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Statement of Faith

The Future

The Lord Jesus Christ will visibly return to the earth in glory and accomplish the final triumph over evil. God will make everything new. The dead will be raised and judged. Unbelievers will suffer eternal punishment in separation from God; believers will enter into eternal joy in fellowship with God, glorifying Him forever.

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The Second Coming of Jesus

- **Definitions**

- **Eschatology** – The study of future events is called “eschatology,” from the Greek word ἔσχατος which means “last.” The study of eschatology, is the study of “the last things.” It is the branch of Christian theology dealing with the end times and the events of the last days.
- **Second Coming** - The sudden, personal, visible, bodily return of Christ from heaven to earth. "Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." Heb. 9:28
- **Rapture** - The rapture describes a future, end-times event when believers who are still alive will be taken from the earth to meet Christ in the air. "Then we who are alive, who are left, shall be *caught up* together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:17.
Note: The term "rapture" comes from the Vulgate (Latin) Bible.

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The Second Coming of Jesus

- **Definitions**

- **Millennium** - The period of time mentioned in Revelation 20:4 during which the saints "reign with Christ a thousand years." During this time Satan is bound and thrown into a pit (Rev. 20:3).
- **Tribulation** - A word referring to the hardships and sufferings that God's people will always have to pass through (Acts 14:21-22), and more specifically Jesus refers to a time of "great tribulation" at the end of the age (Matt. 24:21, Rev 7:14).

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The Second Coming of Christ

- **His Coming in Glory**
 - The Second Coming will be a visible, glorious manifestation of Christ's divine majesty and authority, witnessed by all humanity.
 - It signifies the fulfillment of prophecies and the vindication of Christ's redemptive work.
- **Judgment:**
 - Christ will execute judgment upon the living and the dead, separating the righteous from the unrighteous.
 - Judgment will be just and final, holding every individual accountable for their deeds and faith.
- **Triumph:**
 - The Second Coming culminates in the ultimate triumph of Christ over sin, death, and Satan, ushering in the eternal reign of God's Kingdom.
 - Believers eagerly anticipate this glorious event, knowing that it signifies the consummation of their salvation and the restoration of all things.

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Interpreting Apocalyptic Literature

Four Main Interpretive Approaches

PRETERIST	IDEALIST
FUTURIST	HISTORICIST

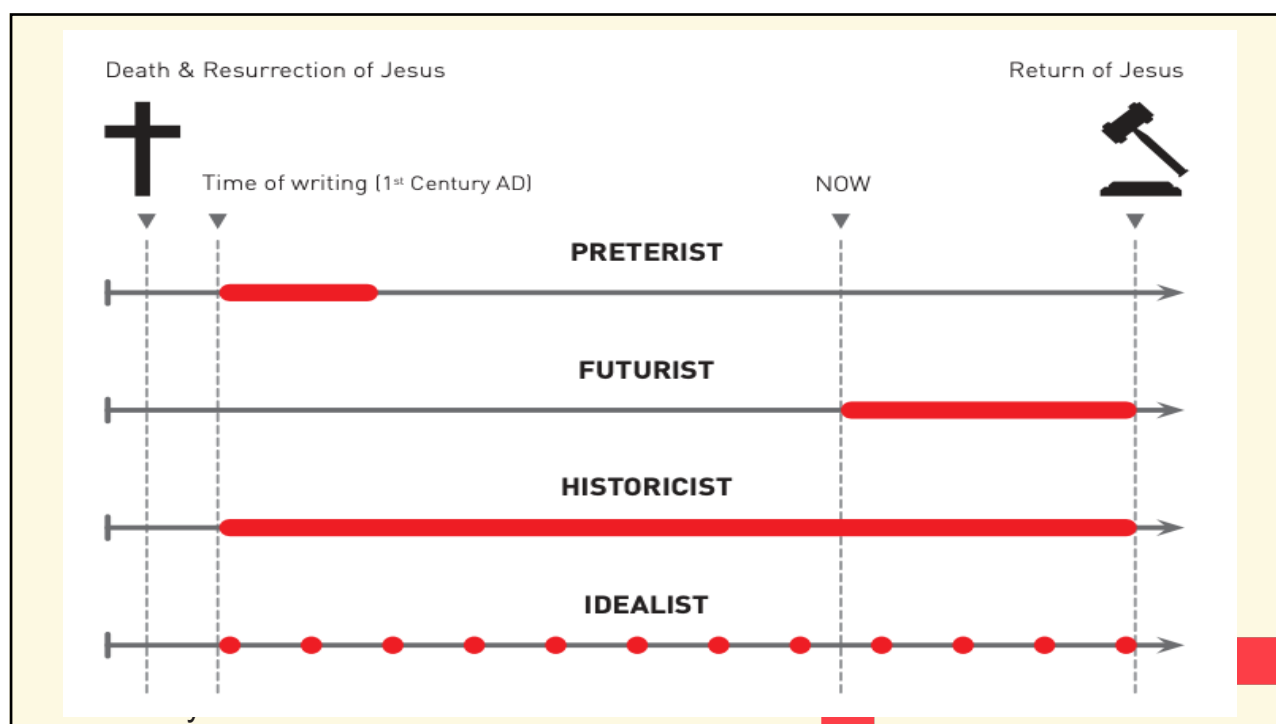
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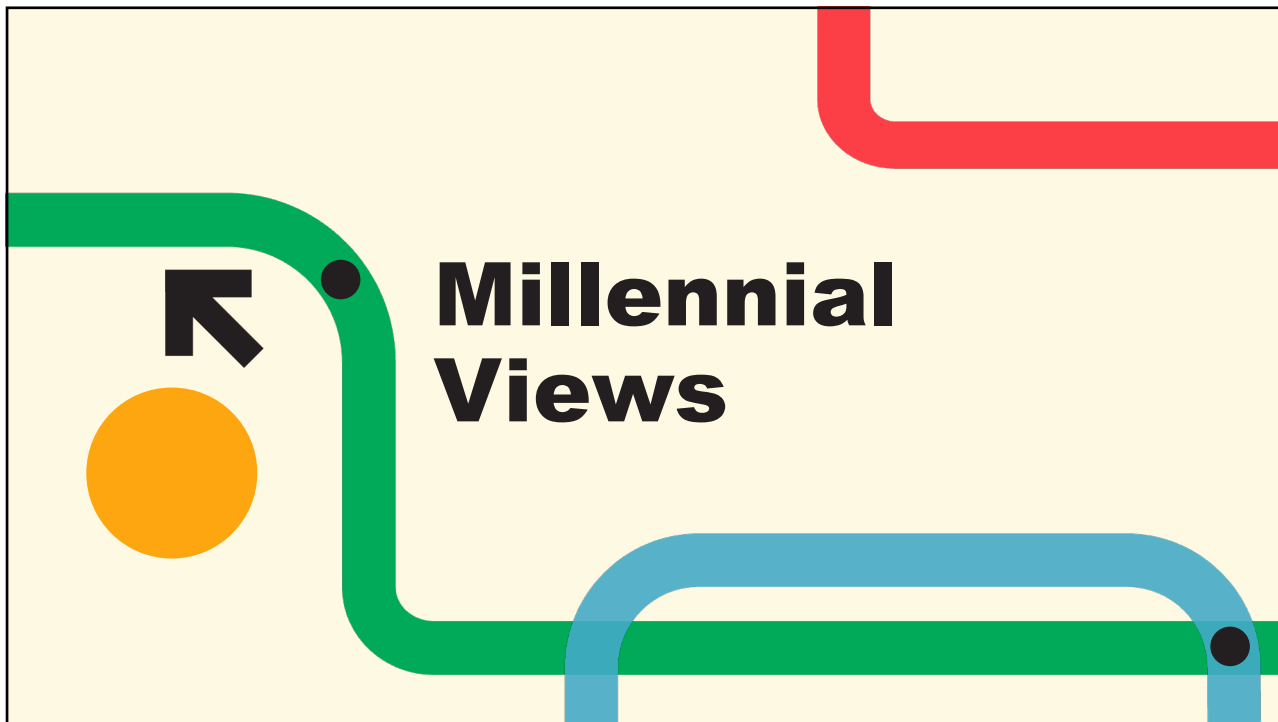
Interpreting Apocalyptic Literature

