

Four Views of Eschatology

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[0:00] We begin a study on what has been called eschatology, the study of the last things, eschaton, the last things, end times prophecy.

Now, this isn't the first time that this subject has been dealt with in our church. You cannot preach through books of the Bible without preaching on eschatology.

You're constantly bumping into what the Bible says about the events of the end times. It's not like all the end times revelation is confined to a couple books, Daniel and first, second Thessalonians and the book of Revelation.

No, it permeates the whole of God's revelation. And it's a part of the very gospel itself that this Lord Jesus Christ who came and lived and died and was raised again and ascended into heaven is coming again and will judge the quick and the dead and will raise the dead at his coming.

So you can't preach the gospel without dealing with eschatology, at least in its broad and general sense. So we've bumped into this subject many times along the way, in some senses, every week for the past 20 years.

[1:26] But it is, as far as I know, the first time in our 20 years as a church that we have taken the topic itself head on and said, let's see, what does the Bible have to say about the end times and try to pull together the passages of scriptures and come up with some system, some timeline in which we understand these things.

We're asking, what does the Bible teach on the subject of the end times? And it's a topical approach that we're taking in this study, trying to pull these strands together so that we have a united system, a united whole, a holistic view, and we can stand back and see these events that are to unfold and even are unfolding as we think of the whole end time scheme.

And for indeed, the New Testament, as we'll see, speaks of the last days and the last times, says from the time of Christ coming onward. So from the time of his ascension into heaven.

And these are times that the Bible calls the last times. So as we begin, I want to give some preliminary cautions and remarks. The first is just the importance of the doctrine of the end times. I think sometimes we might think that the end times is not all that important. But it is crucial. Our Lord and his apostles stress these things over and over.

[3:00] To deny and ignore these truths about Christ's coming and the resurrection and the judgment of all men is to deny and reject the gospel, the critical teachings of Christ.

So, the return of Christ, the general resurrection and judgment and heaven and hell, these are all things that have to do with the last things.

But having established the fact that the doctrine of the end times is important, the actual timeline scheme of how all these things work out in relation to one another is not as important.

And it's important that we stress is not as important. I'm not saying that it's not important at all or we wouldn't be teaching on it. But it's not as important. And I think that distinction needs to be addressed.

It's important if it's in the Word of God. We need to know it and know it for our profit. But what I mean is this. We ought to cut off fellowship with those who deny critical teachings of the gospel.

[4:21] If someone says, I don't believe Jesus Christ is coming back to earth. I don't believe in such a thing as an end to this present age and the last judgment.

We ought to sever ties of fellowship with such a one. And so that I think I trust we would be in agreement on.

But we surely ought not to cut off fellowship with those who differ with us as to just how the end times are going to unravel and fall out and be ordered at the last days.

So some may have the return of Christ before a millennium of a thousand year reign of peace on this earth. Some may have the return of Christ after such a reign of peace.

But we ought not to draw swords and cut off fellowship with such people. Our own 1689 confession of faith makes this crucial distinction as does the Westminster confession of faith.

[5:25] You cannot hold to our confession of faith and deny that Jesus is coming back bodily. But you can subscribe to our confession while believing that Jesus Christ will return before a thousand year millennium of peaceful and prosperity on this earth.

That he's coming back after a reign of peace on this earth. Or that there is no such thing as a thousand years of peace and prosperity on this earth.

The framers of the confession obviously themselves held to differing views on the matter. And they did not make it a point of a point of the confession.

They did not add that to the confession. They were not convinced that unanimity was important on that point. And I think that speaks well for both the Westminster and the 1689 confession of faith.

It does grieve me to see churches that divide over this issue. And will not fellowship with others simply because they do not hold to the same exact scheme of the end times.

[6:40] Well, they did agree on certain key points. And that's chapter 31 and 32 in our confession. And obviously we will be stressing those as we go along.

But in this class, I'm going to be contending for a certain millennial view. It may be different from yours. That doesn't mean that I think any less of you as a Christian for your different view.

I can respect someone coming to the scriptures and hammering out a view of the end times that is different from my own. That's not something that should cause us to think less of one another.

But I would ask that we all subject our positions to the scriptures and to, as Ed prayed, a constant re-evaluation.

Perhaps you've never done that. Maybe you've never brought your teaching that you've received from childhood to the light of the scriptures and said, Is there another way to see this? Some of us know what it was like in terms of the doctrine of election, the election unto salvation.

[7:52] We who were raised on the teaching that it's the will of man, the free will of man, that is the ultimate and only determiner of man's ultimate destiny in heaven or hell.

Can you remember how strange the doctrine of election sounded the first time you heard it? I can. It sounded like a different God. It sounded like a different Bible than what I had read my young life.

