

Understanding the End Times

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2. The Four Millennial Views, 3/11/09

Four Millennial Views

- The Millennium

“Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection... When the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle” (Rev 20:4-5, 7-8).

- The Relationship between the Millennium and Christ’s Return

- *Historic Pre-Millennialism*: The Return of Christ is *before* the Millennium. Historic, because this is the pre-millennial view found in early church.
- *Dispensational Pre-Millennialism*: The Return of Christ is *before* the Millennium. Dispensational, because it teaches that God has different purposes for different peoples (Jews, Gentiles, Church) and dispensations.
- *Amillennialism*: There is no literal 1000-year reign; the millennium is the church age followed by the return of Christ. Amillennial, because it does not believe in a literal thousand years: the millennium is the gospel age.
- *Post-Millennialism*: Christ will return after the millennium, when the Church has triumphed in the world. Millennium is not a literal thousand years, but a period of special triumph at the end of history.

Comparing the Four Views

PREMILLENNIAL

Dispensationalism

Historic Premillennialism

PRE-TRIBULATIONAL

Dispensationalism

DISPENSATIONAL (Church vs. Israel)

Dispensationalism

CHILIASTIC (Millennial)

Dispensationalism

Historic Premillennialism

Post-millennialism

POSTMILLENNIAL

Amillennialism

Postmillennialism

POST-TRIBULATIONAL

Historic Premillennialism

Amillennialism

Postmillennialism

HISTORIC (Church = New Israel)

Historic Premillennialism

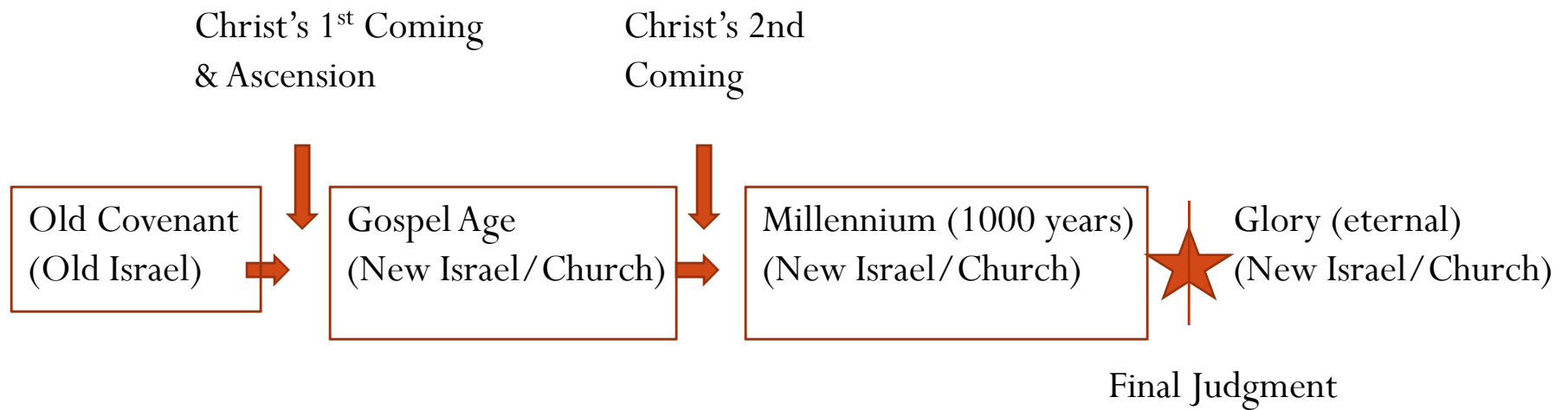
Amillennialism

Post-millennialism

ANTI-CHILIASTIC (Non-Millennial)