- **Preterist** – Apocalyptic texts in the Bible are symbolic descriptions of events that happening near or soon after the time when the text was written. In other words, they happening soon after Jesus' death and resurrection.
- **Idealist** – Apocalyptic texts in the Bible are idealised expressions of struggles between good and evil.
- **Historicist** – Apocalyptic texts in the Bible are symbolic retellings of certain epochs of history.
- **Futurist** – Apocalyptic texts in the Bible are predictive prophecy about events that, even now, have not yet occurred.

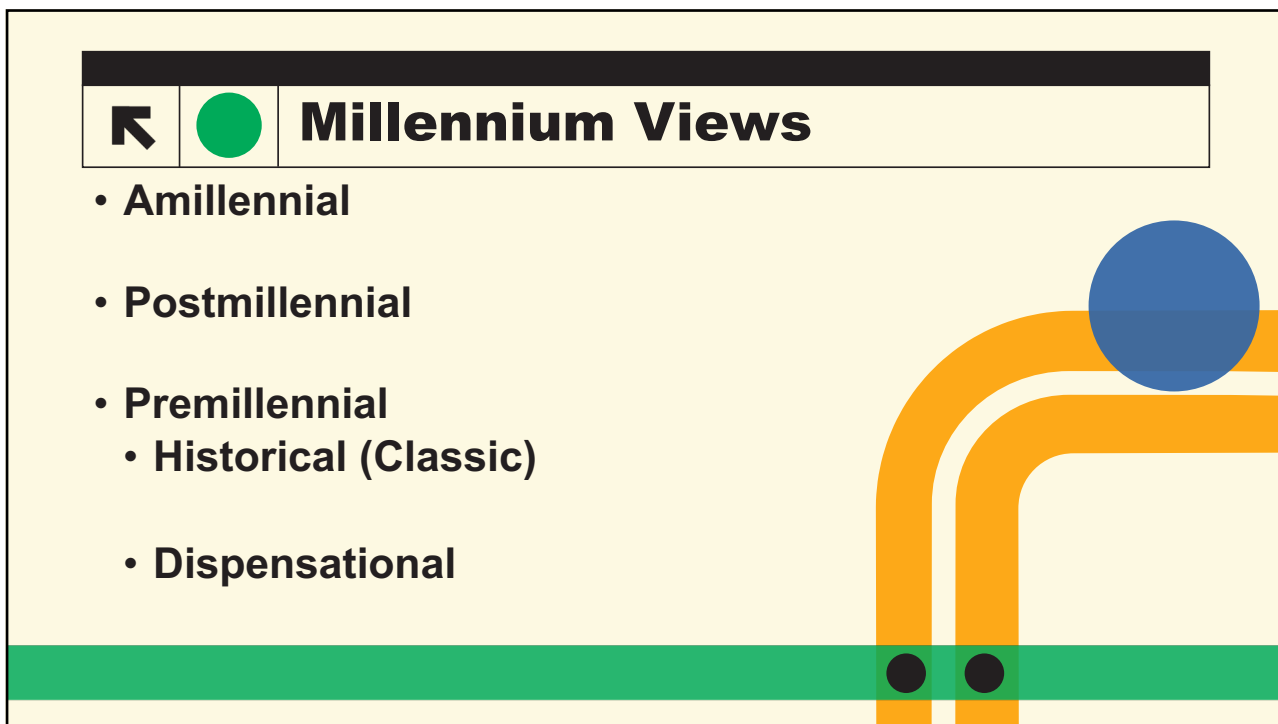
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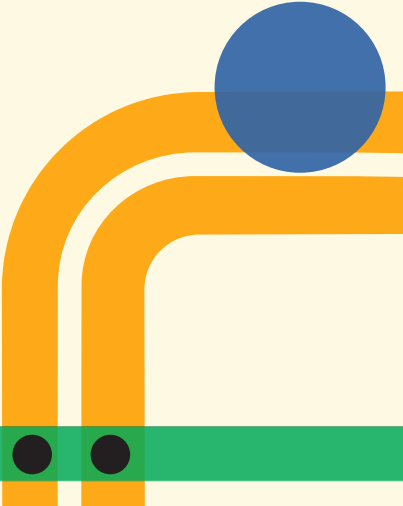
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➤ ● Millennium Views

