

How Pastors' End-Time Views Change Based on This Key Factor

Views on the biblical end times are anything but fluid or unanimous, with pastors and parishioners taking divergent stances on the rapture, the millennium, the Antichrist and other related eschatological elements—but how does one's level of education impact those perspectives?

In conducting original polling for my new book, *The Armageddon Code: One Journalist's Quest for End-Times Answers*, LifeWay Research examined the views of 1,000 Protestant pastors from across the U.S., digging deep into how education, among other indicators, plays a role in shaping preachers' end-time viewpoints.

As *TheBlaze* previously reported, 36 percent of pastors expressed belief in a pre-tribulation rapture, the view that Christians will be taken up before the tribulation period that precedes the Second Coming. An additional 25 percent said that they do not believe that the rapture should be taken literally, while 18 percent expressed belief in a post-tribulation rapture—the idea that the rapture and Second Coming unfold near or at the same time at the end of the tribulation period.

But when education was taken into account, some important differences emerged. Those ministers with no college degree were most likely to select a pre-tribulation rapture (60 percent), while only 26 percent of preachers who hold a Master's degree said the same.

Additionally, 33 percent of preachers with a master's degree and 29 percent of those with a Doctoral degree say that the rapture shouldn't be taken literally as opposed to just 6

percent of those with no degree and 16 percent who hold a bachelor's degree, according to the findings.

Another 22 percent of pastors with a masters' degree believe in a post-tribulation rapture, compared to just 12 percent with a college degree and 13 percent with a bachelor's degree.

Similar findings unfolded among pastors when education was taken into account surrounding views on the millennium and Antichrist. The largest proportion of pastors overall—48 percent—embrace premillennialism, with an addition 31 percent selecting amillennialism and 11 percent aligning themselves with postmillennialism. Before we dive deeper into educational differences, though, let's explore the choices that respondents were given, so that readers can better understand the differences between these millennial worldviews:

- There is no literal millennium, but Christ is currently reigning spiritually and in the hearts of Christians (often called amillennialism)
- The millennium is not a literal 1,000 years, but an era in which the world will gradually grow more Christian and just ending with Christ's Second Coming (often called postmillennialism)
- The millennium will be a future literal 1,000-year period during which Jesus reigns on Earth following Christ's Second Coming (often called premillennialism)
- None of these/Not sure

Preachers with a master's degree were most likely (41 percent) to select amillennialism, though only 9 percent of those with no degree agreed. Likewise, premillennialism was most prevalent among those with no college degree (71 percent) and among those with a bachelor's degree (63 percent). Interestingly, 46 percent of pastors who hold a

doctoral degree also embrace premillennialism, with only 36 percent of those with a master's degree agreeing.

As for views on the Antichrist—the final point of research for “The Armageddon Code”—49 percent of pastors said that they believe the Antichrist will be a future leader who will one-day rise, while 14 percent described the Antichrist as a “personification of evil.” An additional 12 percent said that there will be no individual Antichrist.

Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of famed evangelist Billy Graham, recently told *The Church Boys* podcast about the two signs that she believes show that we are looking at “the last generation of human history.”

Nearly 7 in 10 of those with no degree believe that the Antichrist will be a future figure, with 63 percent of individuals with a bachelor's degree saying the same. Once again, those with a doctoral degree (48 percent) are more likely than those with a master's degree (39 percent) to take the concept of an individual Antichrist literally.

Both of those latter groups were most likely—18 percent for master's degree holders and 16 percent for those with a doctoral degree—to embrace the notion of the Antichrist as a “personification of evil” compared to just 5 percent of ministers with no degree.

You can download the complete results at [and](#) find out more about *The Armageddon Code: One Journalist's Quest for End-Times Answers* here.