

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

1) 06 March	1Thessalonians 1:1-10	Commended
2) 13 March	1Thessalonians 2:1-12	Shared
3) 20 March	1Thessalonians 2:13-20	Response Required
4) 27 March	1Thessalonians 3:1-13	Encouraged
5) 03 April	1Thessalonians 4:1-12	Demonstrated
6) 10 April	1Thessalonians 4:13-18	Promised
7) 17 April	Matthew 28	Risen
8) 24 April	1Thessalonians 5:1-11	Returning
9) 01 May	1Thessalonians 5:12-28	Living
10) 08 May	2Thessalonians 1:1-12	Enduring
11) 15 May	2Thessalonians 2:1-12	Observing
12) 22 May	2Thessalonians 2:13-17	Praying
13) 29 May	2Thessalonians 3:1-18	Waiting

INTRODUCTION

- When is the Rapture (lit. "caught up")?
- How do we prepare for it, and is it imminent?
- One thing for sure – Every day brings us one day closer.
- There are 2 main Premil Positions: 1) Historic & 2) Dispensational

Historic Premillennialism. This belief was held by a large percentage of Christians "during the first 3 centuries of the Christian era, and is found in the works of Papias, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Methodius, Commodianus, and Lactantius."

1. The Antichrist first appears on earth & the 7-year Tribulation begins
2. Next comes the Rapture (post-Tribulation)
3. Then Christ and his Church return to earth to rule for a Millennium. The forces of evil will be conquered (for the most part), and the resurrected faithful will live during these 1000 years of relative peace in Jerusalem while occupying spiritual bodies alongside of those born in this new era.
4. After this period, all people are judged. The faithful will spend eternity on a new earth (not in heaven).
5. After Christianity became the official religion of Rome in the fourth century CE, this was declared a heresy and suppressed.

Dispensational Premillennialism. (a.k.a. Dispensationalism) Premillennialism, declared a heresy in ancient times, was reintroduced circa 1830. Most people credit John N. Darby with its resurrection. He was a minister of the Church of Ireland, a denomination in the Anglican communion, and the founder of the Plymouth Brethren. However, author Dave MacPherson claims that British pastor Edward Irving was the actual person responsible, and that a conspiracy was organized to give Darby the credit. (Dave MacPherson, "The Rapture Plot," Millennium Press, (2000)).

- Premillennialism received general acceptance by most Fundamentalists and other Evangelical Christians after the publishing of the Scofield Reference Bible in 1909. As in Historic Premillennialism, the Tribulation is believed to precede the second coming of Christ, and the subsequent establishment of the millennial kingdom -- a thousand-year golden age on Earth. The Final Judgment follows the millennium.
- But theologians are divided over the timing of the Rapture (i.e., Pre, Mid, or Post-Trib).

Passage	Comments
1Thes 4:13-18	<p>Are the following words/teachings truly comforting?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vv13-15. All of God's Saints, presumably OT & NT Saints, who have died will return with Jesus (so, presumably, they are with Him now) • vv16-17. Others who are alive when Jesus returns with a BIG angelic trumpet blast will remain alive to be "caught up" or "Raptured" to meet our Lord in the air • These words are comforting if our loved ones go with us and all of our bodily pain is removed at this event

Passage	Comments
Comfort or Concern?	<p>This Passage, However, Begs More Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When will this Rapture event happen? 2. What are the signs leading up to the Rapture? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will Jesus find any faith on the earth? ..Luke 18:8 • Or will life be relatively tranquil?Luke 17:26 • Or will it be tumultuousLuke 12:53 3. Will life be chaotic on earth following the Rapture or will the Rapture of God's saints hardly be noticed? 4. Will airplanes, ships, cars, and trains crash if pilots and drivers are raptured? 5. Will babies, toddlers, and teenagers be left behind, or will one or both parents be left behind?
Answers from a Pre-Trib outlook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The answers to some of the questions above are dependent on one's Pre- or Mid- or Post-Trib position • From a Pre-Trib perspective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Q1. The Pre-Trib Rapture is possibly the kick-off event for the 7-year Trib, but not necessarily so. It is conceivable the 7-year Trib could occur years after the Rapture. The Tribulation is not dependent on the Rapture, but on the revealing of the Anti-Christ (the lawless one) 2Thes 2:8 ♦ Q2. In Mat 24:37-41 and Luke 17:26-36 (where, "one will be taken, the other left"), many see the Rapture depicted in these passages. But these passages allude more to the "Day of the Lord" at the end of the 7-year Tribulation when Angels or Reapers begin collecting the Tares from the Wheat for eternal judgment/burning (Mat 13:30). Also, Luke 18:8 (will Jesus find any faith when He comes) also seems to allude to His return at the end of the 7-year Tribulation. Recall believers will be martyred extensively during the final 3.5 years, & those days had to be cut short for the elect's sake (Mat 24:22). In essence, there are no signs prior to the Rapture. ♦ Q3. Presumably, life could be so chaotic after the Rapture, the world will look for someone who can restore normalcy. This could conceivably take years before the Antichrist is revealed or globally voted in ♦ Q4. Will planes, cars, ships, & trains lose their pilots and drivers in the blink of an eye? Conceivably, Yes ♦ Will households be missing loved ones? Yes

