

FAQ VOL II

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Frequently Asked Questions

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Abbreviations and Special Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

ABD: <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>	IVPBBC: <i>IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)</i>
AMG: <i>Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament</i>	Jastrow: <i>Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature</i> (Marcus Jastrow)
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)	JBK: <i>New Jerusalem Bible-Koren</i> (2000)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament	JETS: <i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
Ara: Aramaic	KJV: King James Version
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)	Lattimore: <i>The New Testament</i> by Richmond Lattimore (1996)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)	LITV: <i>Literal Translation of the Holy Bible</i> by Jay P. Green (1986)
b. Babylonian Talmud (<i>Talmud Bavli</i>)	LES: <i>Lexham English Septuagint</i> (2019)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.	LS: <i>An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Liddell-Scott)
BDAG: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)	LSJM: <i>Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)
BDB: <i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>	LXE: <i>Septuagint with Apocrypha</i> by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.	LXX: Septuagint
CGEDNT: <i>Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words</i> (Barclay M. Newman)	m. Mishnah
CGL: <i>Cambridge Greek Lexicon</i> (2021)	MT: Masoretic Text
CHALOT: <i>Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Holladay)	NASB: <i>New American Standard Bible</i> (1977)
CJB: <i>Complete Jewish Bible</i> (1998)	NASU: <i>New American Standard Update</i> (1995)
CJSB: <i>Complete Jewish Study Bible</i> (2016)	NBCR: <i>New Bible Commentary: Revised</i>
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition	NEB: <i>New English Bible</i> (1970)
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls	Nelson: <i>Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words</i>
EDB: <i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i>	NETS: <i>New English Translation of the Septuagint</i> (2007)
EJ: <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>	NIB: <i>New Interpreter's Bible</i>
ESV: <i>English Standard Version</i> (2001)	NIDB: <i>New International Dictionary of the Bible</i>
Ger: German	NIV: <i>New International Version</i> (1984)
GNT: <i>Greek New Testament</i>	NJB: <i>New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic</i> (1985)
Grk: Greek	NJPS: <i>Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures</i> (1999)
HALOT: <i>Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Koehler and Baumgartner)	NKJV: <i>New King James Version</i> (1982)
HCSB: <i>Holman Christian Standard Bible</i> (2004)	NRSV: <i>New Revised Standard Version</i> (1989)
Heb: Hebrew	NLT: <i>New Living Translation</i> (1996)
HNV: <i>Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible</i>	NT: <i>New Testament</i>
IDB: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>	
IDBSup: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement</i>	
ISBE: <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>	

OT: Old Testament
REB: Revised English Bible (1989)
RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)
t. Tosefta
Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament
Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TLV: Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version (2014)
TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)

TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition
v(s). verse(s)
Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
Vul: Latin Vulgate
YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)
WMB: World Messianic Bible (2020)

Millennialism

Can you please help me sort through the different perspectives of “Millennialism”?

a Messianic Insider episode, 07 April, 2020

What is millennialism?¹ I suspect that for many of you, the term **millennialism** is just some theological jargon which you will hear from time to time, here or there, but it really is not that relevant to you. However, all of us, because of when we are in human history—the things which are happening in our world, and most especially all the discussion which is going to be taking place regarding the Last Days and the end-times—need to have a much better handle on what millennialism is. How has it affected us, both theologically as well as socially?

Right now we are at a very interesting juncture, particularly with the whole Coronavirus scare and COVID-19 issue (2020). I have never said that I think COVID-19 is prophesied in the Book of Revelation; I have only said that this is a major wake-up call and a fire drill for the actual end-times. Now is the time to be thinking about what things like millennialism are, because it affects us as Bible readers; it affects where we are today and where we are going in the future. Or does it?

What would you do, if someone said something to you about millennialism? I do not think it is something we are aware of, frequently enough, as Messianic people. In the Messianic movement, you will certainly hear talk about the Kingdom of the Lord and the restoration of Israel. You will hear the word “Millennium” invoked, and hear about the Messianic Age. But there have been multiple views present, certainly throughout Christian history, regarding the Millennium, and whether or not there even is a Millennium. Millennialism as a whole, certainly in the world of Christian theology throughout history, focuses on different interpretations of Revelation 20:1-7.