Amillennialism

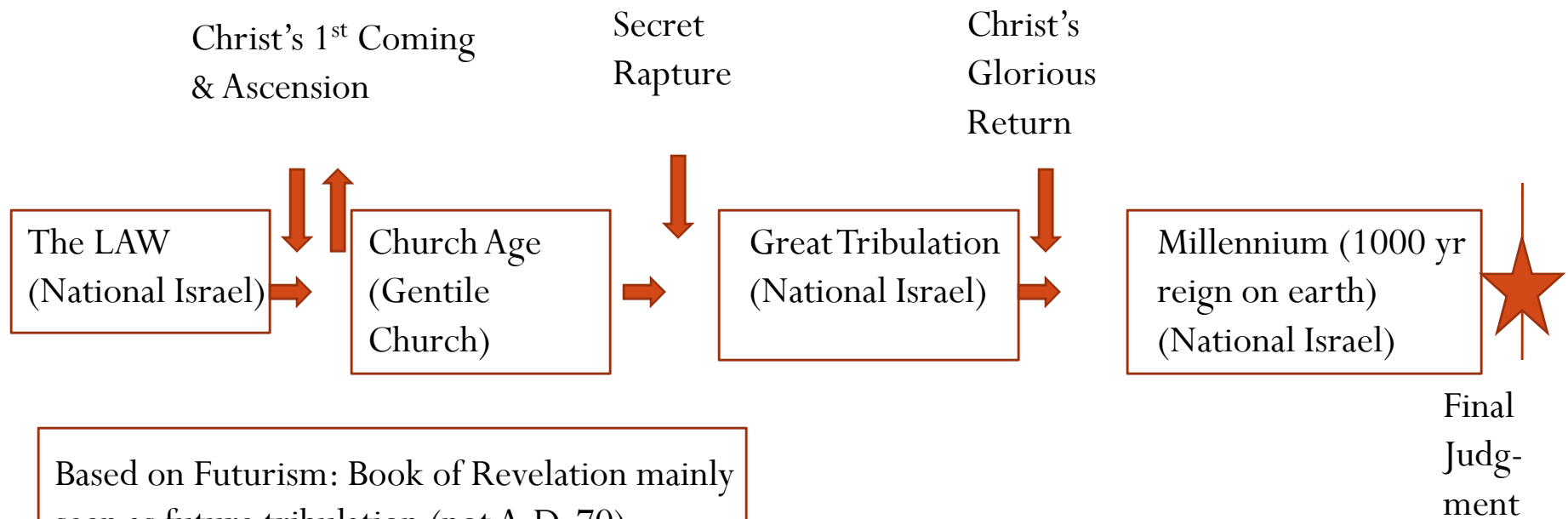
Historic Premillennialism



Widely held by Christians in the early church, including Justin Martyr and Papias, the disciple of John. Resurgent in 18th/19th c.

Literally interprets Rev. 20:4-8, dividing period after Christ's return. Literally interprets many prophecies as fulfilled in this millennium.

Dispensationalism



Based on Futurism: Book of Revelation mainly seen as future tribulation (not A.D. 70).

Originates from J. N. Darby, 1830's. Two novelties: 1) Church \neq Israel 2) Secret Rapture

Premillennialism: Historic v. Dispensational

- The Church and Israel

Historic Premillennialism: The Church = True Israel

Dispensational Premillennialism: The Church \neq Israel

- The Second Coming

Historic Premillennialism: One return of Christ

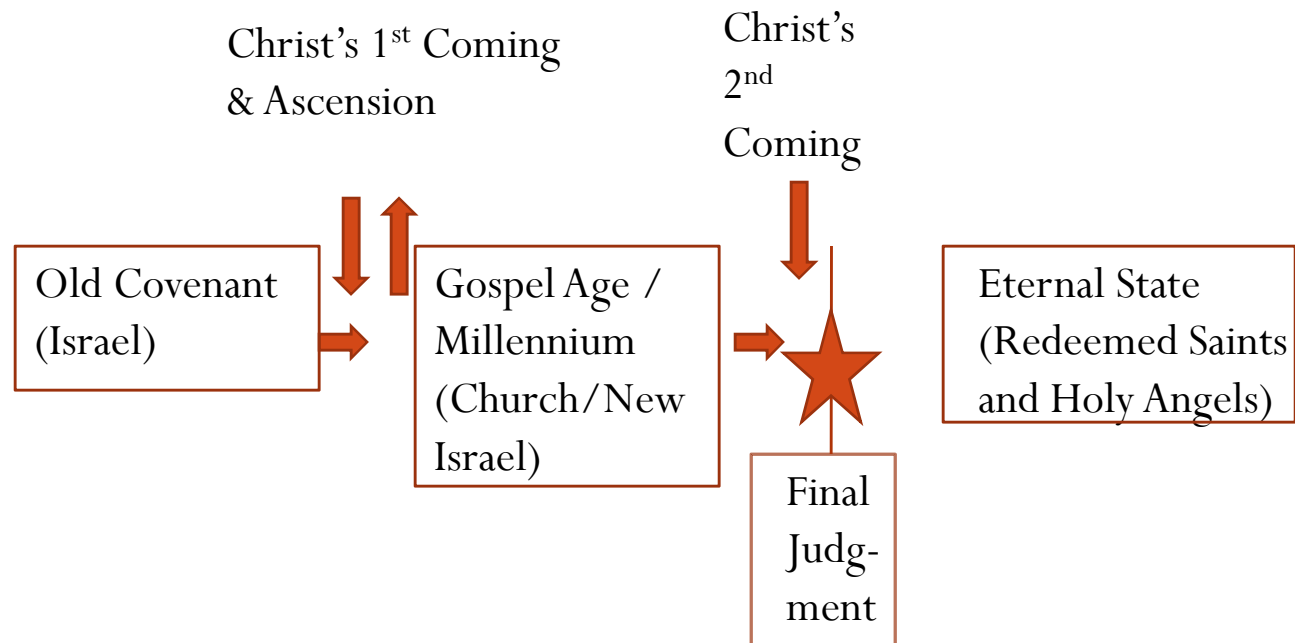
Dispensational Premillennialism: Two-stage return w/ secret rapture

- The Tribulation

Historic Premillennialism: Post-tribulational return of Christ

Dispensational Premillennialism: Pre-tribulational return of Christ.