- **Amillennial** – There will be no future, earthly millennium. The millennium is the present spiritual reign of Jesus with his people. Jesus will return physically to earth at the end of the millennium.



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➤ ● Millennium Views



The diagram illustrates the Amillennialist view of the millennium. It features a central horizontal timeline with several key events and periods marked:

- CHRIST'S DEATH & RESURRECTION** (marked with a cross icon)
- PENTECOST** (marked with a flame icon)
- CHURCH AGE • SOCIETY PROGRESSIVELY DECAYS** (the main duration of the millennium)
- TRIBULATION IS SYMBOLIC** (Classical View)
- TRIBULATION** (Preterist View), which includes **JERUSALEM DESTROYED** (marked with a temple icon)
- CHRIST RETURNS & ALL ARE JUDGED** (marked with a cloud icon)
- BELIEVERS** leading to **ETERNAL KINGDOM** (marked with a crown icon)
- UNBELIEVERS** leading to **ETERNAL TORTURE** (marked with a flame icon)

AMILLENNIALISM

VISUALTHEOLOGY

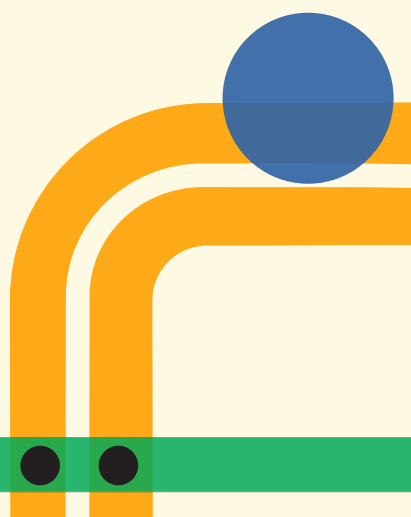
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Millennium Views

- **Postmillennial** – The millennium is a spiritual reign of Jesus on earth through the widespread proclamation and acceptance of the gospel. Jesus will return physically to earth at the end of the millennium




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Millennium Views



POSTMILLENNIALISM

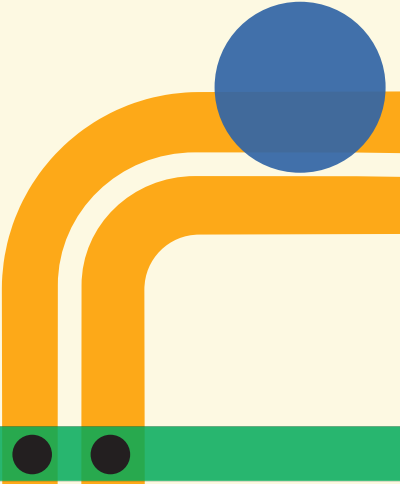


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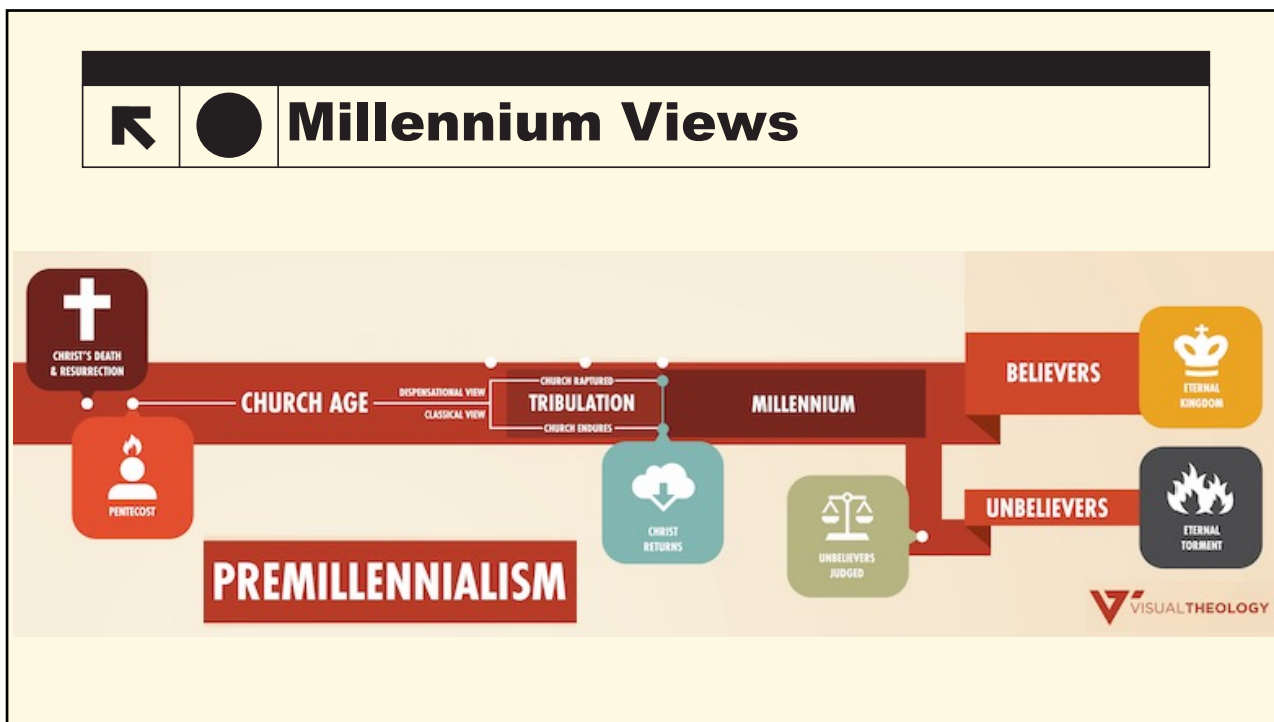
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Millennium Views

