

The Book of Revelation

Expresses a world view common in Jewish “apocalyptic literature”

1. History is moving toward a climax
2. Evil is real
3. What seems permanent/unconquerable is not
4. We can catch important glimpses of God’s work...but not the whole
5. We are accountable! Be faithful! Watch!
6. God is in charge and WILL destroy evil and vindicate faithfulness
 - this will begin with the coming of the Messiah [“Messiah” is Hebrew for the Greek, “Christ,” and the English “Anointed”]
 - Messiah’s presence will begin the “Messianic Age” = “the Latter/Last Days”
 - The phrase “Last Days” does not necessarily indicate that the period of time is short. The “last days” may be short or long (*like the final minutes of a basketball game*)

In Christian Apocalyptic literature

7. Christ/Messiah *has* come, and not all is well. He comes first “as a lamb.”
8. Messiah’s work will not be complete until there is a second, final coming as a judge and conqueror
9. This life is not all that there is. There is more to come: a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21-22)

Our call is to live vibrantly, hopefully, and sacrificially “NOW” (in Act 1) despite the presence of evil and struggle believing that there is a “THEN” (an Act 2) where justice will prevail

Jesus and The New Testament on the timing of the end

Matthew 24:36-44

³⁶ **But about that day and hour no one knows**, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father . . . ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding meat together; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴² **Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming . . .** ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for **the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.**

2 Peter 3: 8-9

⁸ **with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day.** ⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is **patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.**

What About the Millennium?

There is only one passage in one book in the Bible that mentions the millennium: Revelation 20:1-7 – and there is **no clear-cut explanation**

So there are different views . . .

1. Post-Millennial

Jesus comes again after the millennium which is NOW!

The “1000 year” millennium is somewhat literal – a golden age toward the end of history: a long period of growing prosperity, righteousness and peace in which the world will eventually become Christian.

(This view was popular in the 1800’s, but the advent of the horrors of WWI put a damper on its popularity)

2. Pre-Millennial

Jesus comes again and initiates the millennium, after his return.

The millennium is in the future...a literal 1000 years.

There is a period of great tribulation, either before Jesus returns and initiates the millennium, or as the millennium ends.

Many Christians who hold this view believe that Jesus will save his people from this tribulation by the rapture – suddenly removing them to heaven (see Matthew 24:38-41 – which is open to various interpretations)

(This view remains popular especially in the United States, and is a mainstay of Christian radio and books today. It was first proposed and then made popular by the publication of the Scofield Bible in 1909, and is central to Hal Lindsay’s book, The Late Great Planet Earth, and Tim LaHaye’s Left Behind series)

3. A-Millennial

The millennium is figurative and represents the present reign of Christ through the Church from the resurrection on the first Easter until the end of time when Christ returns.

(Generally the Presbyterian view)

4. Pan-Millennial ?!

In the end, everything will all _____ out!