

1



5



Approaches to 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.

6



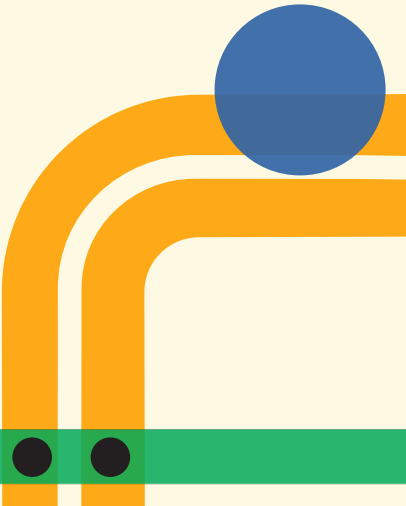
Four Views of End Times

- **Amillennial**
- **Postmillennial**
- **Historical Premillennial**
- **Dispensational Premillennial**

7

↶ ● **Four Views of End Times**


- **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.



8

↶ ●

Amillennial View



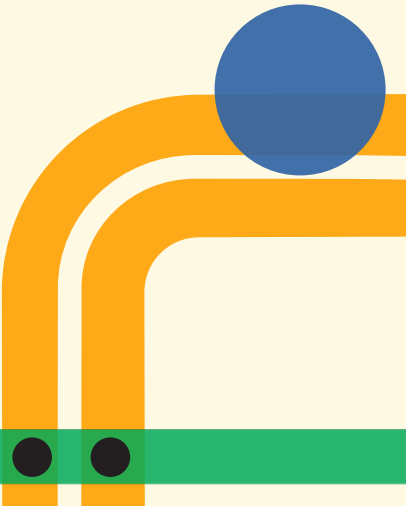
Designed by J. Dennison Jr.
Typeset by Clarence E. Veld

9

↶
●

Four Views of End Times

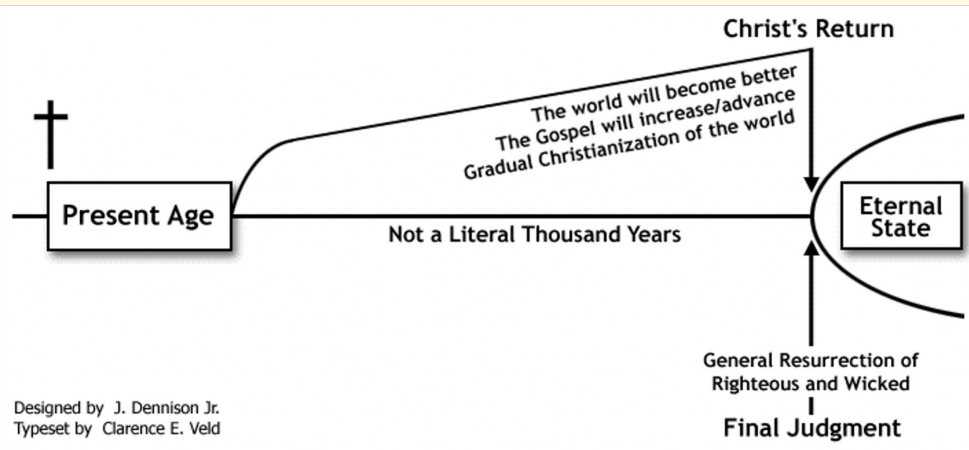
- **Postmillennial** – The millennium is a spiritual reign of Jesus on earth through the widespread proclamation and acceptance of the gospel. Jesus will return physically to earth at the end of the millennium



10

↶
●

Postmillennial View



The diagram illustrates the Postmillennial View. It starts with a box labeled 'Present Age' with a cross symbol above it. A line leads to a box labeled 'Eternal State'. Above this line, text reads: 'The world will become better', 'The Gospel will increase/advance', and 'Gradual Christianization of the world'. Below the line, it says 'Not a Literal Thousand Years'. At the point where the line enters the 'Eternal State' box, it is labeled 'Christ's Return'. Below the 'Eternal State' box, text reads 'General Resurrection of Righteous and Wicked' and 'Final Judgment'.