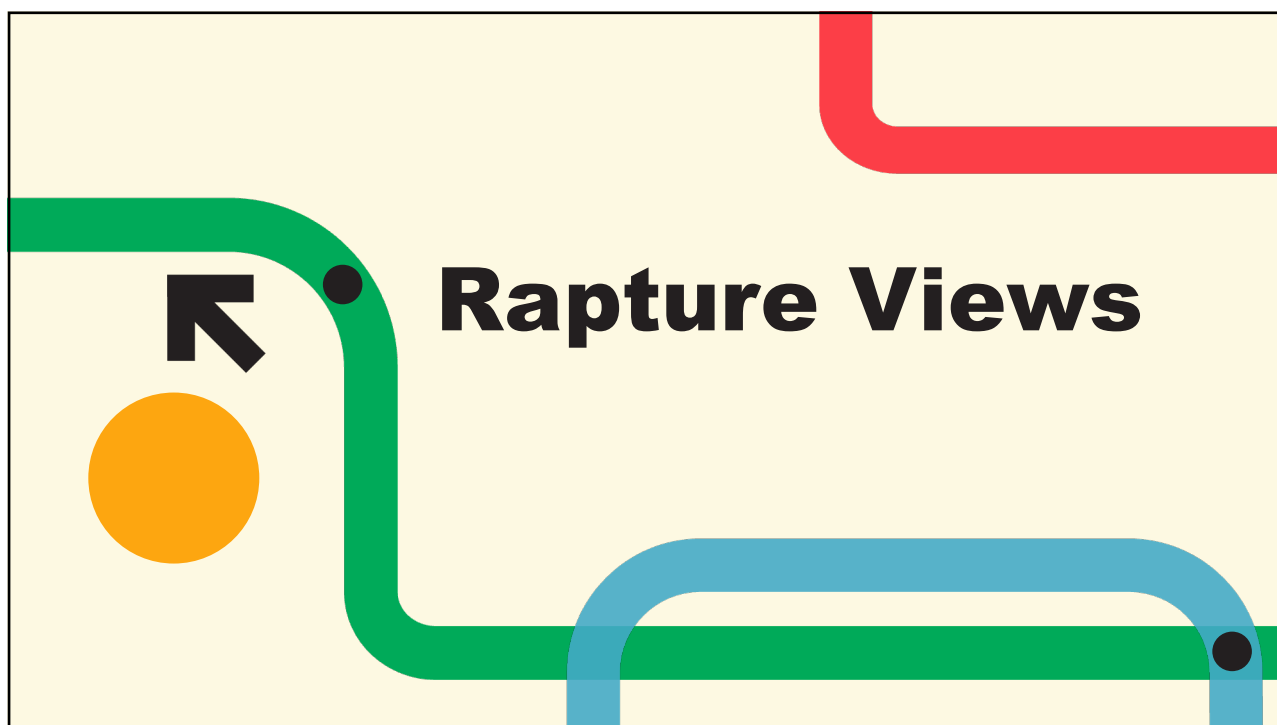
- **Premillennial**
 - **Historical** - The millennium will be a future, physical one-thousand year reign of Jesus on earth after all times of tribulation have ended. Christians endure the great tribulation.
 - **Dispensational** – The millennium will be a future, physical one-thousand year reign of Jesus on the earth, following a time known as “the great tribulation.” Jesus will return to rapture Christians from the earth before God pours out his wrath on the earth.