More frequently than not, many of us have encountered the **pre-millennial** view, which advocates that there is a literal thousand-year Millennium, and Yeshua the Messiah returns to Earth right as the Millennium begins. It will be right before the Millennium, when He defeats His enemies and He sets up His Kingdom from Jerusalem. This is not the only point of view which has been present in historical theology, but before we get into some of those

¹ This has been adapted and edited from the textual transcription provided by YouTube.

others, let us read Revelation 20:1-7, so we have somewhat of an idea about what we are working with here:

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Yeshua and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Messiah for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Messiah and will reign with Him for a thousand years. When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison” (Revelation 20:1-7, NASU).

For many of us, it is pretty clear that Yeshua the Messiah will return to the Earth right as the Millennium begins. There is the first resurrection, the resurrection of the righteous, who will reign with Him over Planet Earth (Revelation 20:4, 5b). Yeshua will set up His Kingdom from Jerusalem. Satan will be bound in the Bottomless Pit (Revelation 20:1-3), and then at the end of the thousand-year Millennium, Satan will then be released for one final rebellion against God against the Messiah (Revelation 20:3, 7-10). And then subsequent to that, will be the resurrection of the unrighteous (Revelation 20:5a), the final condemnation of the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15), and then we will enter into the Eternal State: the New Heavens, New Earth, the New Creation (Revelation 21-22). *That is a basic pre-millennial scenario.*

However, throughout a great deal of Christian history—even Protestant Christian history—an alternative position has been proposed, and that has widely been the position of **post-millennialism**. This is the idea that the Messiah will return after the thousand-year Millennium. *Many wonder how that can be.* In fact, a lot of us wonder what would have initiated that. What point event would have started such a Millennium? And what about ruling and reigning with Messiah? What about the first resurrection? What about this, what about that? To many of us hearing about post-millennialism, it leaves a lot of details and a lot of questions unanswered. But it has indeed been a position present in a great deal of Protestant theology, in particular Reformed Protestant theology.

The critical flaw of post-millennialism, for many of us as Messianic people, would be how it is widely based in replacement theology or supersessionism. This is the idea that while on first reading, in the Tanach (OT), you have all of these prophecies of a literal return of Israel and the Jewish people back to the Holy Land, the restoration of Israel's Kingdom, and

the Messiah ruling and reigning from Jerusalem. But in the post-millennial schema, that has all been superimposed onto the Christian Church as the “New Israel,” and those expectations are widely allegorized as being a part of the bounty which Believers have in Christ. Prophecies regarding an apparent literal return of physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to the Land of Israel, are spiritualized and applied to the “New Israel,” i.e. “the Church,” and in people simply turning to the salvation of God.

Post-millennialism has historically advocated that the world is getting better and better and better. Then, once we reach a point of worldwide peace, under the Church’s dominion, the Messiah will return to reign over Planet Earth. We will then enter into the Eternal State.

Human history, however, demonstrates something completely different: the world is not getting better and better and better. The world is getting worse and worse and worse. In a great deal of historical theology, the point event among many people—who we would widely regard as conservative Believers in the Bible, who historically held to post-millennialism—which made many reevaluate their position, and got many to move toward a more pre-millennial position, was actually the First World War. Many of the Reformed post-millennial theologians were in Germany, as well as Great Britain, and they found out that because of the First World War—which was apparently “the the war to end all wars”—the world is not at all getting better; the world is getting worse. And so the First World War was a major wake-up call to many of people in theology!

World War I was not the only wake-up call, of course, seen in the early Twentieth Century. There was also an emerging Zionist movement, which advocated that the Jewish people in Europe needed to establish a Jewish state: mainly a Jewish state in the Middle East. And to be sure, when the State of Israel was founded after the World War II in 1948, many theologians had to reevaluate some things. A literal, autonomous Jewish nation-state, surely saw many people move from a post-millennial to a pre-millennial position. No longer could Tanach (OT) prophecies about the return of physical Israelite and Jewish exiles, be somehow allegorized as involving a restoration of non-Jewish people, i.e., Gentiles, to their Creator. Post-millennialism is still definitely something you will encounter from time, though, as it is a position which has existed in historical theology.