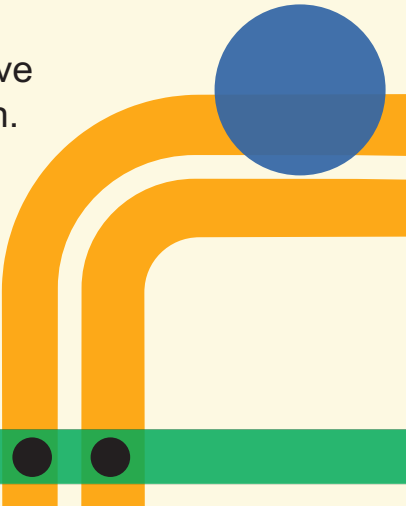
Designed by J. Dennison Jr.
Typeset by Clarence E. Veld

11

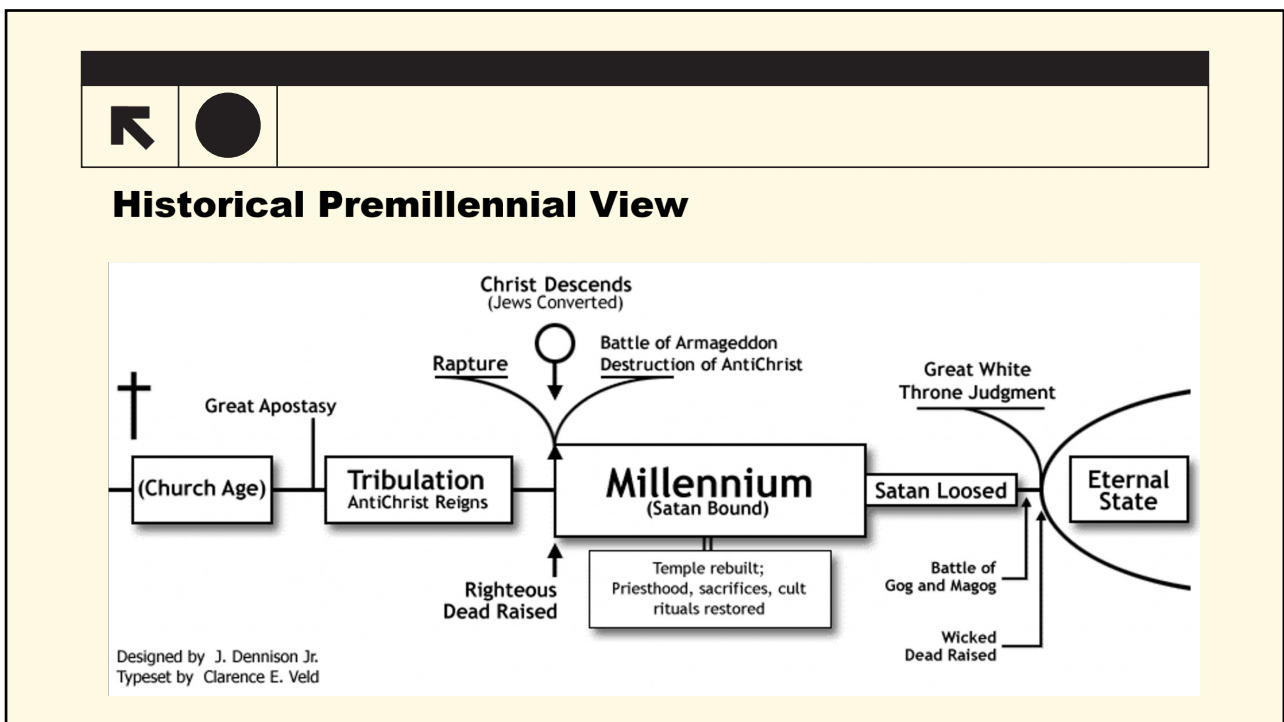
↶ ●

Four Views of End Times

- **Historical Premillennial** – 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.