CONCLUSION/APPLICATIONS

- When it comes to eschatology, we must realize we don't have all the facts yet. God even keeps Satan in the dark.[Dan 12:9](#)

NEXT WEEK: Matthew 28. Easter Message



"Can you believe it? That clock is five minutes slow! I know it's a small thing, but you'd think the least they could do for us is keep better track of eternity."

	Dispensational Pre-Millennialism	Historic / Covenant Pre-Millennialism	Amillennialism	Post-Millennialism
Overview	"A golden age of civilization...as described in the Bible...a millennial kingdom will be ushered in by a divine, supernatural and catastrophic manifestation from heaven at the Second coming of Christ...when the conditions of life have reached the depths of great tribulation." H.A. Hoyt	"After the Second coming of Christ, he will reign for a thousand years over the earth before the final consummation of God's redemptive purpose in the new heavens and the new earth of the age to come." G.E. Ladd	"...amillennialists do not believe in a literal thousand-year reign which will follow the return of Christ... the millennium of Revelation 20 is not exclusively the future but is now in the process of realization." A.A. Hoekema	"...the kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit... the world eventually is to be Christianized and the return of Christ is to occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace, called the millennium." L. Boettner
Hermeneutics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole Bible is divided into 7 dispensations/time periods in which God acts in different ways toward man. Interpretation must be literal whenever possible Interpret the New Testament by the Old Testament. (Hos. 1:9/Rom 9:25-26, Jer.31:33ff/Heb. 8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Natural reading" of Revelation Context determines whether literal or figurative Interpret the Old Test. by the New Test. Millennium must be Christ-Centered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressive Parallelism in Revelation (Earth's history repeated 7 times) OR Pretoristic: interpret in terms of meaning to 1st century church--reassurance of Christ's victory over Roman persecutors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revelation either mostly figurative or mostly fulfilled in 70ad (Mt. 24:34) Context determines whether literal or figurative Interpret the Old Testament by the New Testament.
History	Dispensationalism Espoused by Darby and the Brethren movement beginning in mid-1800's. Continues in Bible School movement and Annotated Bibles (Scofield, Revised Scofield, and Ryrie). Three schools: Classical, Moderate, and Progressive.	Early church chialists (incl. Iraenus and Justin Martyr) believed in a literal earthly Premillennial reign, but generally abandoned by 400 AD. Picked up by Anabaptists in 16th century Reformation	Figurative thousand years embraced by E. Orthodox church (under Origen's influence), later Espoused by Augustine and embraced by Western church by 400 AD. Held by Roman Catholic church as well as by Reformers	Tychonius (350AD) was early proponent; existed side-by-side with a-mil positions in Roman and Reformation streams because differences are relatively small. Popular among non-dispensational evangelicals in 19th century. Three schools: Traditional, Liberal (Social Gospel) and Theonomic
Millennium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literal Spoken of throughout the Bible (Isa 11: 6-9, Isa. 65: 20-25, Amos 9: 15, etc.) Has to do with Christ's physical reign on earth before the end. (Obad. 12ff, Is. 2:3, 24:23, 33:17, 52:10, Dan.2:31, Rev. 22:1ff) Jewish temple rebuilt along with sacrificial system (Ez.40-48) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be literal or figurative Mentioned in Rev. 20 & I Cor 15:23-26 Has to do with Christ's reign on earth before the end. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figurative Only mentioned in Rev. 20 Has to do with the age of the church between Christ's First and Second coming, in which Christ rules from heaven. We are in the millennial last days (Acts 2:16, I Cor. 10:11, I John 2:18) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be literal or figurative Only mentioned in Rev. 20 Has to do with a gradual appearance (Lk.17:20), of a "golden age" of earth's history in which the nations are disciplined in God's ways, until the earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord (Hab. 2:14) and ends with Christ's Second coming.