So the point is, but we brought our teachings and our upbringings and our understandings to the word of God. And we came to see that what sounded so strange to our ears at first is indeed the teaching of scripture.

And we're convinced of that. So I'm saying the same thing could happen here. That perhaps the reason that these other views have sounded so strange is that you from infancy, you've heard the holy scriptures and it's always come through the colored glasses of your perspective that you were raised with.

I'm simply saying let's search the scriptures and see whether or not that is true. The view I'm espousing may sound strange if you've only known a dispensational premillennial position.

[9:08] Now that's maybe that doesn't mean anything to you. So we'll look into that term as we come to these charts. But I trust that we can head into this study with mutual respect for one another and esteem and yet subject our mind to the mind of God as revealed in scripture.

That by way of introduction. Also, secondly, I don't have all the answers to your questions about the end times. I don't even have all my questions answered.

And so. And yet if I waited until I had all my questions on the end times answered, I'd never preach on this.

The Lord would come. I would die before I ever. Was brave enough to take the challenge. But I do believe that. Second Timothy three sixteen is true that all scripture is profitable.

And therefore, there is spiritual profit to come to you by dealing with end times scriptures. And because of that, I've been encouraged to make an attempt that indeed does scare me.

[10:23] I don't know exactly where we're going in this class as far as having an outline for the next three months. I don't have that. We'll be working our way along as we go.

I'll be using several helps along the way. Most. At least to begin with, I'll be using Sam Waldron's The End Times Made Simple.

A recent release. Sam Waldron was the past, one of the pastors at the Grand Rapids Reformed Baptist Church for many years. He's presently working on a doctorate degree down at Louisville Southern Seminary and is attending the Heritage Christian Church at Owensboro.

So I'll be using that at least to begin with, sometimes just lifting material from it, other times adding from other sources. And we'll seek to identify other sources to help you as we go along.

Now, Mr. Waldron tells us that he wrote this book moved by three convictions. Number one, that eschatology is profoundly important. Number two, that the end times system of the Bible is basically simple.

[11:39] And number three, that the popular views of prophecy today are not taught in the Bible. Now, Mr. Waldron continues with a helpful analysis of two different attitudes toward the end times as found in the church today.

Fascinated Fred and Practical Pam, or how he calls them. Fascinated Fred. He's read every one of the Left Behind series of novels on the last days.

And he's watching events in the Middle East and in the world with breathless excitement for signs of the onset of the last days in the tribulation.

Fascination. Now, I must say, our daughter worked with a fellow who was fascinated with the end times. And yet he was also fascinated with the way that astrology and what sign you were born under controls your destiny.

Fascination with the end times is no encouragement to me about a spiritual work of grace in the heart. There's a lot of excitement and fascination about the end times.

[12:54] That's not the same thing as having a heart for the things of God. And we just need to be aware of that. It can become a springboard, can't it? It can become a witnessing opportunity.

But let's not equate fascination with the end times with a love for God and his word and for holiness and for Christ. Amazing things coexist with fascination and the end times.

So that's fascinated Fred on the one side. Practical Pam on the other fails to see the usefulness of such fascination. And her attitude is, forget about prophecy.

Teach me something practical about the home and about the family. That's where I live my life.

That's where I struggle and have my problems. Don't need to talk to me about the end days.

I'm living in this day. And I need help just to make it through today. So she kind of throws the baby out with the bathwater. Now, both attitudes are insufficient. And Waldron says that in his view, it's because the end times have been divorced from the gospel of Christ.

[14:07] That you say, okay, let's preach the gospel to people. And then if they have a deeper interest, if they're the sort of person that has an interest in the end times, then we'll teach them that as well.

But that these things are separated. And as Mr. Waldron points out, the gospel has everything to do with eschatology.

The Jesus who died on the cross is the Jesus who is reigning and is coming again. And you can't divide these things, you see. Because his cross work and his resurrection is all part of what he's come to do.

And he's not done doing it yet. And that's to restore all things and to regenerate the whole world and to bring the whole world back into what it was meant to be before the fall.

When I say regenerate the whole world, I don't mean every person in the world. I mean what Acts 3 speaks about. The regeneration of all things. Behold, all things have become new.

[15:09] Revelation 21 and 22. So you can't deal with, or I should say we shouldn't deal with the gospel as if it's separated from eschatology.

If we do, then we begin to say, well, what practical purpose does it have in my life? Maybe eschatology is really just for a few people who have that propensity and interest.

Well, as you know, it's not given just to tickle our spine, our fascination. It's rather to affect how we live our lives today.

It is very practical, these realities of the last times. So, we come to the views of the end times.