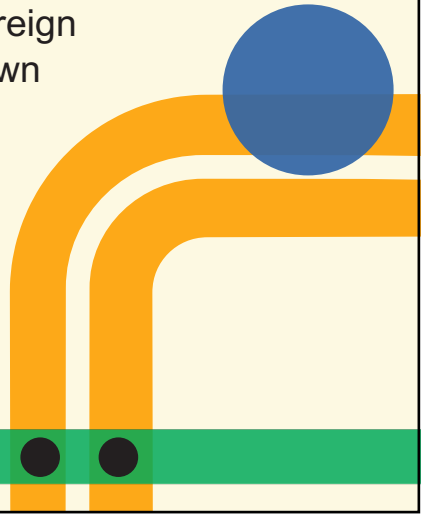
12



13

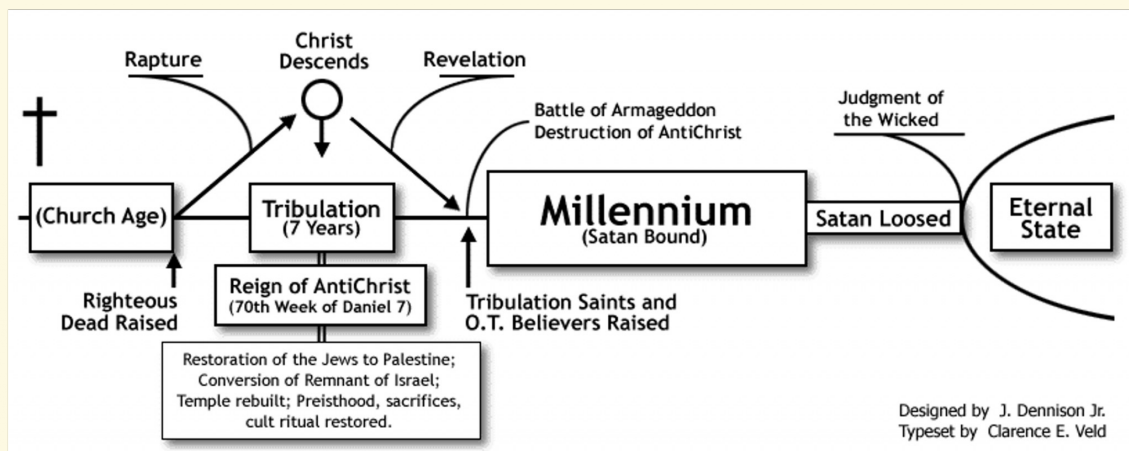
Four Views of End Times

- **Dispensational Premillennial** – 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.



14

Dispensational Premillennial View



15



16

↖	●	Historicist Approach
---	---	-----------------------------

- **Approach**
 - A running account of the whole of church history written in advance, from the time of John to the return of Christ.
 - A historical textbook for the past, present and future.
 - Key events and figures in history are seen as fulfilling specific prophetic predictions.
- **Assumption about Biblical Apocalypses**
 - Apocalyptic texts tell what is happening from God's perspective throughout a particular period of history.
 - For example, the Seven Seals and the Four Horsemen represent the decline of the Roman Empire, the 144,000 represent the spread of Christianity, the locust invasion is the rise of Islam, and the Beast is the Roman Catholic Church and the Papal system. Other events highlighted in this view is the Protestant Reformation, The French Revolution and the Napoleonic Era.