Amillennialism is a position which has been around, certainly since the time of Augustine from the Fourth Century or so. Amillennialism has been historically held by Roman Catholicism, and just looks at Revelation 20:1-7 as being entirely allegorized. The concept of the Millennium is just a symbol of the Messiah's Kingdom, especially such a Kingdom operating on Earth via the presence of the Christian Church. And, it is hardly surprising how this is often connected with how the Messiah's Kingdom is to be demonstrated through the authority of figures like the pope. This does not mean that all all millennialists are Roman Catholic, as there are certainly amillennialists you will encounter who are Protestant. Zondervan has, in their multiple views a series, a volume entitled *Three Views on*

Millennialism

the Millennium and Beyond,² dealing with pre-millennialism, post-millennialism, and amillennialism. If you are interested in this topic, this is a good resource to access to briefly summarize:

- **pre-millennialism:** the Messiah returns and then the Millennium begins
- **post-millennialism:** the Millennium is now and then the Messiah will return, as a millennial thousand years are representative of the Messiah's reign over this planet
- **amillennialism:** the Millennium is a symbol of the reign of the Messiah, over the Earth, in the presence of the Christian Church

More often than not—and I think that in my encounters in twenty-five years in the Messianic movement (2020), I have almost never encountered someone who is *not* pre-millennial—almost everyone I have encountered in today's Messianic movement believes that Yeshua the Messiah returns before the thousand-year Millennium.³ *He returns, He defeats His enemies, and then Israel is restored and we enter into the Messianic Age on Planet Earth.* Following the thousand years Satan is going to be unleashed, and then there will be a final rebellion and the final judgment of the wicked at the second resurrection. Then the Eternal State will begin. This is something which I have pretty much universally encountered in my Messianic experience. I am not here to say that is all Messianic people, as I am sure there is more variance out there than perhaps we want to know about! But on the whole, today's Messianic people are pre-millennial.

There are some other labels, however, which you will see thrown around. These are the differences between those who are **pre-tribulational**, versus those who are **post-tribulational** in some way. There are many people in today's Messianic movement who believe in the any moment pre-tribulation rapture doctrine. This is the idea that Yeshua can return at any time to gather the Believers up to Heaven, and then that initiates the seven-year Tribulation period/the Seventieth Week of Israel/the Time of Jacob's Trouble.

Many other people in the Messianic community, myself included, adhere to a post-tribulation scenario. We believe that the holy ones/saints/the elect are going through the seven-year Tribulation period, and that will God will protect the redeemed, similar to how He protected the Ancient Israelites through the plagues of Egypt. (We are getting ready to commemorate Passover, so this would be a great time to talk about the parallels between the plagues upon Egypt—and what you see in the Book of Revelation.) We believe that Yeshua, as He is returning to the Earth, will gather the saints to meet him in the clouds—something actually similar to how the believers in Rome met the Apostle Paul at Three Taverns, and then they all returned to Rome together (Acts 28:15-16). *That is how I see the gathering of the saints/elect.*

² Darrell L. Bock, gen. ed., *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999).

³ For some further thoughts, consult the author's McKee Moment from 11 October, 2023, "Can Someone Be Post-Millennial or Amillennial and Messianic?," accessible via <youtube.com/MessianicApologetics>.

You have in today's Messianic community, people who adhere to a pre-tribulational gathering of the saints, a post-tribulational gathering of the saints—and there are some other positions as well, like the **mid-tribulational** belief, or the **pre-wrath** rapture. (I do not actually disagree with the pre-wrath view in principle; I just believe that the judgments which actually classify as being “wrath,” occur near the end of the Tribulation period.)⁴

Please do not confuse the terms pre-tribulational and pre-millennial. Both pre-tribulationism and post-tribulationism are pre-millennial, as they *both* advocate that Yeshua returns to the Earth before the thousand-year Millennium.

