

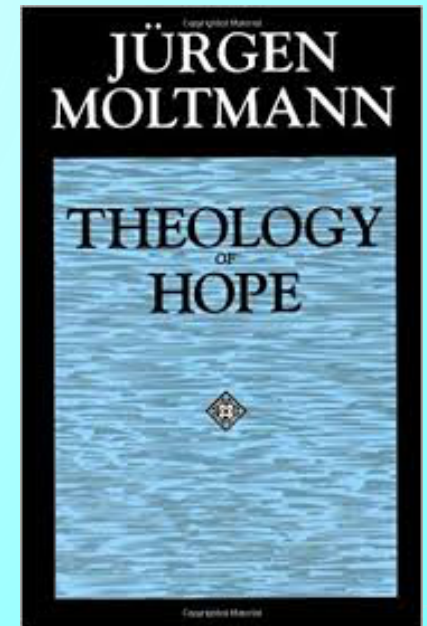
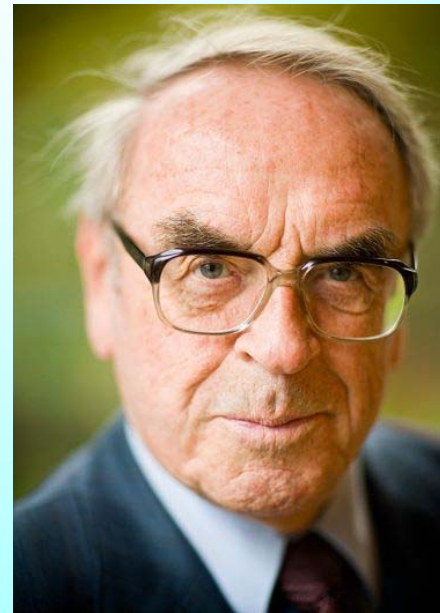


ESCHATOLOGY WEEK 1

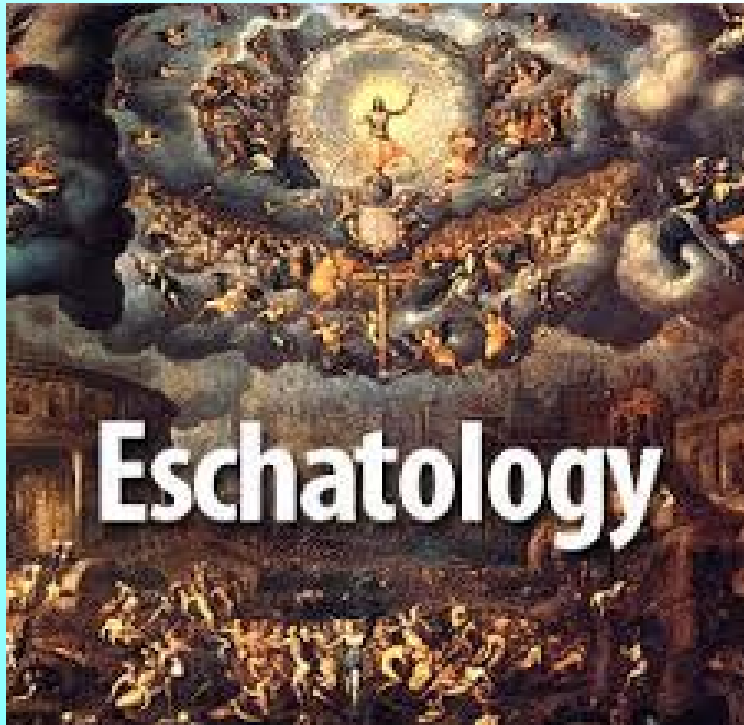
INTRODUCTION AND DISPENSATIONALISM/HISTORICAL
PREMILLENNIALISM

THEOLOGY OF HOPE

- I will argue that the primary framework that Scripture should read through is redemptive. Not eschatology.
- However, eschatology is important because it shows where our hope lies.
- This hope we have shapes us into Christ's image. Or could possibly have bad outcomes.