17

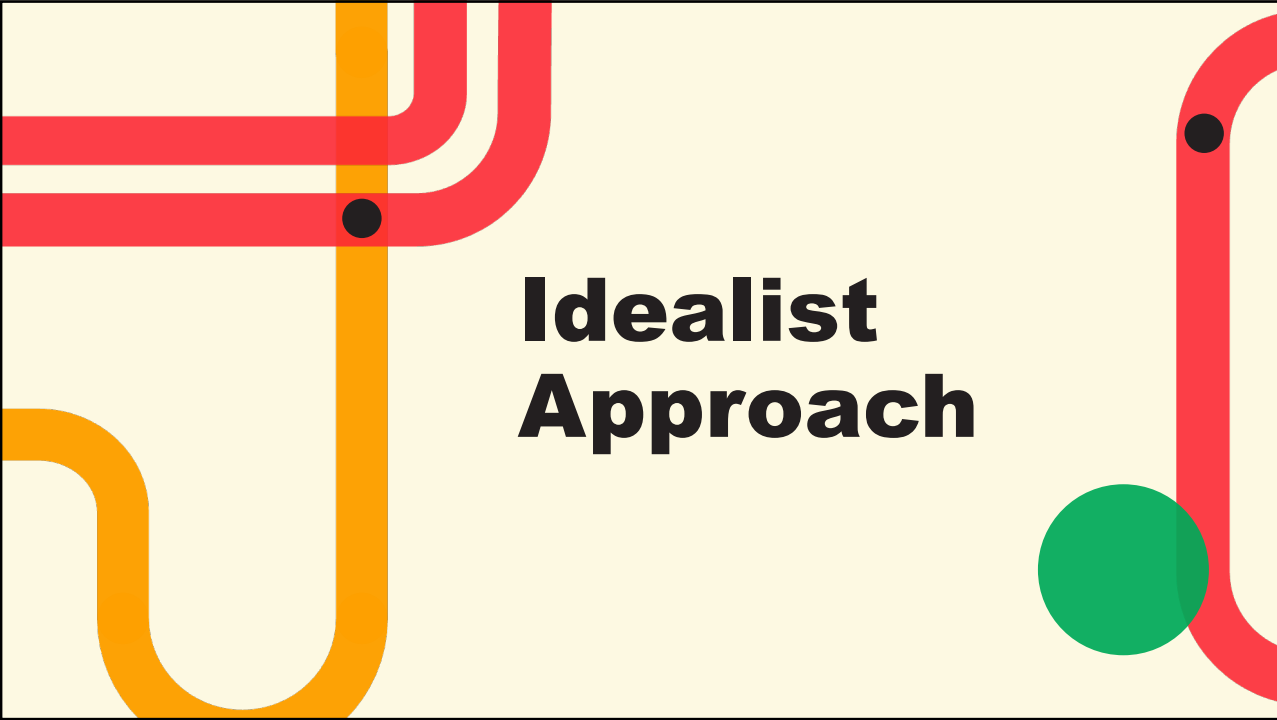


Historicist Approach

- **Critique of the Viewpoint**

- This view has its roots in the Reformation and all reformers were Historicists.
- John Knox, William Tyndale, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Finney, C. H. Spurgeon all held this viewpoint
- It can point to striking historical parallels to the prophecies in Revelation. As a running history, Revelation is relevant to all church ages.
- The Historicist view was a reactionary response against the Roman Catholic Church and may have prejudices built into it. The Catholic church tried to counter this view with Preterism and Futurism during the Counter-Reformation.
- It has been the dominate view in the Protestant church for 500 years.

18



Idealist Approach

19



Idealist Approach

- **Approach**
 - The idealist view does not take a literal historical or futuristic fulfillment but sees the entire book as a symbolic presentation of the battle between good and evil. An allegory for all times and places.
- **Assumption about Biblical Apocalypses**
 - The symbols in Revelation are not tied to specific events but point to themes throughout church history. The seals, bowls, and trumpets speak repeatedly to the events of human history in every age and give believers of all ages an exhortation to remain faithful in the face of suffering. The battles in Revelation are viewed as spiritual warfare manifested in the persecution of Christians or wars in general that have occurred in history. The beast from the sea may be identified as the satanically inspired political opposition to the church. The beast from the land represents pagan, or corrupt, religion to Christianity. Catastrophes represent God's displeasure with sinful man. God ultimately triumphs in the end.