We are not too likely to find people who are post-millennial or amillennial in today's Messianic community—but we will certainly encounter those who are post-millennial or amillennial in various theological books and resources. And, we will encounter those who are not too sure what to believe, so they may conclude that “it will all pan out in the end,” being pan-millennial, which which is really not a good position to have!

I think that right now, because of the COVID-19 scare, the Lord is waking many of us up. A big part of waking up, is that are you going to have start holding studies on prophecy. Unfortunately, one of the things I have really felt, is how so many people have grown into prophecy fatigue—a direct consequence of hearing a great number of false predictions in the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, leading up to Y2k, and then immediately after the start of the 2000s. And, they just do not really want to discuss it. Many young people have not been exposed to many of these opinions or positions on end-time prophecy, because their parents—or their leaders from the Baby Boomer generation—have gone into prophecy or eschatology fatigue. So, it is time for us to bring out these subjects once again and discuss them, because people are doubtlessly talking about them.

One of the things which we do encounter when you consider pre-millennialism, post-millennialism, amillennialism, and then another position which is preterism—is how you approach the **Book of Revelation**. Now obviously, Revelation is not the only prophetic book of Holy Scripture, where there are future predictions involving the end-times and the final conflict between good and evil, God and Satan. You certainly have to look at the Prophets of the Tanach, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah. When we look at at the Tanach, we look at particular prophetic patterns like the deliverance of Ancient Israel, and the protection of Ancient Israel during the Passover and Exodus. We look at teachings of Yeshua, with Matthew 24 immediately coming to mind. Paul has a great deal to say, especially in 1&2 Thessalonians.

Revelation often ends up as a kind of compilation of all these things, as it tends to be the place Bible readers often turn to, for the main outline of the end times. Revelation includes so many Old Testament prophecies, interwoven in some form some significant form or fashion—either by direct quotation or certainly allusion. Zondervan has a useful volume,

⁴ Consult the Messianic Apologetics FAQ, “Pre-Wrath Rapture.”

Four Views on the Book of Revelation,⁵ which offers a useful summary of approaches (although I am indeed there are more than four views out there), covering some of the major views you will encounter in theology. I am going to read a few of pages to you, from our ministry's workbook *A Survey of the Holy Scriptures* (2024), from the entry on the Book of Revelation where I cover this. This is not too extensive:

The language of Revelation is apocalyptic, and much of its terminology is symbolic.⁶ Generally speaking, there are four distinct schools of interpretation relating to the Book of Revelation:⁷

1. **Preterists** hold to the view that Revelation was written in the mid-First Century C.E., during the reign of Nero Caesar, and that most of the events prophesied in Revelation, as well as in passages like Matthew 24, were largely fulfilled by the early Second Century C.E. Preterists generally think that Nero was the antichrist of the Book of Revelation.
2. **Historicists** hold to the view that Revelation speaks to the many centuries of Christianity, and should be interpreted in light of the history of the Church. Historical events in Christian history are represented by the imagery of Revelation. Many of the early Reformers were historicists, as are some Roman Catholic theologians today.
3. **Futurists** hold to the view that Revelation was written in the late First Century, and although it had a message for the early Believers (Revelation chs. 1-3), it largely speaks to events to occur in the distant future (Revelation chs. 4-18), and believe in a literal thousand-year reign of Yeshua on Planet Earth. The majority of the early Church Fathers were futurists, as are many evangelical Protestants today, and most people in the Messianic movement. Futurists may **all** be described as being **pre-millennialists**, believing that the Messiah returns before His thousand-year reign. There are distinct viewpoints within the pre-millennial camp, however, notably the "rapture debate" between pre- and post-tribulationists.
4. **Idealists** are those who widely do not take sides in the actual debate over what Revelation means, but simply believe that it speaks of the Messiah's final battle over Satan, sin, and evil in the world. Some Roman Catholic theologians are idealists.

⁵ C. Marvin Pate, gen. ed., *Four Views on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998).

⁶ Cf. G.R. Beasley-Murray, "Revelation, Book of," in Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, eds., *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), pp 1034-1035.