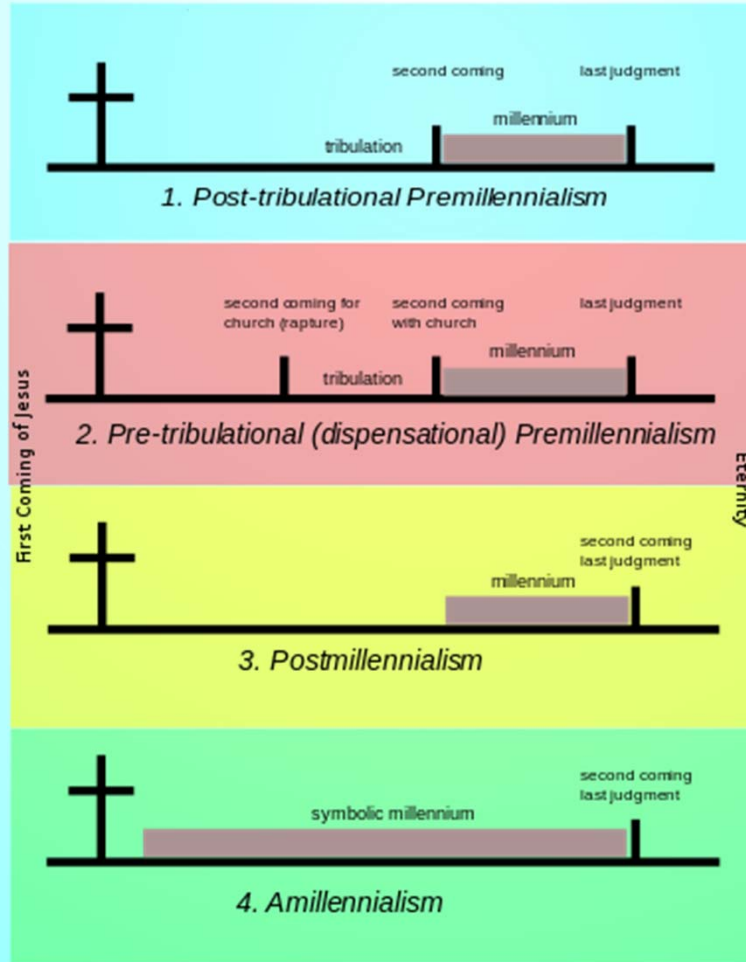


FRAMEWORK



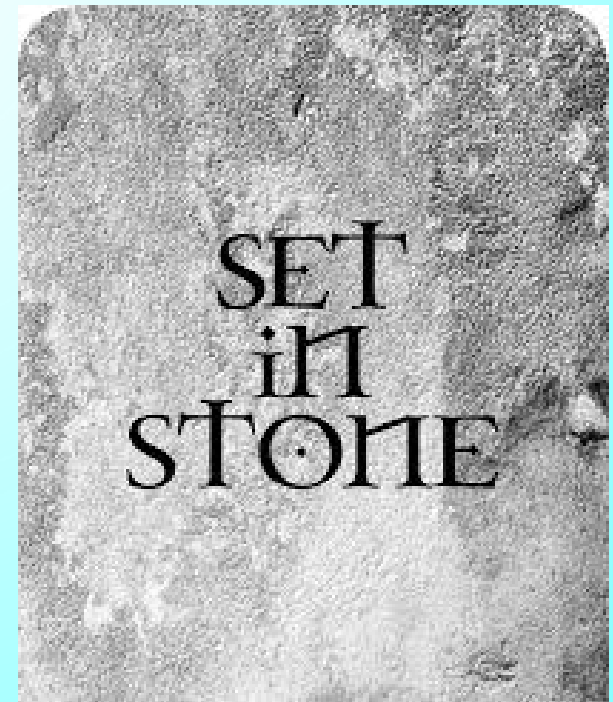
- Eschatology is one of the disciplines in theology where we cannot affirm certain aspects with certainty.
- We will discuss – in order – dispensationalism/historical premillennialism, post millennialism, and amillennialism.
- All four views deal with a certain interpretation of Revelation 20.

Comparison of Christian millennial teachings



WHAT IS “SET IN STONE” IN ESCHATOLOGY

- “I believe in the resurrection of the body” and “life everlasting”.
Apostles Creed.
- Jesus will come back bodily to judge the living and the dead (Mark 13)
- Jesus will reign as king of all the earth (Rev 20-22).