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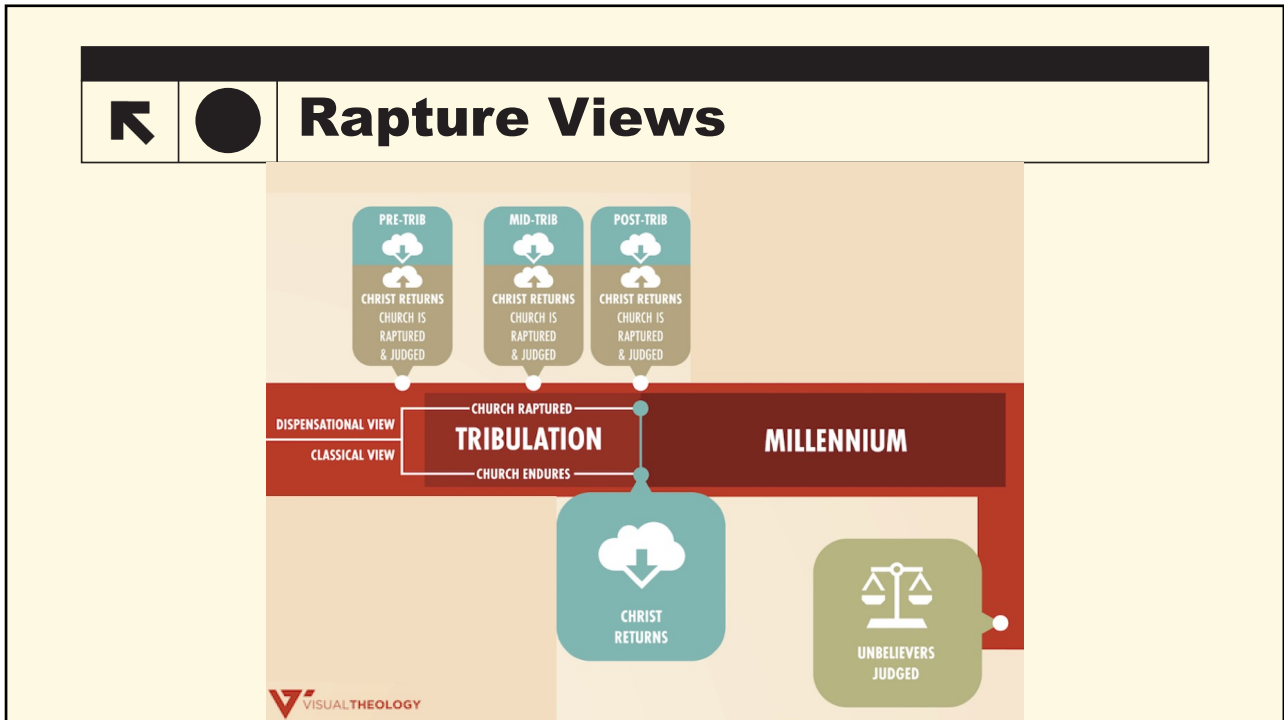
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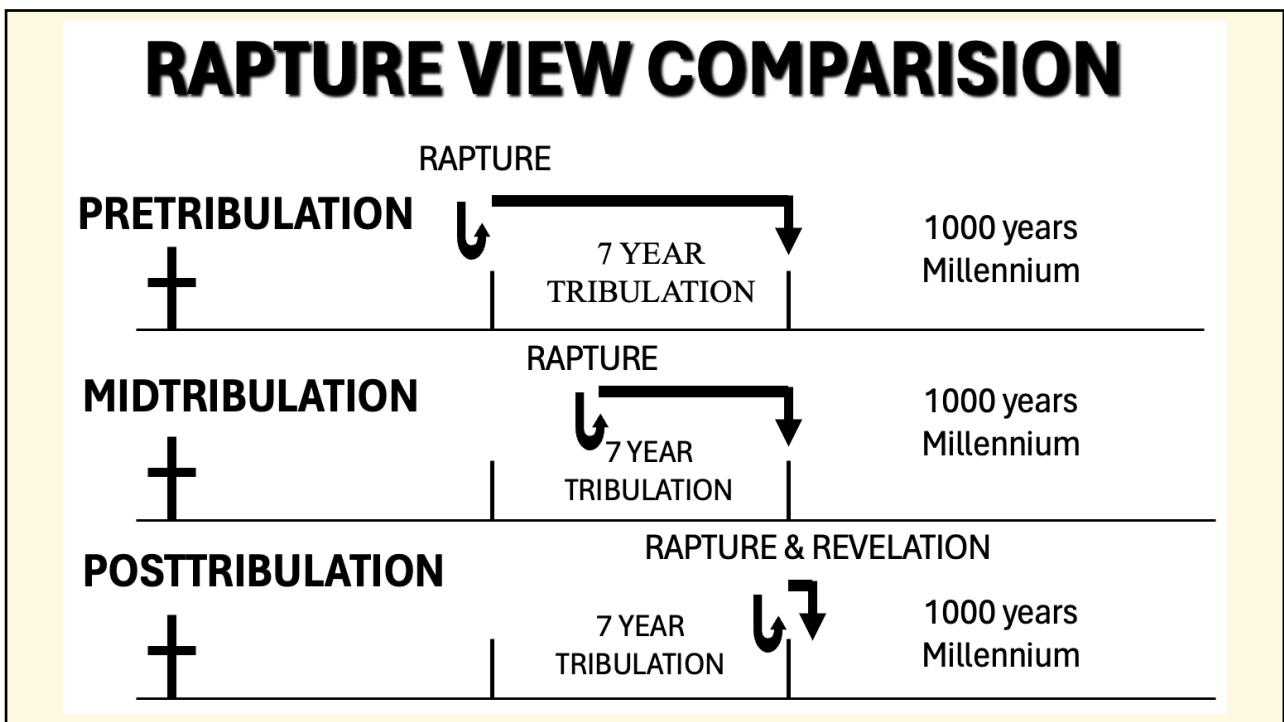
Rapture Views

- **Rapture** - Refers to the snatching away of believers from the earth, "We who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:17
- **Pre-Tribulational Rapture** - Before Christ returns in glory, He will return quietly to catch up the church and take us to heaven. This happens before the tribulation, meaning the Church will not go through the tribulation.
- **Mid-Tribulational Rapture** - The Church will be raptured at the mid-point of the tribulation, before the start of the Great Tribulation.
- **Post-Tribulational Rapture** - The rapture and the second coming are part of one simultaneous event. The saints rise to meet the Lord in the air and accompany him back as the rightful king of the earth, meaning the church goes through the tribulation.

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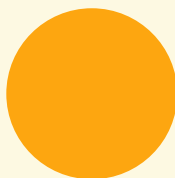


The Tribulation

- **Seven Year Tribulation**

- The seven-year Tribulation period is a concept in Christian eschatology that refers to a future time marked by divine judgments, celestial disturbances, natural disasters, and terrible plagues, to finish God's discipline of Israel and finalise His judgment of the unbelieving world.
- This period is associated with the "day of the Lord", the latter half is known as the "Great Tribulation," characterised by intensified suffering and the rise of the Antichrist.
- The seven-year tribulation is not referred to in the New Testament (c.f. 1260 days and 42 months in Rev 11:1-3, 12:1-6, 13:1-5).
- It comes from Daniel 9:24-27 where Daniel predicts "seventy weeks of years" for the accomplishment of God's redemption.