⁷ J.W. Bowman, "Revelation, Book of," in George Buttrick, ed. et. al., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 4:61; G.E. Ladd, "Revelation, Book of," in Geoffrey Bromiley, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 4:173-174; Adela Yarbro Collins, "Revelation, Book of," in David Noel Freedman, ed., *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:706-707; D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, second edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), pp 719-721.

It is notable that there are futurists who adhere to some of the elements of the other three groups, as some concede that a wider portion of Revelation may have been more applicable for the late First-early Second Century Believers, than others. Likewise—and this is where we have to all be very careful, if we are futurists—as there can be problems with futurists who focus too much on the different symbols of Revelation. Many try to attach them to modern political entities or institutions, and it can be forgotten how Revelation’s words are rooted within the First Century struggles of the early Believers in the Roman Empire.

I am actually someone who believes that the language of the Book of Revelation, is written within the conflicts which the early, First Century Believers, were facing in the Roman Empire. The same is true of the language of Matthew 24. The language of the Prophets of the Tanach, was based within the culture and circumstances of their times. But, there is a far-reaching impact of those words, and we have to be very careful with what we say.

There are debates I have encountered, for the better part of two decades (2000-2020), going back to the turn of the Millennium, Y2k, regarding what global entity will compose the New World Order. This has ranged from proposing that it will come out of the United Nations, to the European Union. The E.U. was strongly proposed, because of the new Euro (€) currency, which was obviously supposed to be precursor to the new world currency. But now, we have seen some of the failures of the European integration project. A debate has now shifted, from the antimesiah/antichrist coming out of out of Europe or some (defunct) European royal family—to now how the beast system will come out of Islam. Many are now looking at Iran or Iraq or Turkey.

Does it really matter? We live in a fallen world! These are possibilities for sure, but we do not really know what new world organization is going to come out in the next few decades—if the United Nations flounders, or if the European Union flounders. We humanly do not know what is going to happen, **but what we do know is that we need to be paying attention.** We do not need to be ignorant of what is happening in our world. As I have said the whole time, the COVID-19 or Coronavirus scare is probably not in prophecy, directly in Revelation. But, it is probably more in the rubric of hearing about wars and rumors of wars (Matthew 24:6). It is in that rubric where people are talking and speculating.

Recognizing that it is important that we pay attention *to when we are*, we each need to figure out what role we are to play, as the people of God, in the end-times. The end-times are ultimately about the return of Israel's Messiah, the restoration of Israel. The end-times are all about the Forces of Light, not about the Forces of Darkness.

As we evaluate matters, each of us needs to be aware of how millennialism affects one’s orientation to God’s plans, whether one adheres to: pre-millennialism, post-millennialism, amillennialism. At the very least, you are going to encounter these different points of view when you access different study Bibles, commentaries, and other theological resources. There has been a social impact, certainly over the past two centuries, regarding post-millennialism and pre-millennialism. As I said earlier, many post-millennial, Reformed

theologians (mainly in Germany and Great Britain) thought the world was getting better at the end of the Nineteenth Century—and the First World War proved them wrong. But the world is not getting better; the world is getting worse. That is the social impact of millennialism for many. *Is the world getting better, or is the world getting worse?*

What did the First World War lead to? The Second World War. What the Second World War lead to? The Holocaust, the atomic bomb, the Cold War. And here we are without the Cold War now for over three decades! Arguably, the world is now even more unstable, perhaps now than it was during the Cold War—because there is no clear enemy. So in this environment today, it should not be surprising to see why many people are talking and speculating about where the Coronavirus or COVID-19 originated.

A huge amount of speculation usually takes place when you discuss prophecy. But, I like many others, believe that the Lord is trying to get our attention! I am very much concerned that many of people, especially the Baby Boomer generation, heard a great these false predictions and prognostications, like *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988*, which then proved fallacious. After the turn of the Millennium in 2000, many got very fatigued, and discussions on eschatology or the end-times faded out and widely ceased. Many of those from my generation, the Millennials, are not that familiar with various discussions about the Book of Revelation or end-time prophecy. So, in learning some of the lessons from the past, we need to begin to have some of these discussions.