” of Revelation as a symbolic number. Here is an example:
- John’s numbers usually have a symbolic meaning.
- “Ten” was the number that meant a *round* number or a *complete* number.
- “A thousand” is the cube of 10. This intensifies the meaning of the original number. Therefore, “a thousand” is the roundest number or understood as *the rest of time*.

For those who are not yet convinced, remember this:

- The “thousand years” is mentioned nowhere else in the Bible.
 - The concept is almost unknown in apocalyptic literature.
 - It does not fit with the rest of Scripture.
- explaining all the scary stuff in revelation –