Now, the popular view of the end times, as taught in the majority of evangelical churches today, is so complicated as to confuse and frustrate the simple Bible-reading believer.

[16:14] Now, it's true that Peter says there are some things in Scripture that are hard to understand. And so we shouldn't run from things hard to understand. We shouldn't say, well, it's obvious then this can't be true because it's hard to understand.

No, Peter says Paul wrote some things that are hard to understand. But it's Scripture. It's God's mind and His truth. So I'm not saying just because it's complicated and difficult that it's wrong. I'm not meaning that at all. But many have read their Bibles and felt that they could read their Bibles for a hundred years and never come to these elaborate schemes that have been drawn concerning the end times.

And we can understand then why some practical PAMs would throw up their hands in despair and say, well, this just isn't for me. I can't see all this in the Bible. And I guess it's just for a few with some interest in these kind of things.

I agree with Mr. Waldron that the biblical view of the end times is far less complicated and far more user-friendly to the simple Bible reader, the man, the woman in the pew.

[17 : 25] After all, that's who the Bible's given to, isn't it? That's why these books were written. They weren't written to some seminary grads. They weren't written to some scholars in an ivory tower.

They were written to husbands and wives and slaves and masters to help them in their lives. And so if we've put this out of reach of mom, pa, Christian, we've done a disservice.

I'm not saying that it's been intentional. I think they really believe that that is the way that things are going to happen. But I'm simply making the observation that it's very complicated and elaborate.

I think we'll find it that the Bible is rather far more simple. Now, we need to know the landscape then. We need to be able to look out and see what's there on the differing views of the end times.

This is just a very introductory view. We're not going to be able to turn to scriptures on any of these things this morning. I just want you to get the broad picture of what's out there as to how to understand the scriptures.

[18 : 30] These views of eschatology have basically been arranged around one's view of when Jesus Christ will return in relation to a millennium.

Now, the word millennium is the Latin for 1,000 years. And Revelation chapter 20 speaks of 1,000 years, the millennium. And so we basically have premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism.

And we'll come to describing them in a moment. But these three views have dominated the theological landscape for nearly 2,000 years. Though very early on, the early church fathers didn't draw schemes so elaborate and precise as this.

They were still feeling their way along. They had just received the revelation of our Lord and his apostles. And so they were taking that new information and comparing it with the Old Testament prophecies and trying to come up and make heads and tails with it and to understand it.

And so it wasn't as precise as these statements are. But later on, down through church history, these different views of the end times became more and more defined.

[19 : 51] All three of these views have proponents that hold to different varieties. I don't mean to say that every postmillennialist looks exactly like this.

There may be different ideas within postmillennialism itself. And so with the other views here. So there are minor variations.

And yet these broad categories still hold true. It's kind of like you've got trucks and you've got cars and you've got minivans. And you've got those basic types of vehicles.

Now, not all trucks are the same, are they? Some have duallys. Some have chrome pipes sticking up the back. But they're trucks, aren't they?

And though there's variations between truck and truck, they're definitely not a car. Don't think of Sonny's El Camino where it ruins the illustration, which is half car and half truck.

[20 : 54] But you've basically got a truck that's different from the car. And that's the way it is with these views. A postmillennialist might have different views with other postmillennialists, but it's a great divide between that and amillennialists and so on.

So there are these differences. So with the other views as well. But the latest kid on the block, if we could call it that, is the SUV, isn't it?

And that's not really a minivan. It might have some similarities with that, but it's different enough that it deserves its own title itself.

And so it is with eschatological views. The latest view holds many similarities with historic premillennialism, but it has such noted differences from it that it deserves a label all of its own.

It's the SUV of prophetic views. Dispensational premillennialism. That's the last here on your page. And so we have not three, but four basic schemes of eschatology before us.

[22 : 05] And I just want to go through them very quickly. They're set here side by side so you can see their similarities and their differences. All right.

We begin with postmillennialism. And let me just read a paragraph from Kenneth Gentry, Jr., who is a postmillennialist. Let's let him define for us what postmillennialism is.

He speaks for this view in one of the books that compares these different views. Postmillennialism expects the proclaiming of the spirit-blessed gospel of Jesus Christ to win the vast majority of human beings to salvation in this present age.

Increasing gospel success will gradually produce a time in history prior to Christ's return in which faith, righteousness, peace, and prosperity will prevail in the affairs of people and nations.

After an extensive era of such millennial conditions, the Lord will return visibly, bodily, and in great glory, ending history with the general resurrection and the great judgment of all humankind.

[23 : 20] End quote. End quote. Now, just notice several things about this position. The millennium is this great golden age of spiritual and material blessing on earth.

