

Christ's Second Coming *1 Thess 4:13–18*

Looking at the final phrase in the section “the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; *from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*”

This passage highlights **Christ's exaltation** (WLC 51), and WLC 56 explains the final phrase in this way: “How is Christ to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world? Christ is to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world, in that he, who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men, shall come again at the last day in great power, and in the full manifestation of his own glory, and of his Father's, with all his holy angels, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, to judge the world in righteousness.”¹

1. The fact of Jesus' Second Coming: must we believe in the Second Coming of Christ?

- a. How to identify a fundamental of the faith: centrality, clarity, and catholicity.²
- b. Centrality: If Jesus is not returning to judge the quick and the dead, then there is no final salvation or damnation.³

2. The timing of Jesus' Second Coming: when will Jesus come again?⁴

- a. Amillennialism: the millennium is now (the millennium is the church age; the eternal state follows Christ's return).
- b. Postmillennialism: Christ returns after the millennium (the millennium is the triumph of Christianity; the eternal state follows Christ's return).
- c. Premillennialism: Christ returns before the millennium (the millennium is an earthly reign of Christ; this reign precedes the eternal state).
 - i. Pre-tribulation rapture: Jesus takes all Christians (living and dead) to heaven prior to the commencement of the tribulation.
 - ii. Mid-tribulation rapture: Christ raptures believers mid-way through the tribulation.
 - iii. Post-tribulation rapture: Christ catches believers up to meet him in the air as he returns to judge unbelievers and inaugurate his kingdom.

3. The significance of Jesus' Second Coming: how does this doctrine affect our lives?

¹ See also WCF chs. 32 and 33.

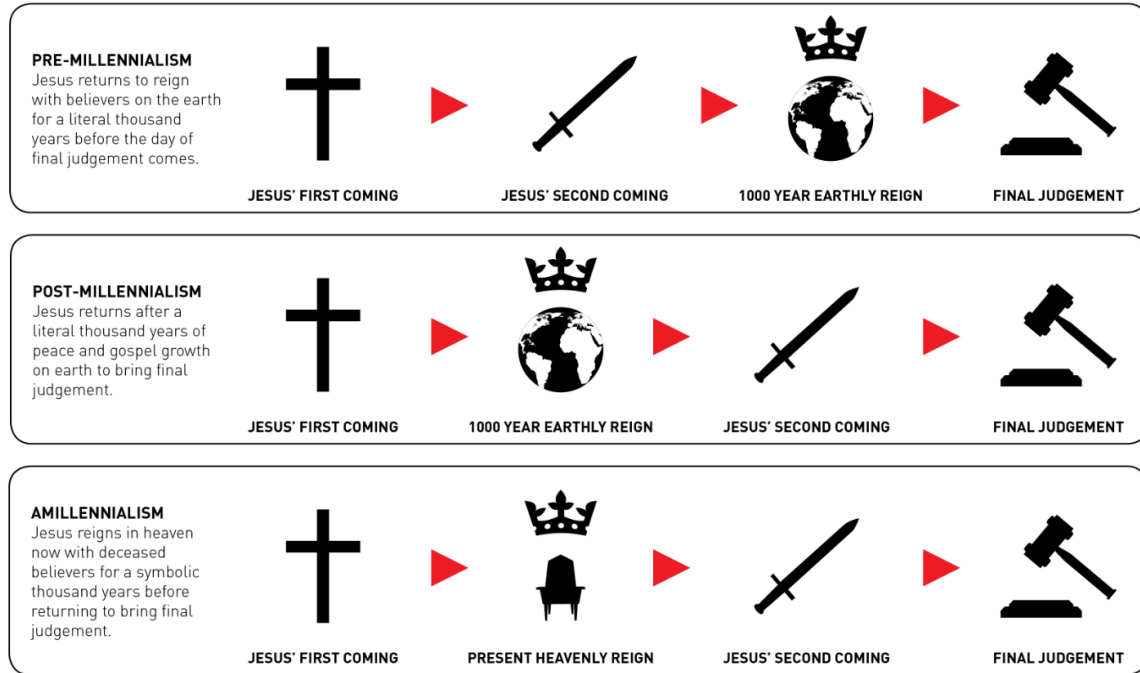
² Kevin Bauder, “Thinking About the Gospel, Part Eight: Identifying the Fundamentals.”

³ Kevin Bauder, private correspondence.

⁴ Much of the information in this section comes from Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1109–39. These pages encompass Ch. 55, “The Millennium.”

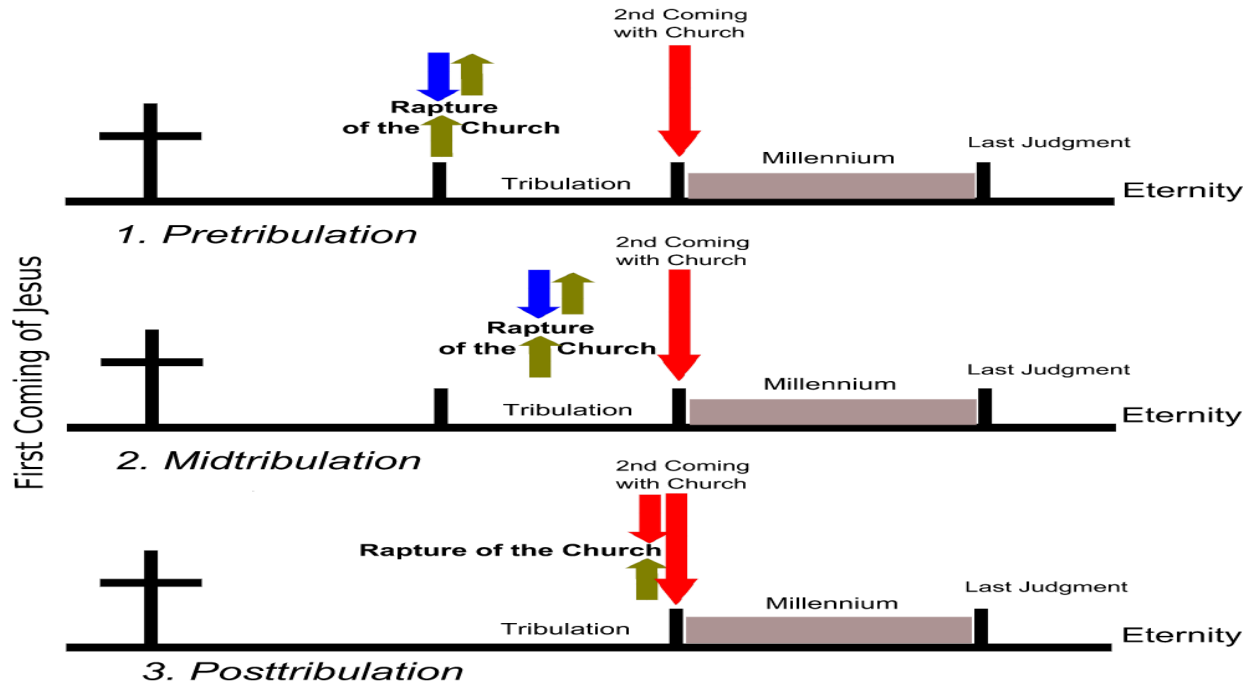
THE MILLENNIUM THREE VIEWS

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Comparison of Christian Tribulation Views



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