20



Idealist Approach

- **Analysis of Approach**
 - Idealism treats apocalypses as symbolic expressions of struggles between good and evil that occur in every age. Idealism sees the scenes and symbols in biblical apocalypses as picturesque expressions of the conflict between the reign of God and the powers of evil
- **Key Proponents of the Idealist Viewpoint:**
 - Historic Examples:
 - Origen (185–254 AD) - An early Christian theologian, is one of the early proponents of the Idealist approach. He emphasised the allegorical and symbolic interpretation of biblical texts, including eschatological passages.
 - Augustine (AD 354-420) - A theologian and philosopher from North Africa. His writings influenced the development of Western philosophy and Western Christianity. He made this view prominent and the dominant view.

21



Idealist Approach

- **Key Proponents of the Idealist Viewpoint:**
 - Contemporary Examples:
 - George Eldon Ladd (1911–1982) - A prominent evangelical theologian, integrated Idealist elements into his Amillennialist perspective. He emphasised the spiritual and symbolic aspects of biblical prophecy while acknowledging a future culmination of God's plan.
 - Anthony Hoekema (1913–1988) – An influential evangelical theologian, incorporated Idealist elements into his Amillennialist views. He focused on the spiritual significance of biblical prophecy and how it applies to the ongoing Christian experience.