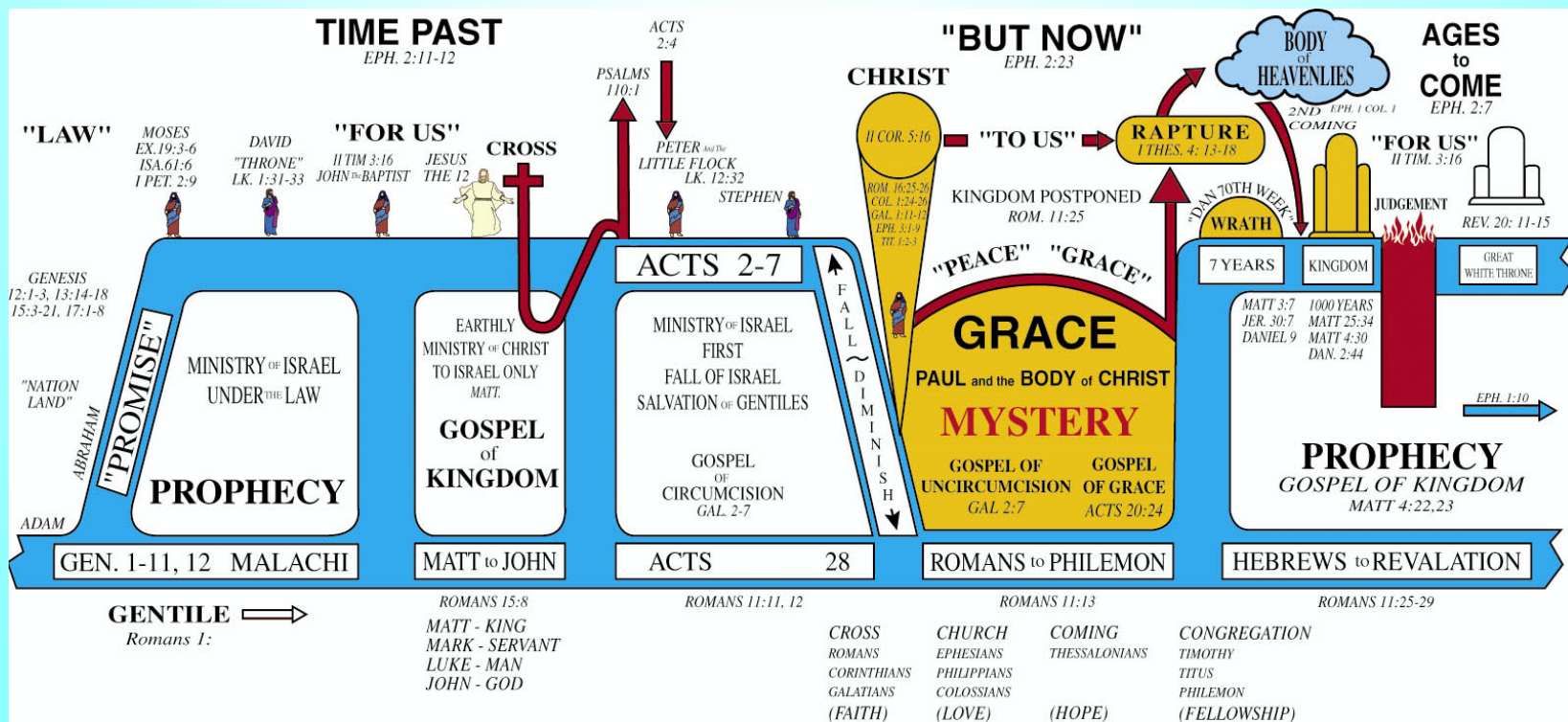


PREFACE TO DISPENSATIONALISM

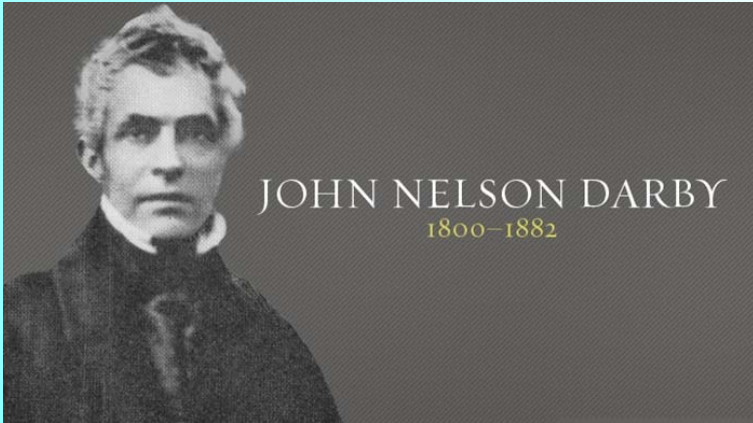


- I went to the “flagship” school for dispensationalism. I was in the world of dispensationalism but not of it.
- However, I know plenty of dispensationalists who love the Lord and have served Him throughout the world.
- Like any movement, dispensationalism has changed over its history.

DISPENSATIONALIST ESCHATOLOGY



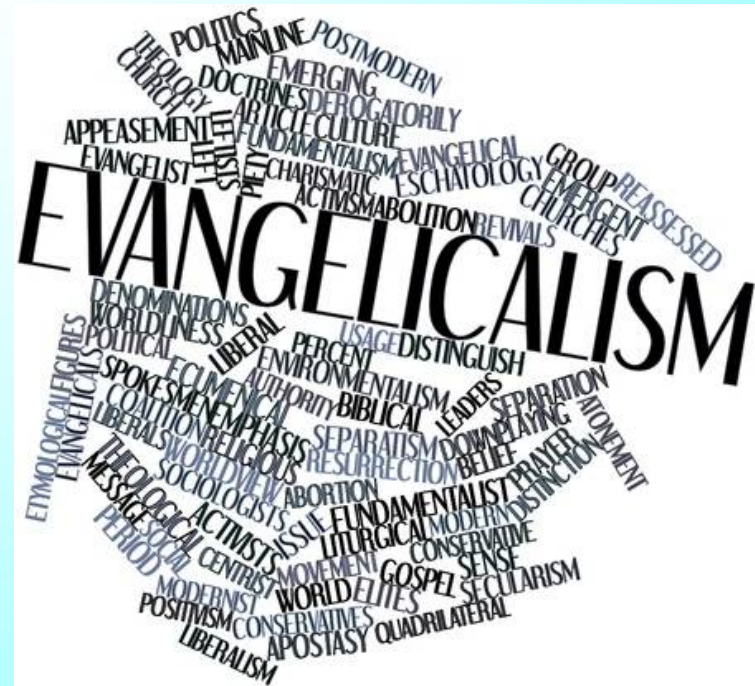
JOHN NELSON DARBY



- Pre-millennial dispensationalism was developed in the 1820's and 1830's by a small group of conservative evangelicals associated with the Plymouth Brethren. John Nelson Darby became associated with them.
- More or less converted from the “mainline” to the “evangelical cause”.
- He originally was a lawyer.
- Darby's eschatology was as much political as it was theological.
- His views on God's role in salvation were “Calvinistic”.

GENEROUS EVANGELICALISM

- There is no denying that dispensationalist and reformed Christians disagree on many issues.
- However, dispensationalists preach the gospel and love Jesus.
- Orthodox Reformed Christians have more in common with dispensationalists than they do mainline protestants.
- They would affirm the “essentials of the EPC”.



LEFT BEHIND AND EVANGELICALISM

- Nobody can deny the impact of the “Left Behind” series. It has sold millions of copies!
- At it’s best, Left Behind attempts to share the gospel with those who do not know Christ.
- It not only has it been imprinted on the imagination of Christians, most secular people I speak with assume this is the standard position.



