

Glossary: The Second Coming of Christ

Glossary of Terms

1. Abomination of Desolation--To preterists, this is the event during the tribulation just before A.D 70 when the Roman army surrounded Jerusalem and destroyed Herod's temple. To futurists, this is at the end times when Antichrist exalts himself, causes the sacrifices to cease, sits in the rebuilt temple, showing himself to be God.

2. Amillennialism --Holds that the 1000 year reign of Rev 20:1-6 is not a literal 1000 years, but represents an indefinite period of time. This reign of Christ is not a political reign over all people, but a spiritual reign over the saints. This millennial period started at Christ's first coming when Satan was bound by Jesus on the cross. It will end at Christ's second coming and judgment, immediately after which the new heavens and new earth will be established.

3. Antichrist-- These last times since the Lord left are marked by many antichrists who deny that Jesus is the Christ, paving the way for antichrist to come (1Jn 2:18-23). Preterists may view the man of sin in Thes 2 as the little horn of Dan 7, but may see the sea beast of Rev 13 as a different entity altogether. Many preterists believe the beast is Nero. Some preterists have viewed the man of sin as the Roman Catholic Popes. Futurists see "Antichrist" as one who will come and deceive the whole world during the tribulation period immediately preceding the second coming of Christ. They see 1Jn 2's Antichrist, Daniel 7's little horn, 2Thes 2's man of sin, and the sea beast of Romans 13 as the same individual man. Futurists believe he will be destroyed at Christ's second coming in power and glory.

4. Covenant Theology--Covenant theology views scriptural history as various administrations of two or three basic covenants, emphasizing the unity of the covenants and not drawing as many distinctions as does dispensational theology. It focuses primarily on spiritual redemption. Covenant theologians tend to homogenize the Old Testament and the New Testament, applying the Old Testament laws that have not been specifically rescinded to New Testament believers as ordinances. They view the church as receiving the prophetic promises made to Israel and/or view some of the prophecies as having been forfeited by unbelief. Thus ethnic Israel has no distinct role in God's future program, other than their salvation and integration into God's one people, the church. Covenant theologians are usually amillennial.

5. Dispensationalism-- Dispensational theology views scriptural history as a series of dispensations marked by God's interventions. These interventions, to varying degrees, change the way God administers his sovereign rule over creation. Dispensationalists understand these changes to be more significant than do Covenant theologians. Dispensational theologians maintain a distinction between Israel and the church in the future. They believe God still has a distinct plan for ethnic Israel to fulfill her role in the prophetic future kingdom in accordance with Old Testament prophecies.

6. Eschatology--Study of last things

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7. Futurism--Views most all of the "Christ coming" prophecies as yet to occur in the future, including the attending events such as the abomination of desolation, antichrist, and the great tribulation period. Christ's coming is consistently understood to be referring to His literal, bodily, visible return to the earth at the end of this age.

8. Millennium-- A thousand year period described in Revelation 20:1-6. It is a time when Satan is bound and Christ and the saints reign.

9. Postmillennialism --Christ will reign on the earth in the future for a thousand years through his church. The church will experience growth such that the world will eventually be Christianized either by conversion or influence. Jesus will come again post (i.e., after) this period of righteousness, peace, and prosperity.

10. Premillennialism --Maintains that Jesus' second coming will be pre (i.e., before) the Millennium, with Christ reigning literally on the earth with His saints for 1000 years. The millennium is viewed to be a future period of peace and righteousness over all the earth, with glorified saints and non-glorified people living together. At the end of the millennium, Satan is loosed and there is a large final rebellion of the unregenerate who God devours with fire. All the lost of all ages are then judged. After the great white throne judgment, the earth is burned up and the eternal state begins.

a. Historic Premillennialism--Sometimes called classic premillennialism, historic premillennialists believe Christ's coming will occur before an earthly millennial reign of Christ and His saints. This conviction is based almost exclusively on Rev 20:1-6. Like covenant theology, ethnic Israel has no special place in the millennium. Thus historic premillennialists are not dispensational. Historic premillennialists believe the exact nature of the millennium is not expounded in scripture (similar to the way the Old Testament scripture did not fully expound the New Testament). Some apply the term historic premillennial to those who are premillennial and post-trib in their view of the rapture.

b. Dispensational Premillennialism-- Different from historic premillennialists, dispensational premillennialists stress a distinction between national Israel and the Church in the future by insisting on a more literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies. Most all dispensationalists are premillennial, but not all premillennialists are dispensational (e.g., historic dispensationalism). Dispensationalists understand the millennium to be the time when many unfulfilled Old Testament promises and prophecies will be literally fulfilled.

