

Christian Doctrine

The End Times (Part 5)

Three Main Views of the End Times

Three Main Views of the End Time Events

Having looked at key verses relating to prophecy, let us now look at the main views as to how prophecy all fits together:

➤ **Postmillennialism**

- Overview: The church will continue to expand (Matt. 13:31-32), eventually resulting in a “Christianized” world. This will bring about the kingdom of God on earth, as good overcomes evil. Christ will return after (“post”) this occurs. Revelation is seen as symbolic of past events.
- Critique: The positive outlook is encouraging, but seems to go beyond how Scripture portrays things at the time of Christ’s return (II Tim. 3:12-13; Matt. 24:15-31). Plus, it is difficult to find the fulfillment of Revelation 7-18 (the tribulation period) in past events (example Rev. 8:7-12).

➤ **Amillennialism**

- Overview: Christ reigns today in a spiritual sense, though He will return one day. The OT promises are fulfilled in the church, so no future earthly reign is anticipated (Luke 17:20-21; Gal. 3:6-29). Revelation is seen in a spiritual sense, describing Christ’s life and events today.
- Critique: Spiritualizing concepts can lead to interpretive problems (for example, is Rev. 20:1-6 really occurring today?). Also, it is unclear how the church truly fulfills all the OT promises (land promise, etc.). The OT points to Gentile blessings (seen in NT as coming through Christ), but still emphasizes fulfillment to Israel (note Rom. 11).

➤ **Premillennialism**

- Overview: God will fulfill His purpose for the church, but apostasy in the world will grow. Following the tribulation, Christ will return and then (“pre”) establish His kingdom on earth (Matt. 24-25) fulfilling His promises to Israel. Revelation is seen as referring to real future events.
- Critique: This view holds to a more literal interpretation of Scripture, believing events prophesied will occur just as they are described, though some may argue that prophecy was not intended to be interpreted literally. However, prophecy already fulfilled (i.e. events of Christ’s life) came to pass literally, which support a literal view.

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