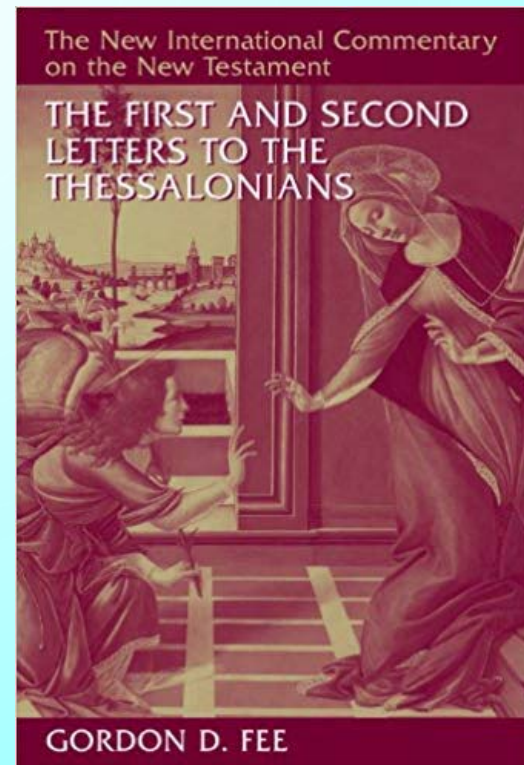
“THE RAPTURE”



- **1 Thess 4:16-17:** ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

THE RAPTURE CONTINUED

- “In the air” refers to the space between heaven and earth. Not literally “in the air”. It’s apocalyptic.
- The emphasis in these two verses is “being with the Lord forever”.
- “in the clouds” is a reference to Daniel 7:13. Son of Man was Jesus’ favorite title for Himself.
- Acts 1:9 uses similar language in reference to Jesus’ ascension.



DISPENSATIONALISM AND POLITICS



- Dispensationalism has had as much to do with politics as it has eschatology (we will see "post millennialism" does too).
- Crawford Gribben states for example "Left Behind is as much about politics as exegesis".
- Premillennial theology has found it's footing primarily in conservative churches. Moreover, in times of crisis or persecution this view has gained traction.
- Ronald Reagan and his cabinet were fascinated and interested in millenarian thought patterns.

MAJOR WEAKNESSES OF DISPENSATIONALISM

- Reads current “political dramas” into the text which becomes endless speculation.
- It’s view is found nowhere in the early church, middle ages, nor during the Reformation. This should not be taken lightly.
- It is overly “literalistic” in it’s interpretation of the New and Old Testament. It does not play the rules of genre and historical backgrounds.
- The entire system is built on eschatology whereas the Bible’s primary focus is on **redemption**.
- Primarily a lay movement. It has not gained attention in the academy.

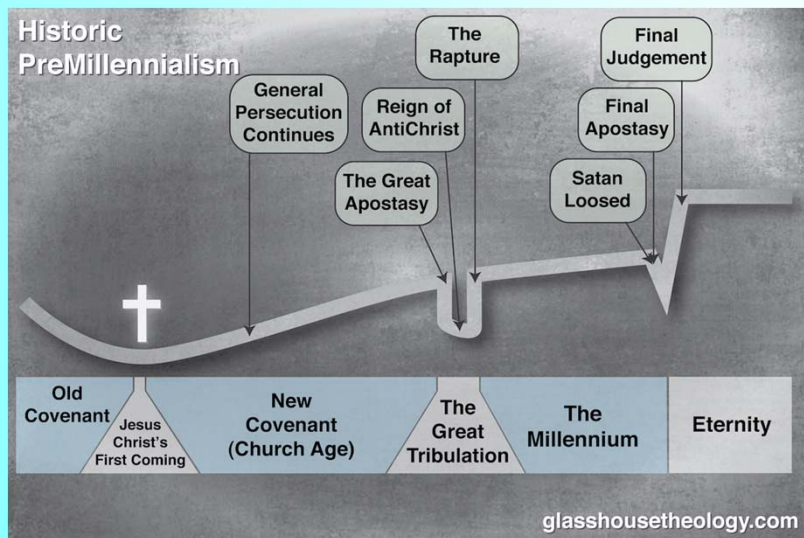


PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM



- The major difference is that the radical difference between “church” and “Israel” was abandoned.
- My personal theory (remember I had most of these professors) is that many Dallas Theological Seminary professors went over to England to complete their PhD and learned that classical dispensational was not what Scripture taught.
- Therefore, they ended up with a version of historical premillennialism.

HISTORICAL PREMILLENNIALISM



- Many of the early church fathers held to a “literal” 1,000 year interpretation of Revelation 20. Irenaeus and Justin Martyr are examples.
- This view has increased in popularity whenever Christians are undergoing persecution.
- This view should be taken more serious than dispensationalism.