

Ever Wondered What Prominent Leaders Are Pre-Trib and Post-Trib?

There are three main schools of eschatological thought when it comes to the Millennial Reign of Christ mentioned in Revelation 20. Leaders across the body of Christ are divided on the timing of the Millennial Reign and the rapture, or if there even is a literal rapture.

Charisma magazine sat down with author and itinerant minister Joel Richardson to break down the three main thoughts and where he stands from a biblical perspective.

As you survey the landscape of the Christian End Times perspectives, Richardson says the Church is divided by the Reformed movement and the Dispensationalists.

“The main point is the return of Jesus, the renewal of all things,” Richardson points out.

Here is a breakdown of the three main schools of thought:

Pre-Millennialism

The pre-millennialist category can be divided into two different groups. The Historical Pre-Mills or the Dispensationalist Pre-Mills.

The Historical Pre-Millennialists believe that the day Jesus returns, He will establish His kingdom on the earth for the next 1,000 years. Some view this as literal, others symbolic. They do not believe there will be a sudden rapture before the Great Tribulation. Instead, this camp believes the Antichrist will come to the earth and after that, the seven-year tribulation will start. Following the tribulation is the

rapture.

Richardson holding to the historical pre-mill view says, "We believe that Jesus will return before the millennium and that He will literally establish His rule and reign on the earth in Jerusalem according to the prophets. The millennium is literal. It's called historical because it's the view of the earliest church writers."

Dispensationalist Pre-Millennialists believe that Jesus will rapture the church before the Great Tribulation. This is one of the key distinctions. Once the body of Christ has been raptured they believe that God will work with the Jews and they will preach the gospel. They believe many Israelites and Gentiles will put their faith in Christ before He returns. As far as the Millennial Reign, they believe the world is in a continued progression toward the millennium which is a time known for great prosperity. They hold to a pre-tribulation viewpoint.

Well-known dispensationalist advocates are John Hagee, Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye and the Left Behind series.

Post-Millennialism and A-Millennialism

The post-millennialist group believes that the Millennial Reign happens before Jesus' Second Coming to earth. Finally, the a-millennialists are under the impression there is no millennium, but it is merely a symbolic picture.

"Bethel, Bill Johnson, Chris Vallaton, in Redding California are post-millennial. So this is sometimes called victorious eschatology. In partnership with Jesus, we as the body of Christ will eventually conquer the world, after which Jesus will return," Richardson says.

This view is also widely held in the reformed world with prominent voices like Jeff Durban and Douglas Wilson also supporting the post-mill viewpoint.

"You also have a view called pre-wrath and post-tribulation. I will say all of the early church writers, in fact, all of the early church until a couple of hundred years ago were all post-tribulation. They believe the church is raptured once Jesus returns, at the end of the millennium," Richardson says.

He says at that point, Jesus brings with him those who had fallen asleep, had previously died, that were already saved in Christ. Then, if we happen to be alive when He returns we will be raptured.

A Message to Pastors

"Jesus made one of the most profoundly sober warnings in all scripture, his sermon on the End Times. Mathew 4:9," Richardson says. Jesus says many will fall away from the faith and the love of most will grow cold. In that season, in particular, there will be a profound falling away and many will be deceived.

The apostle Paul talks about this in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 as he refers to the time of great 'apostasy.' People will have itching ears and fall astray to the doctrines of demons.

"The reality is we may very well be the generation that sees that. Not just the generation, this could be something that is coming upon us quickly," he says.

Richardson says to be careful trying to pin time frames, but the Bible does tell us to live with a sense of urgency in case we are the generation to face those very harsh realities.

"If we are the generation to be alive during that time, this is one of the single most important pastoral realities. Every shepherd and every pastor out there should be preparing their people. Yet we have massive leaders in the body of Christ, telling the body of Christ, 'hey run the race hard but don't worry you don't have to take the finals.' The Scriptures are very clear, if we are alive during that time, we will face the

finals," Richardson says.

Tune in to the rest of the interview to hear his thoughts on preparing for the End Times and the Great Tribulation.



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Shelby Bowen *is an assistant editor for Charisma Media.*