i. Progressive Dispensationalism (PD)--PD adherents are dispensational in that they hold to God fulfilling His kingdom promises to Israel, however do not necessarily hold to a pre-tribulation rapture. They default to a literal interpretation of prophecies, but accept that certain prophecies made to Israel have been partially fulfilled in the Church based on the New

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Testament scriptures' declaration. Progressive dispensationalism does not identify Israel and the Church as being two separate "peoples of God." But that Israel is a nation and the Church is a spiritual organism. The nation of Israel is made up of believers and unbelievers, whereas the Church is composed of believing Jews and Gentiles from all ages.

ii. Classical Dispensationalism --Classical dispensationalists draw a sharp distinction between God's earthly people, Israel, and God's heavenly people, the Church. This distinction of two peoples is maintained throughout God's timeline. Classic dispensationalists maintain that there are two programs for God's two distinct peoples--His earthly people (Israel) and His heavenly people (the Church). Classical dispensationalists tend not to apply prophecies made to Israel in the Old Testament to the Church. They interpret passages where the apostles use Old Testament prophecies this way more as incomplete types rather than completed fulfillments. The New Testament Church age is viewed more as a parenthetical period in God's prophetic timetable which deals primarily with Israel.

11. Preterism--Espouses that many, if not all, prophetic passages of the coming of Jesus have already been fulfilled in A.D. 70 when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem.

a. Full or hyper preterism--Considers most *all* second coming pronouncements to be fulfilled in A.D. 70, including the resurrection of the dead and the great judgment. Full preterism is extreme to the point of heresy (1Tim 1:18-20; 2Tim 2:15-18).

b. Evangelical preterism or partial preterism--Views only certain passages regarding Christ's coming and associated events such as the abomination of desolation, antichrist, and the great tribulation period as being time-marked to be fulfilled in that first century generation of Jews. The visible, physical second coming of Christ, bodily resurrection of the dead, and the great judgment are believed to be end-time events not yet accomplished.

12. Progressive fulfillment--A view compatible with futurism proposing that prophecies do not have to be fulfilled in a single event but may have a near term and far term fulfillment or may be fulfilled in a succession of several events. For example, progressive fulfillment allows the same verses in the Olivet discourse to apply to both Christ's coming in judgment in His generation's lifetime *and* to His visible, personal coming in the future.

13. Rapture-- From the Latin word for "catching up" found in 1Thes 4:17. The catching up into the air of live saints upon their transformation and dead saints upon their resurrection, which all occur at Christ's coming. "Pretrib proponents" believe this event to be before the tribulation, midtribbers in the middle of the 7-year tribulation, prewrathers about 3/4ths into the tribulation (before the 6th seal is opened). Posttribbers believe the rapture is concurrent with Christ's coming in judgment and is not a two-phase event or separate coming.

14. Second Advent--Advent meaning "coming". The revelation of Christ in judgment at the end of the world. Pretrib, midtrib, and prewrath rapture proponents believe the rapture to be a separate event from the second advent (or the first of two phases). They believe at the

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rapture, He comes for his saints. At the advent, He comes with His saints in judgment. Those who teach a single-event advent (which involves both the rapture and judgment) include posttrib rapturists (who can be dispensational premillenarians or amillennialists) and partial preterists (who do not teach a future tribulation preceding Christ's second coming).

15. Tribulation period-- In prophecy, "the tribulation" is a term that describes a particular period of great trouble described in the Olivet discourse (Matt 24; Mark 13; and Luke 21), Revelation (7:14 and perhaps all of Rev 6-19), and Daniel (12:1). Preterists (partial and full) view this tribulation period as pertaining to Jerusalem in A.D. 70 or perhaps the Roman empire. Futurists, on the other hand, typically see the tribulation as a global event which immediately precedes the Lord Jesus' future return in glory and power. Many futurists believe the length of the future tribulation period to be seven years based on the biblical references to 3.5 years in Revelation and Daniel (Dan 7:25, 12:7; Rev 11:2, 11:3; 12:6; 12:14, 13:5) and Daniel's 70th week (a week being 7 years-not days) described in Daniel 9:27. Although the Bible does not specify the length of the tribulation, many futurists believe Daniel's 70th week is the tribulation period divided into two 3.5 year periods. This position is based on combining several passages that describe what futurists believe to be events preceding the Lord's return.