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Israel and the Church

25



Israel and the Church

- The Role of Israel
 - Israel holds a significant place as God's chosen people.
 - God made promises and covenants with Israel - Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1-3), Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7:12-16), New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)
 - These promises highlight Israel's special relationship with God.
- The Role of the Church
 - The Church is composed of all believers in Jesus Christ – Jew and Gentile
 - It is referred to as the "body of Christ" (1 Cor 12:27), and the "bride of Christ" (Rev 19:7).
 - The Church's mission includes proclaiming the gospel, making disciples, and being a light to the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

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Israel and the Church

- The Place of Israel: Literal or Spiritual?
 - The questions regarding the place of Israel within theological discourse have long been debated among scholars and theologians.
 - Two main perspectives emerge:
 - A literal interpretation of Israel's place in prophecy as a physical land and people
 - The promises to Israel find fulfillment within the Church.

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Israel and the Church

- A Literal Place for Israel
 - Israel retains a distinct and specific role in God's plan, separate from the Church.
 - A future restoration of Israel as a nation has a prominent role in God's end-time plan.
 - Supporting Biblical References
 - Genesis 17:7-8: God's everlasting covenant with Abraham and his descendants.
 - Jeremiah 32:37-41: Israel's restoration and ultimate redemption
 - Ezekiel 36:22-28: Israel will dwell in the land given to their fathers
 - Romans 11:1-3,25-27: Paul's affirmation of God's continued faithfulness to Israel.
 - Strengths
 - The literal interpretation maintains consistency with centuries of Jewish tradition.
 - Prophecies regarding the restoration and blessing of Israel appear to await literal fulfillment.
 - Weaknesses
 - The New Testament seems to reinterpret the Old Testament promises in light of Jesus Christ, implying a spiritual fulfillment rather than a literal one.

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Israel and the Church

- The Promises of Israel Are Fulfilled in the Church
 - The promises made to Israel find their ultimate fulfillment in the Church, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles.
 - Supporting Biblical References
 - Galatians 3:7-9: Believers in Christ are heirs to the promises made to Abraham.
 - Ephesians 2:11-22: Gentiles are no longer strangers but fellow citizens with the saints.
 - Romans 2:28-29: True circumcision is of the heart, not of the flesh.
 - Strengths:
 - The spiritual interpretation emphasises the inclusive nature of God's kingdom and unity in Christ.
 - The emphasis on spiritual realities aligns with the teachings of Jesus and the apostles.
 - Weaknesses:
 - Spiritualising the promises to Israel overlooks the unique role and identity of the nation in God's plan.
 - Some prophecies regarding Israel's restoration and prominence appear difficult to reconcile with a purely spiritual interpretation.

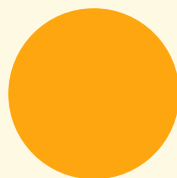
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Israel and the Church

- **Replacement Theology**
 - Replacement Theology, also known as supersessionism, posits that the Church has replaced Israel
 - God's plan and the promises made to Israel in the Old Testament are now fulfilled in the Church.
 - This perspective has strong historical roots.
- **Dispensational Theology**
 - Dispensational Theology, maintains a clear distinction between Israel and the Church in God's plan.
 - It sees God as working with distinct purposes for Israel and the Church throughout different "dispensations" or periods of time.
 - Proponents of Dispensational Theology emphasise a future restoration of Israel as a nation and a literal fulfillment of biblical prophecies concerning Israel.

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Death, Judgement and Heaven

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Death, Judgement & Heaven

• Death

- For Adam and his offspring death was the result of human sin
 - You shall surely die - Gen 2:17, 3:19
 - Death in Adam - Rom 5:12-17
 - In Adam, all die - 1 Cor 15:22
- Scripture does not portray death as the end of our existence
- Beyond death, the Bible attests to the reality of some kind of afterlife, whether in a disembodied or re-embodied state.

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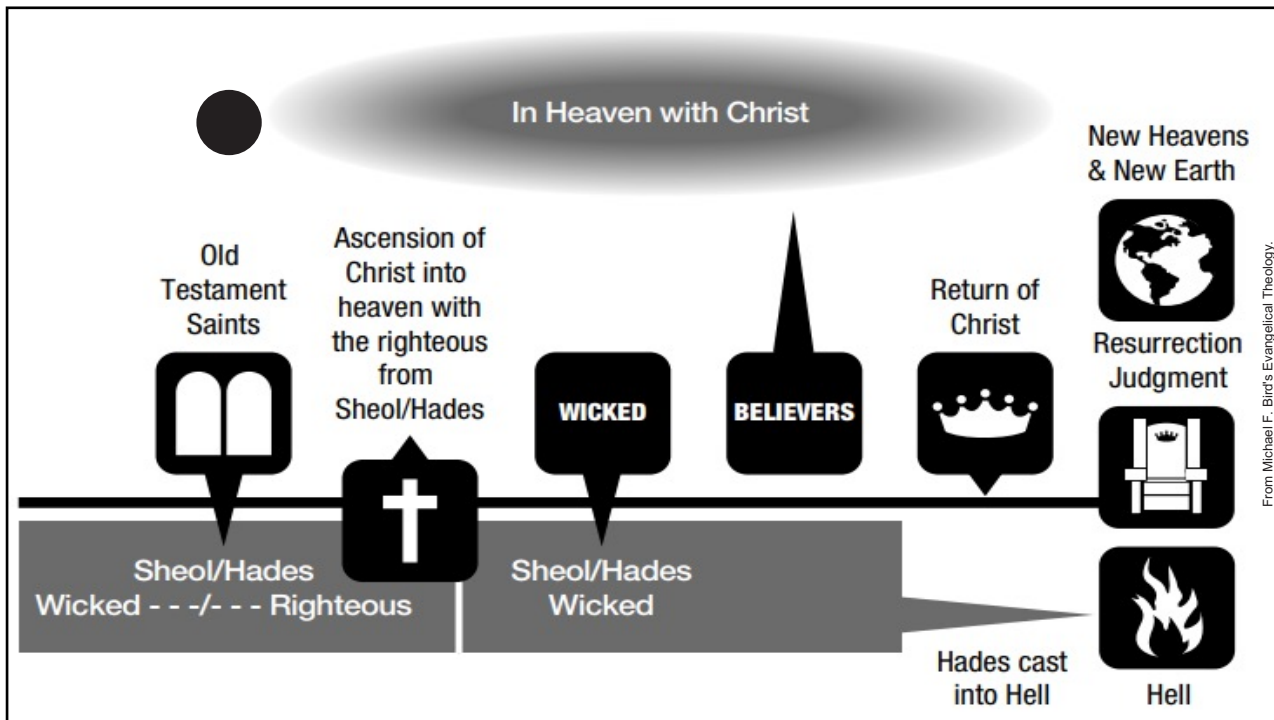


