

# Defining our terms<sup>1</sup>

## Eschatology

- Eschatology means “the doctrine of last things”
- It is important for us to realize that the **entire** NT is eschatological, the NT is concerned with the doctrine of last things of the OT, it is the fulfillment of the promises of the OT.

## Millennium

- ‘Millennium’ means “a period of a thousand years”
- There are three main positions on the millennium
  - A. Pre-millennialism - the return of Christ precedes the millennium
  - B. Post-millennialism - Christ returns after the millennium
  - C. Amillennialism - the millennium isn’t a literal 1000 years but includes the entire period of time between the first and second comings of Christ.

## Tribulation

- Tribulation means a period of great suffering
- When used by dispensational writers it refers to a specific 7 year period in which most of the events of the book of Revelation will unfold.
- However tribulation should be seen as characterizing the entire church age until Christ returns

## Rapture

- Comes from the Latin Vulgate translation of 1 Thess. 4:17 *rapiemur*
- Dispensationists use the term to refer to Christ’s second coming when all Christians will be suddenly and secretly removed from the earth and transported to heaven.
  - This can occur before, during or after the 7 Year tribulation
- Everyone agrees there is going to be a rapture because rapture simply means “caught up”
- We believe that there is a time when believers will be brought into the Lord’s presence, but it will come at the end of time, when Christ returns.
- Essentially the debate is over how we interpret the various passages that describe the return of Christ.
  1. Is Christ coming back once or multiple times or in stages?

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<sup>1</sup> Much of this is a summary of Kim Riddlebarger’s 2 chapters in his book *A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 17-32.