

Intro to Revelation: Glossary of Terms

The terms below will be used throughout our study of the Book of Revelation. Please note that the purpose of this document is to simply define these terms. It should not be considered an endorsement or denial of the viewpoints discussed.

Eschatology

Literally means the study of last things. Broadly speaking it is the theological study that seeks to understand the ultimate direction and purpose of history as it moves toward the future. The three main questions of concern in eschatology are

1. What is the kingdom of God?
2. What happens to men and women when they die?
3. How will history end?

Most theologians speak of the inauguration and consummation of the kingdom. The inauguration of the kingdom was the first coming of Christ recorded in the Gospels. The consummation will be the second coming of Christ.

Second Coming of Christ

This is a vital doctrine upheld by every Christian to ever live. The Church has always held that to deny the second coming of Christ is to deny the Christian faith.

The Nicene Creed states:

He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again with glory
to judge the living and the dead.
His kingdom will never end.

Resurrection

The bodily resurrection of all believers who have died in Christ will occur at the Second Coming. 1 Corinthians 15 lays out a logical defense of this doctrine. Like the Second Coming, this is an essential doctrine upheld by all Christians at all times.

Another resurrection will occur for those who die apart from Christ to face His righteous

judgment and receive eternal punishment in the body.

Rapture

“To be caught up.” Some theologians believe this will occur among events leading up to the Second Coming.

The theory of the rapture is that living Christians will be carried out of the world to meet Christ before his Second Coming. Most believe it will occur before or during a literal seven-year period of tribulation. The major Scriptural citations are in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and Matthew 24:36-44.

Unlike the Second Coming and Resurrection, the rapture is not an essential Christian doctrine.

Great Tribulation

Some believe the Book of Daniel prophesies a literal seven-year period when Satan reaches his highest point of his influence in the world. This period will be characterized by intense persecution of the saints. Others believe that Tribulation symbolically refers to the intense persecution of the people of God throughout the history of the Church.

Depravity

The reign of sin in the lives of mankind resulting in the corruption (cursing) of the world and a broken relationship between God and mankind. The Westminster Catechism of 1648 answers question 19 about the result of man's fall this way:

“All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.”

Covenant Theology

“A system of theology that centers on God as a covenant-making God and sees in history two great covenants between God and men: The Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace.”

Covenant theology generally regards the church as having replaced Israel as the chosen people of God since we have been grafted in. (Romans 11) Certain elements of the Old Testament law (moral law) remain binding in the Covenant of Grace.

Dispensationalism

A system of theology that views the work of God in distinct ways through distinct periods of human history.

This system was popularized by the notes in the Schofield Reference Edition of the King James Bible in the early 1900s. It generally regards Israel and the Church as two separate and distinct

peoples of God.

New Covenant Theology

A theological system that maintains a replacement of Israel with the Church as the people of God, but goes a step further in declaring that the entire Law of Moses has been replaced with the covenant of Grace and a “Law of Christ.”

Millennium

Revelation 20:1-8 describes a period of time when Jesus has bound the works of Satan and His saints jointly reign with Him over the earth.

Dispensational Premillennialism

The Second Coming of Jesus will occur after a distinct period of Tribulation, and Tribulation before the Millennium. This is a common view in the United States and is reflected in the *Left Behind* books and movies.

Historic Premillennialism

The Second Coming of Jesus precedes a literal thousand-year reign. Does not believe in a rapture/literal seven-year Tribulation before the Second Coming, but simply believes the Resurrection of saints will occur at the Second Coming.

Amillennialism

The thousand-year reign refers to the current reign of Christ in heaven while the church advances His kingdom on earth. The Second Coming will fully bring the reign of Christ from heaven to earth.

Amillennialism and historic premillennialism believe that the tribulation refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD as well as to the ongoing persecution of the church throughout history.

The millennium is regarded as more figurative than literal in amillennialism.

Postmillennialism

The millennial reign of Christ will come not in the return of Christ, but through the spiritual and moral influence of Christian preaching and teaching throughout the world. The Second Coming will bring resurrection and judgment, but not the millennium.

Satan

A created being who once dwelt in heaven as an angel. At some point Satan rebelled against God, was cast out of heaven, and now inhabits the earth. Satan opposed Jesus and now

opposes the advance of God's kingdom throughout the world. He will ultimately be defeated, judged, and cast into eternal fire.

Demons

Angels who follow Satan and work to oppose God throughout the world.

Antichrist

A term unique to the writings of John. It describes movements, attitudes, and people which deny and oppose Jesus Christ as the anointed son of God.

Some theologians also apply the term antichrist to the Man of Lawlessness in the letters of Paul and the beast in Daniel and Revelation.

Resources for further Study and Reference

These resources reflect a wide variety of viewpoints on the Millennium, but they are from people who we believe to be driven by the text rather than forcing the text into their ideas.

Websites

Austin publishes his own study notes every week at www.daretoventure.org.

<http://desiringgod.org/interviews/an-evening-of-eschatology>

Sermon by G.K. Beale on introduction to Revelation (Audio Download)

<http://www.lanesvillechurch.org/sermons-audio/900624.mp3>

<http://monergism.com>

www.thegospelcoalition.org

Books

Revelation: The Spirit Speaks to the Church, James Hamilton, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012). This commentary is about \$27 at Lifeway. Hamilton is writing from an historic premillennial viewpoint.

Kingdom Come: An Amillennial Alternative, Sam Storms, (Fearn, UK: Mentor, 2013).

Revelation Vol. 1 and 2, MacArthur New Testament Commentary, John MacArthur, (Chicago: Moody, 1999). MacArthur will run just under \$20/volume at Lifeway. MacArthur is writing from a dispensational premillennial viewpoint.

Exalting Jesus in Revelation, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary, Daniel Akin, (Nashville: Holman Reference, 2016). This volume is a \$10.50 paperback at Lifeway. Akin is writing from a dispensational premillennial viewpoint.