Death, Judgement & Heaven

• Intermediate State

- The Intermediate State is the time from the point of death to the resurrection.
- The separation of body and soul through physical death is merely temporary.
- Body and soul will be reunited at the resurrection
 - Issuing in eternal life and immortality for some, or
 - The second death and everlasting shame for others.

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Death, Judgement & Heaven

- **Judgement**
 - The final judgment ushers in the end of human history and the beginning of the eternal state
 - All unbelievers will be judged by Christ at the “great white throne”
 - They will be punished according to the works they have done. (Rom 2:1-6)
 - The fate of the unsaved will be in the hands of the omniscient God who will judge everyone according to their soul’s condition.
 - Believers will also be judged at the “judgment seat of Christ” (Romans 14:10)

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Death, Judgement & Heaven

• Hell

- The Bible teaches that hell is a real place for the wicked/unbelieving.
- Hell is mentioned 167 times in the Bible (Gehenna, Hades, the pit, the Abyss, or everlasting punishment - Pro 7:27; Lk 8:31; 10:15; 2 Thess 1:9).
- Jesus spoke of heaven and hell as real places (Matt 13:41–42; 23:33; Mark 9:43–47; Luke 12:5).
- We all deserve hell as the just punishment for our rebellion against God (Romans 6:23).
- Hell is a place of misery and suffering; hell is where torment and anguish never cease (Revelation 14:11).

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Death, Judgement & Heaven

• Resurrection

- The New Testament connects Jesus' resurrection with our final bodily resurrection.
 - “And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power” (1 Cor. 6:14).
 - “He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence” (2 Cor. 4:14).
- When Christ redeemed us, He did not just redeem our spirits (or souls) - He redeemed us as whole persons, including the redemption of our bodies.
- The application of Christ's work of redemption will not be complete until our bodies are entirely set free from the effects of the fall and brought to that state of perfection.
- The redemption of our bodies will only occur when Christ returns and raises our bodies from the dead. Paul says that we will be “glorified with him” (Rom. 8:17).

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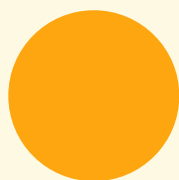


Death, Judgement & Heaven

- **Heaven**

- The new heavens and new earth is the culmination of the biblical story
- Christ accomplishes God's original purposes for creation, reverses Adam's curse, culminates his fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, and, ultimately, provides his people a place to dwell with God for eternity.
- The Bible describes the new creation as both physical (material, corporeal, concrete) and spiritual (experiencing the presence of God, spiritual).

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Living in Light of Christ's Return

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Imminency

- A key concept of eschatology is the imminency of Christ's return.
- Jesus Christ could return at any moment without prior signs or warning.
- Key Passages: Matthew 24:36-44, 1 Thess 5:1-11
- This imminent expectation serves to motivate believers to live holy and faithful lives, always ready to meet their Saviour.
- Imminency should impact our missions focus. The nearness of Christ's return motivates us to spread the Gospel globally, fulfilling the Great Commission as outlined in Matthew 28:18-20.
- It encourages a lifestyle of 'active waiting,' where actions are heavily influenced by the expectancy of impending divine intervention.