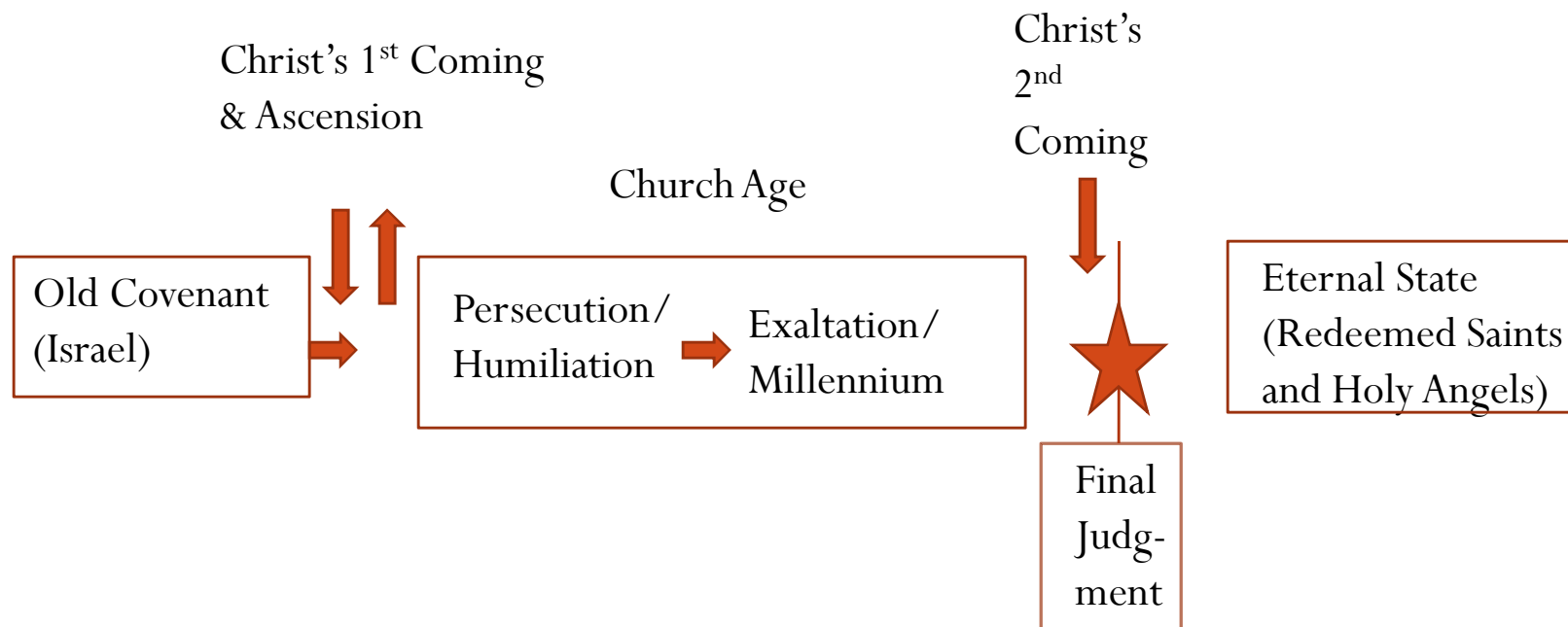
Amillennialism



Found in early church; prominent after Augustine. Majority view of Reformers (Luther, Calvin), most Reformed theologians today.

Interprets Millennium of Rev. 20 as figurative.

Postmillennialism



Emphasized in 16th & 17th c, esp. Puritans (Jon. Edwards).
Growing view among many Reformed theologians.
Linked with theonomy/reconstruction.

Rejects futurism. Sees all or some of Christ's end-times teaching & Revelation as relating to AD 70.

Summary & Conclusion

- Issues concerned with the four views:
 - How to take Millennium of Rev. 20?
 - Will church suffer the tribulation?
 - What will happen when and after Christ returns?
 - How and when are OT prophecies fulfilled?
 - What is the relationship between Israel and the Church, Old and New Testaments?
- One may hold any of these views and be a faithful, Bible-believing Christian
- One may hold any of these views and understand little of the Bible's eschatological teaching.