

## End Times Confusion @ the Mil Stream

### The Return of Christ is an essential doctrine of faith

Matthew 24:27 "For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."

Matthew 24:36 "However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows."

Luke 12:40 "You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

Acts 1:11 "Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!"

Jesus was emphatic the time of His return cannot be calculated:

-like a thief in the night, totally unexpected *Mat 24:23/1Thess 5:2/2Peter 3:10/Rev 16:15*

-like lightening at night, powerfully displayed, seen by everyone *Matt24:27/Rev 1:7*

### Three Words about the Return of Christ:

#### His *Parousia* = arrival

1Thess 3:13 "as you stand before God our Father when our Lord Jesus comes again with all his holy people."

1Thess 4:15-17 "We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died."

#### His *Apokalypse* = revelation

1Corinthians 1:7-8 "Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.<sup>8</sup> He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2Thessalonians 1:6-7 "And God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with his mighty angels,<sup>8</sup> in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don't know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus."

1Peter 1:13 "Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming."

1Peter 4:12-13 "Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you.<sup>13</sup> Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world."

#### His *Ephiphaneia* = manifestation

2Thess 2:8 "but the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming."

*1Timothy 6:12,14 "Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you, which you have declared so well before many witnesses...Then no one can find fault with you from now until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again."*

*2Timothy 4:8 "And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing."*

*Titus 2:12-14 "It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, <sup>13</sup> while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."*

### **Christian Doctrine**

**"In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, charity. In all things, Jesus Christ."**

### **Three Leading Lenses of Eschatology:**

#### **American Dispensationalism: The Prescription Lens Popularized**

God has two distinct people and programs: national Israel and spiritual Church  
A literalist interpretation of OT prophecy and Revelation  
Church is raptured before a literal 7yr Tribulation (enjoys marriage feast of Lamb)  
God uses the Tribulation to bring Israel to faith in Jesus as Messiah  
Jesus returns at end of 7yrs to destroy Antichrist and establish 1000-year reign  
During the literal 1000-year rule, God fulfills OT prophecy to Israel re: Temple worship  
At end of 1000-year reign, Satan loosed for final rebellion  
A great white throne Judgement and lake of fire  
God creates a new heaven and earth

#### **History            A New Kid in Town**

Dispensationalism rose from the Plymouth Brethren in England in early 1800's.  
Popularized in America by John Darby and C.I. Scofield Bible mid 1800's, evangelists late 1800's.  
20<sup>th</sup> century rise of seminaries, bible colleges, radio preachers, conferences, books popularize the view

#### **Critique**

##### **-Old Covenant Israel as priority over the New Covenant Church**

*Luke 22:20 "After supper he took another cup of wine and said, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you."*

##### **-The Return of Christ and Rapture of Saints are Contemporaneous (same event)**

*1Thess 4:14-17 "For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. <sup>15</sup> We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. <sup>17</sup> Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever."*

## Historic Premillennialism: The Earliest Lens the Church Had

Jesus Christ and His New Covenant People: the Church fulfill OT prophecy to Israel  
The return of Jesus and the rapture of believers living and dead are same event  
The Great Tribulation and final Antichrist is a period of time just prior to Christ's return  
The Church will go through the Tribulation and God will turn hearts of Israel to Christ  
Jesus returns to establish the Kingdom of God on earth for literal or figurative 1000 years  
God judges the living and the dead, cast Satan and death and unrepentant into hell  
God creates a new heaven and earth

### History

The Didache	125 AD	a time of antichrist, tribulation and Christ's return
Shepherd of Hermas	150 AD	persevering through the time of tribulation
Justin Martyr	150 AD	be prepared for tribulation hoping in Christ's return
Irenaeus	170 AD	tribulation will purify the church as it waits for Jesus

### Critique

What about the Scripture that teaches at the return of Christ:

- all people will face the one final Judgement *Mt 13:41-43*
- an immediate Judgment for eternal reward or punishment *Mt 25:31*

## Amillennialism: The Majority Lens of Biblical Scholarship

The NT has interpretive priority over the OT (NT explains OT)  
No future 1000 yr earthly reign, Christ now reigns on earth in Church  
The Church age between Resurrection and Return of Jesus is Kingdom of God  
Revelation 20 is a symbolic description of the church age not futuristic  
The Church is the new Israel, all promises and blessings are fulfilled in Christ  
The Church age is in the end times tribulation with many antichrists until a final one  
Christ's return will simultaneously accomplish many things mentioned in Scripture:  
    The Church meets Jesus in the air,  
    Jesus vanquishes the forces antichrist, Satan, death,  
    the resurrection of all unbelievers to final judgment  
    the creation of new heaven and earth for God's people

### History

- after the writings of Augustine 5<sup>th</sup> century amillennialism became predominate view of eschatology.
- the legacy of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation and reformed theology continues to hold an amil view.
- the primary view of European Christianity and scholarship
- current resurgence of amil view in American evangelical seminaries and scholarship

**Critique** Does the amil view rightly interpret the difficult passages of Scripture regarding the return of Christ as in Revelation 20?

### So What?

*"Christians need to remember the ultimate, "bottom line" purpose of biblical eschatology: to make us better Christians here and now."* Doug Moo, NT professor TEDS/ Wheaton College