New Heavens & New Earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realized in the earthly millennium with a curse partly lifted. (Is. 65:17) After millennium is merged with eternal kingdom (I Cor. 15:24ff, Rev. 21:1ff, 22:1ff) 	Realized after millennial earthly reign is over and end has come	Set up at Christ's second coming, immediately after the resurrection and the judgement (Is. 65:17, 66:22, Rev. 21:1)	
Resurrection	Approx. 4 Resurrections: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Rapture: Christ will make an incomplete appearance and take the NT Christians to heaven (I Thes. 4:16), sparing them from approximately seven years of severe tribulation (aka, God's Wrath) on the earth. (Rev. 6-19). These saints are a "Spiritual Aristocracy/Nobility" who will reign with Christ. Rev. 20:4ff The second resurrection is of tribulation-era saints and O.T. saints at the beginning of the millennium (Rev. 20:4, Is.26:19ff, Dan. 12:1ff) Company of saints after the millennium (I Cor. 15:23ff) Finally of the wicked (Rev. 20:11ff) 	Two Resurrections as per Rev. 20, first of saints before the millennium, then of everyone else after the millennium	One resurrection of all the dead, as per Jn. 5:28ff & Acts 24:15. "Resurrections" in Rev. 20 are spiritual. The "First resurrection" is the passing of the soul into God's presence, the "second death" is eternal damnation (Rev. 20:14)	
Judgment	Three judgments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First of the raptured believers (I Cor. 3:13ff) Second of the nations at the beginning of the millennium (Joel 3:2, Matt. 19:28) Lastly of the wicked at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:15) 		One judgement at the end Rev. 22:12, Mt. 16:27, 25:31ff, Jude 14ff, II Thes. 1:7ff	
Israel and the Church	Israel is only the physical nation.	Israel is sometimes the physical nation (Rom. 11:26) and sometimes the church (Rom. 9:25-26, 4:11-16, 2:28-29, Gal. 3:7 & 29, Phil. 3:3)	O.T. Israel is the nation N.T. Israel is the Church (Rom 2-4 and Gal 3) The nation of Israel no longer has any spiritual significance. (aka, Replacement Theology)	
2nd Coming	First a "rapture" appearance (I Thes. 4:13ff), then a full appearance 7 years later to establish an earthly millennial kingdom (Rev. 19:7ff)	One appearance to establish an earthly millennial reign	One appearance to judge the earth and establish the new heavens and new earth. (I Cor 15:23-26, Matt. 25:31-46)	
Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not as literal as claimed to be; Can only be seen if you put on "dispensational glasses" Bible doesn't define tribulation as 7 years Not Christological Ethnically Jewish, inc. sacrifices (Heb. 8:13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earthly reign of heavenly saints De-emphasizes power of Christ's victory over Satan at the cross 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two physical resurrections in Rev. 20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evil isn't abating Doesn't deal with Rev. 20
Major Proponents	J. N. Darby, C. I. Scofield, John Walvoord, A. C. Gaebelain, Charles Ryrie, Lewis S. Chafer, J. Dwight Pentecost, Charles C. Ryrie, Tim Lahaye, Hal Lindsay, Thomas Ice, John McArthur	W.J. Erdman, George Eldon Ladd, Robert Gundry, Robert Culver, Walter Martin, J. Barton Payne, John Warwick Montgomery, Douglas Moo, Wayne Grudem, George Beasley-Murray, Craig Blomberg, John Piper	Charles Hodge, Meredith Kline, Kim Ridderbarger, Robert B. Strimple, Gregory Beale, Anthony Hoekema, Vern Poythress, John Murray, Louis Berkhof.	Lorraine Boettner, Rousas J. Rushdoony, Greg L. Bahnsen, Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., David Chilton, R.C. Sproul, Gary North.

Sources: Lectures from Dr. Dwight F. Zeller, Sangre de Cristo Seminary and the book *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, edited by Robert G. Clouse (IVP 1977)