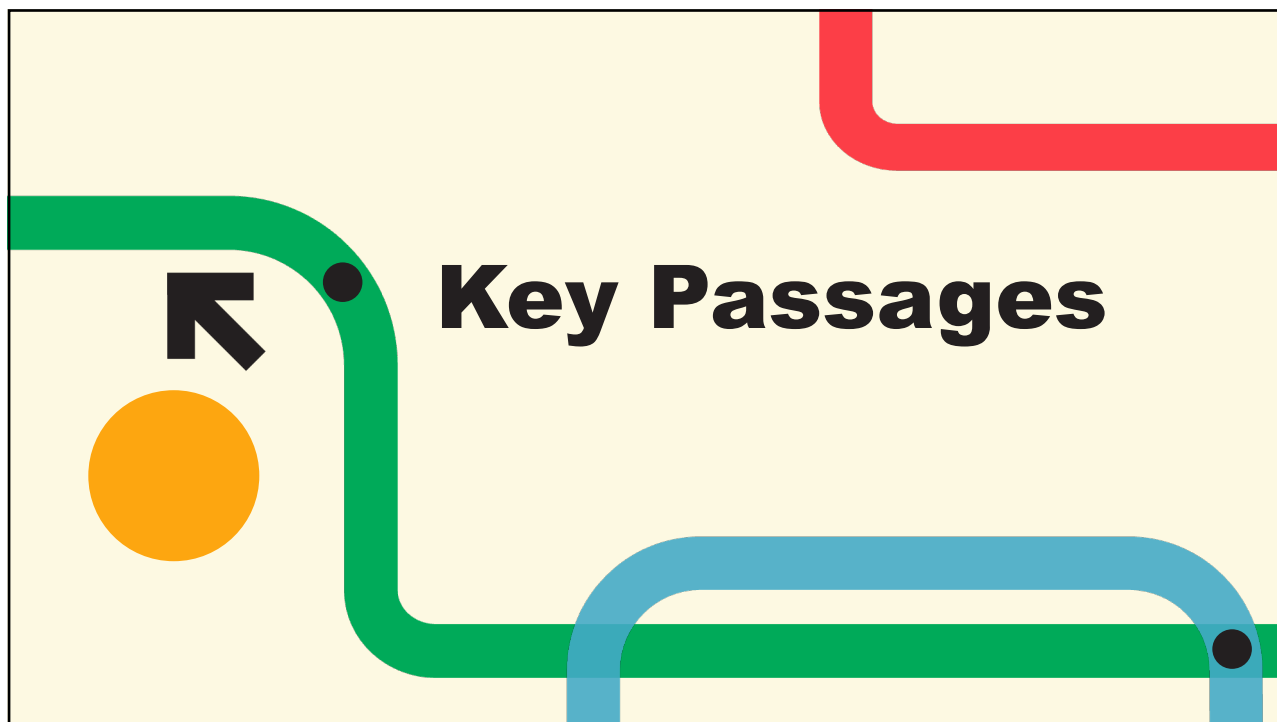
22



Idealist Approach

- **Critique of the Viewpoint:**
 - It avoids the difficulty of harmonising specific passages with specific fulfillments, which has plagued the historicist, futurist and preterist views. It makes the book of Revelation applicable and relevant for all periods of church history, especially to those suffering persecution.
 - The book of Revelation itself claims to be predicting events that must shortly come to pass (Rev 1:1). Reading spiritual meanings into the text can lead to random personal interpretations, based solely on a person's opinion, not Scripture.

23



24

↖	●	Key Passages
----------	----------	---------------------

- Revelation 9 (Fifth and Sixth Trumpets):
 - Idealists interpret the events described in Revelation 9, including the locusts and the army of horsemen, as symbolic representations of spiritual forces at work throughout history. The focus is on the broader spiritual significance rather than specific, literal events.
- Daniel 12 (Prophecies of the End):
 - The Idealist interpretation of Daniel 12 involves understanding the symbolic elements, such as the time, times, and half a time, as representing the ongoing spiritual conflict and God's ultimate victory rather than predicting precise historical timelines.

25



Key Passages

- Revelation 9 (Fifth and Sixth Trumpets):

Now the first woe, the fifth angel, is Arius, the great heretic, and his companions, who plagued the Church so terribly everywhere that the text here says that righteous people would rather have died than see such things; but they had to see them and not die. Indeed, he says that the angel from hell, called the Destroyer, is their king; as if to say that the devil himself rides them. For they persecuted the true Christians, not only spiritually, but physically, with the sword. Read the history of the Arians, and you will understand this figure and these words.

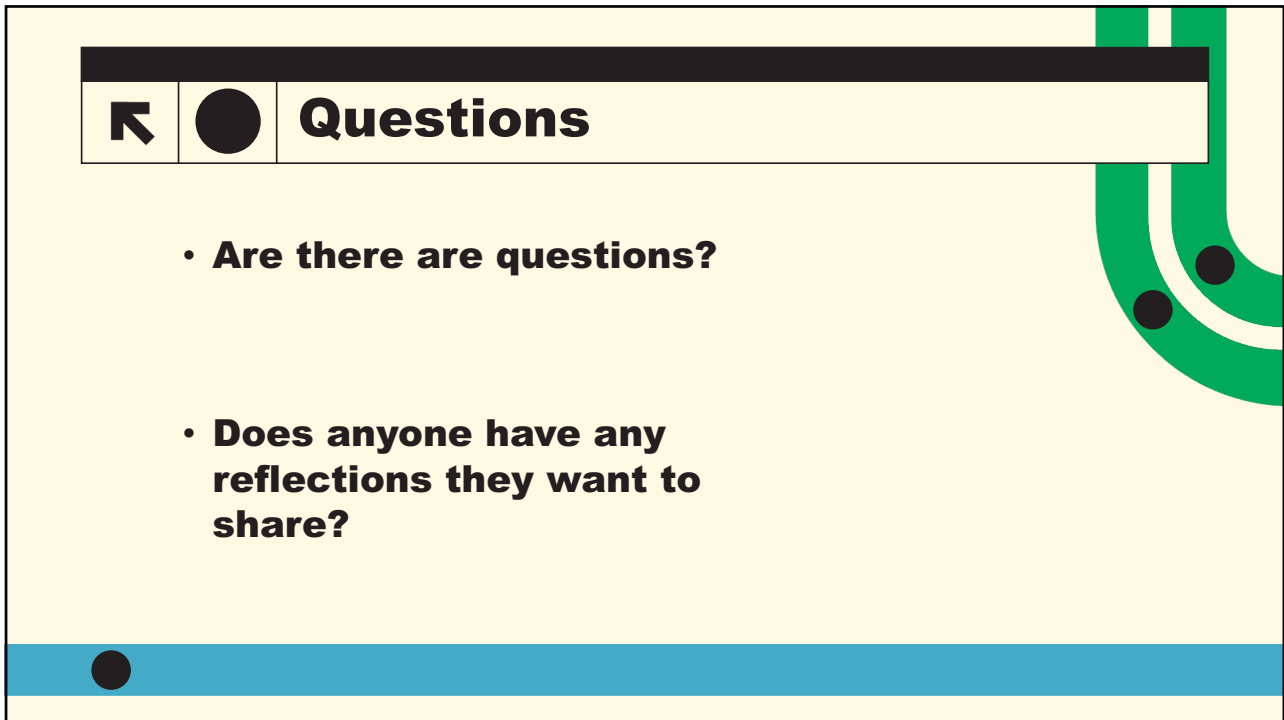
The second woe is the sixth angel, the shameful Mohammed, with his companions, the Saracens, who inflicted a great plague on the Church, with their doctrines and with the sword. Along with this angel, in order that this woe may be all the greater, comes the strong angel with the rainbow: and the bitter book, that is the holy papacy, with its great spiritual show, the masses. They lay hold upon the temple with their laws, throw out the choir and start a sham church, or outward holy place.

