

Does Your View of the Second Coming Matter?



Does your view of the second coming really matter?

Yes ... and no.

Jesus Christ is coming back. He

will return to earth in a very visible and public manner. This is a core doctrine of Christianity. It is as significant and important as the doctrine surrounding His first coming.

What is not as critical is how you interpret and view the details and events surrounding His return. I am *not* saying these details are unimportant. Jesus spoke of the end times and His return, and He gave an incredible vision—a revelation—to the apostle John regarding the end times. Peter and Paul also spoke of His return. God would not have revealed these things if they were not important for us to know.

What's not as critical is our interpretation of these events. I'll explain what I mean in a moment, but first, here are the primary ways believers interpret the end times.

1. **Historical Premillennialism.** Christ will return to earth in a cataclysmic event and reign for a thousand years.
2. **Dispensational Premillennialism.** Christ will remove His church prior to a period of great tribulation, after which He will return to earth and reign for a thousand years.
3. **Amillennialism.** The thousand-year period referred to in Revelation 20:4-6 is a figurative description of the church age, the long period of time—but not literally a thousand years—between Christ's first appearance on earth and His return. There will be no millennium (thus a-millennial) after Christ's return but rather the judgment and establishment of the new heaven and new earth.
4. **Postmillennialism.** As the gospel advances and triumphs throughout the world, humanity will experience a golden age of a thousand years (either literal and/or symbolic). At the conclusion of this

period, Christ will physically return to earth and the new heaven and new earth will be established.

Which is the predominant view? Historical Premillennialism has been strong throughout church history. Postmillennialism was popular in the 19th century, but it fell away in the 20th century (when it became obvious the world was not getting progressively better). Dispensational Premillennialism began in the 1800s and gained popularity in the 20th century (chiefly through the popular writing of Hal Lindsay and Tim LaHaye), but it's popularity is giving way to Amillennialism. Amillennialism is strong these days.

But which is the correct view? Determining the correct interpretation is not as easy as it may sound.

- Godly people fall into each of the millennial camps.
- Godly people who hold to the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture falls into each of the camps.
- Godly people who seek to be completely faithful to the Bible fall into each of the camps.
- Godly people who love Jesus and each other don't see eye-to-eye on the details of the second coming.

To prove my point, there's a wonderful book called *The Meaning of the Millennium*. A Bible scholar from each of the millennial camps wrote a chapter on why he holds to his particular millennial view, and the other three scholars respond based on their own millennial view. In other words, it's a friendly debate among four godly biblical scholars!

Study the Scriptures. Don't just throw your hands up in the hand and conclude, "Who really knows?!" But wherever you land, be gracious to those who interpret the details differently.

Years ago, I served on a church staff that was phenomenal. We worked and played well together. Over time, I discovered that among the four of us, three of the millennial views were represented. We had our different views—our convictions—but that did not negatively impact our relationship or ministry together. That's the way it should be.

Jesus is coming back. Let's agree on that.