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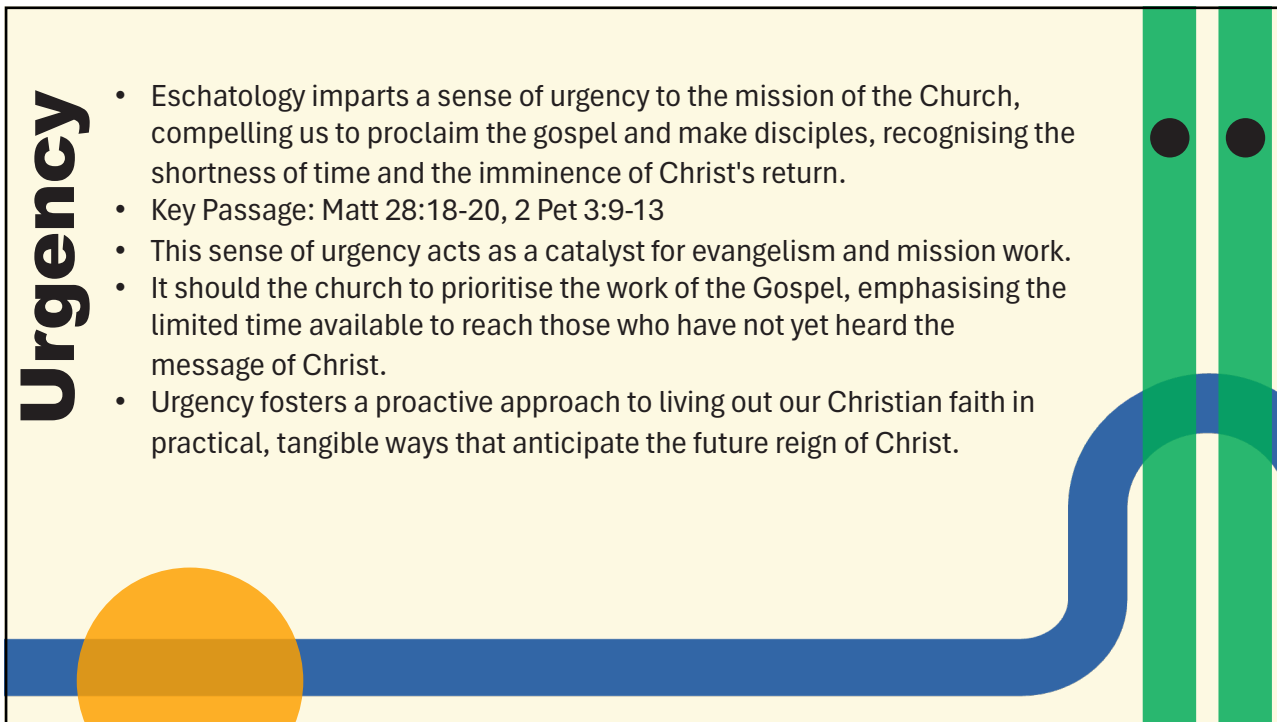
Hope

- Eschatology offers a profound source of hope for believers, anchoring our faith in the promise of a glorious future beyond the trials and tribulations of this world.
- Hope is not merely wishful thinking, but a confident expectation based on the faithfulness of God and the certainty of His promises.
- Key Passages: Romans 8:18-25, 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, Revelation 21:1-5
- Eschatological hope is grounded in the promises of God for a future transformation and redemption of the world.
- It is a transformative hope that empowers us to endure hardships, persecution, and challenges with a perspective of God's promised restoration.
- Eschatological hope shapes how we engage with the world. It promotes a good stewardship and motivates believers to work towards justice, peace, and holistic renewal

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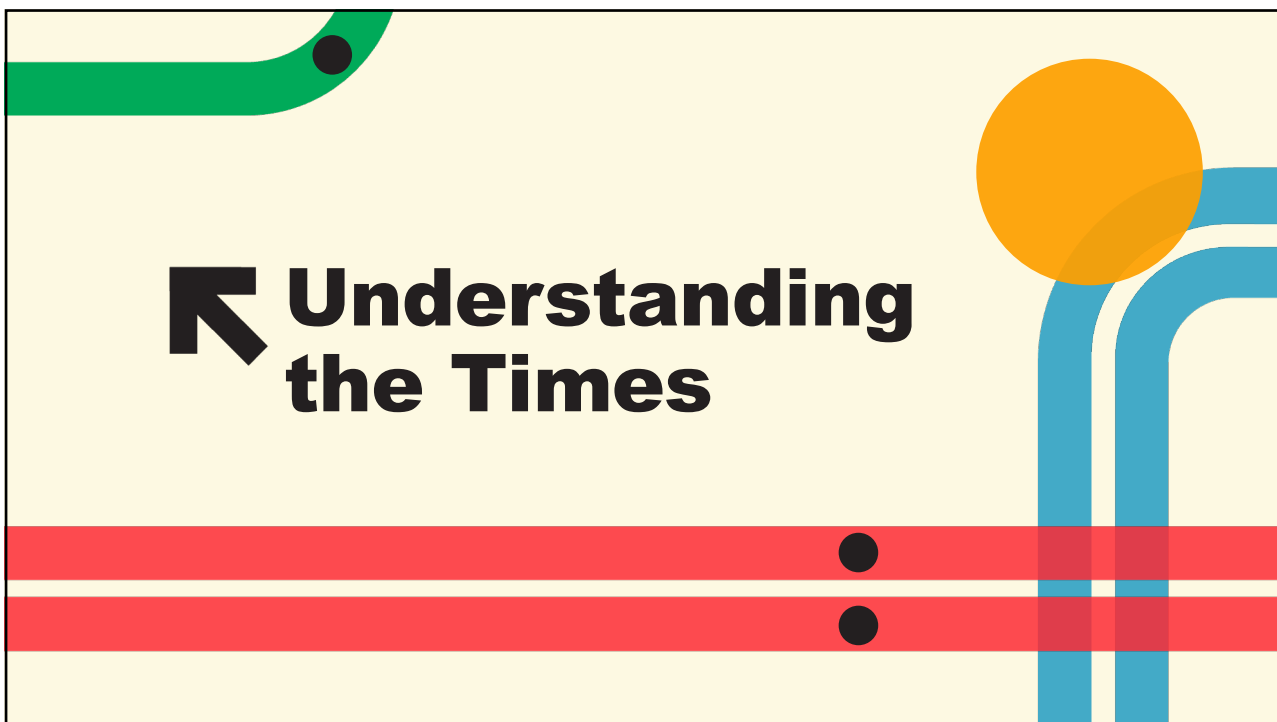
Urgency

- Eschatology imparts a sense of urgency to the mission of the Church, compelling us to proclaim the gospel and make disciples, recognising the shortness of time and the imminence of Christ's return.
- Key Passage: Matt 28:18-20, 2 Pet 3:9-13
- This sense of urgency acts as a catalyst for evangelism and mission work.
- It should the church to prioritise the work of the Gospel, emphasising the limited time available to reach those who have not yet heard the message of Christ.
- Urgency fosters a proactive approach to living out our Christian faith in practical, tangible ways that anticipate the future reign of Christ.



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Understanding the Times



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