(Martin Luther's Commentary)

26

Questions & Discussion

27



The slide features a light yellow background with a black header bar at the top. The header bar contains a left-pointing arrow icon, a black circle, and the word "Questions" in bold black text. On the right side, there is a decorative graphic of green curved lines with black dots. At the bottom, there is a blue horizontal bar with a black dot on the left.

Questions

- **Are there are questions?**
- **Does anyone have any reflections they want to share?**

28



The slide features a light yellow background with a black header bar at the top. The header bar contains a left-pointing arrow icon, a green circle, and the word "Discussion" in bold black text. On the right side, there is a decorative graphic of orange curved lines with a blue circle and black dots. At the bottom, there is a green horizontal bar with two black dots on the right.

Discussion

What is most significant to me?

What questions do I have?

Is there anything I need to do?

29



30

↖	●	Focusing on the Right End
---	---	----------------------------------

- **The Endpoint and Goal of God's Work in Human History is Jesus**
 "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." Revelation 22:12–13.
- **Jesus is the Source of the Created Order**
 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. John 1:1–3.
- **All Things Exist Through Jesus**
 But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist. Hebrews 2:9–10.

31



Focusing on the Right End

God's purpose is not simply to get people into heaven; God's plan has always been to display his glory through the cosmos in and through Jesus. According to the apostle Paul, God 'set forth' his purpose 'in Christ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment - to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ' (Ephesians 1:9-10). The present fellowship of Christians that will someday culminate in the communion of heaven is simply an outgrowth of God's plan to bring everything together in Jesus the Messiah. Jesus is the source of God's creation and the goal of God's plan. He is 'the pioneer and perfecter of faith' (Hebrews 12:2)

from Rose's Guide to End-Time Prophecy pg. 13

32



"Death on the Pale Horse,"

American artist Benjamin West in 1796



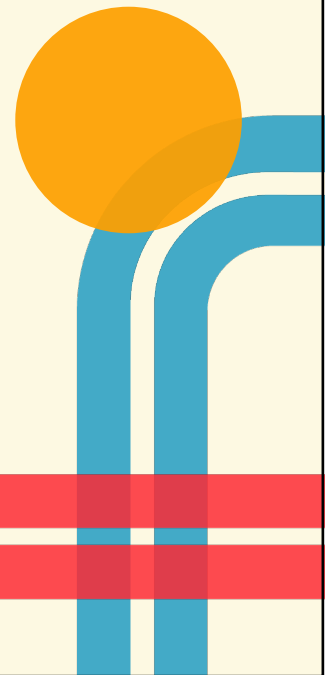
33

↖ ● **"The Last Judgment"**
Dutch artist Hieronymus Bosch in 1482



34

↖ **Understanding
the Times**



35