It's brought about not by the return of our Lord Jesus Christ in glory, crushing his enemies and bringing in peace. No, not at all. It's brought in by the success of the gospel.

That the gospel will be given such power by the Holy Spirit that it will save the vast majority of people living on the earth.

And what happens when you have the vast majority of people living on the earth really converted, not like America where everybody claims to be born again, but it doesn't affect the society we live in.

I mean, we don't have more holy laws. No, their view is that when the gospel truly saves, and this, they're right, that it transforms society. It trickles down to your Supreme Court, to all of your government agencies.

[24 : 25] If they're redeemed holy men sitting on the court, then the whole court system will be redeemed. And so their view of this age of peace and prosperity is the fruit of the gospel, saving and then sanctifying and so transforming all these people that society and nations will be transformed and will be ruled in righteousness.

And all of this before the return of Christ. Now, the length of the millennium, historically, they held that it was a thousand years, literally, especially the Puritans.

Some of the Puritans who held this view held that. Some today hold it as a period of undisclosed length. We don't know how long this period is, they say, but there will be this prosperous age of peace on earth.

More recently, some of them actually hold that it's the whole time from the resurrection of Christ to the return of Christ. That this whole church, or this whole gospel church age, is the time of this millennium.

Or at least that it will happen within that. And here's where they begin to fudge, and you have your different vanillas and chocolates kinds of post-millennialism.

[25 : 41] But you see, between the resurrection of Christ and the return of Christ, what they see is that the gospel age begins in great persecution and humiliation, and it grows and the gospel is exalted on the earth until finally it brings in and ushers in this great kingdom age, this age of peace and prosperity and spiritual rule and reign over the nation.

So there's progress. During the first three centuries, you had all the persecution and blood of the church, but that's subsided, and it's getting better and better, and the gospel is permeating, to use their key passages like yeast.

It's spreading through the whole dough, and so the further you get, the more you ought to see society being ruled by righteousness and by faith and the cause of the gospel flourishing.

Well, you can already see some problems with that view, but that's their understanding, that it's going to get better, and only after this great age on earth of peace and prosperity, spiritually and materially, will Christ return and end it all.

Industrial and then the eternal age. So that's post-millennialism. Christ will come post-after the millennium.

[27 : 09] Any questions real briefly on that? Yes, Jim? When you talk about the millennium, is that saying that everything would go on like it is right now, people would be marrying, children being

raised, and I mean everything they say is the same, just being for peace and prosperity, or did they be almost likely seeing now?

Except that spiritually transformed as well as, I mean a world in which, yeah, you've still got marrying and burying and, the present world order as it were, but in a heightened spiritual and material blessing, shalom and reigning.

Ed? Maybe an important one, this is not a literal 1,000 years, it's a broader time than that. Some of them would hold that it was a literal 1,000 years, especially the Puritans who held that view. John, where did we get, if we wanted to see what scripture they were able to do, to go for their views, is it in this book?

I'd be interested in seeing where they're coming from, especially the Puritans. Yeah, well, they wouldn't quote the Puritans, it's quoting, there's a book written, three views on post, pre, and amillennialism, and they each get to present their side and critique each other's views.

[28:33] So there is such a book, I think IVP published it, I'm borrowing Aaron's copy right now, but I'll bring that information. So you can hear them present their view with their own scriptures.

But those would be some, at least some of the scriptures they would use in the New Testament have to do with yeast permeating the whole dough. It starts out small, same thing with the mustard seed, smallest of garden seeds, becomes, excuse me, becomes the greatest of garden plants. So they see, the gospel began small, but it will grow and grow and grow until it fills the earth. And, it's not like there's no scriptures that, you see, you understand, you can see where they're coming from.

It's not, off the wall in that sense, by any means. So, I don't want to present it as if it were, but we just don't have time, at this point, to give all the scriptures for why they hold what they hold.

I just want you to see the big picture so that you have an understanding. Then when we dive into the particulars, we can find, we're going to say, okay, we're going to set this aside then.

[29:40] And we're going to say, take out a blank sheet of paper and now let's begin with the Bible and see what the scriptures teach. And then you can compare that with these views and see how these views hold up to what we're going to look at in the scripture.

Let me press on if we're going to cover all four views this morning just briefly. Amillennialism, secondly. Ah, the alpha prefix to any word usually is a negative, means no, literally, it means no millennium.

Now, that's something of a confusing title. There's a sense in which it's true and a sense in which it's false. It's true in the sense that all the other views teach that the millennium is this great golden age of spiritual and material blessing on the earth before Christ, before the eternal state, I should say, in which evil is suppressed and righteousness is triumphant.

Now, amillennialism says of that there's no such millennium. There is no such age of peace and prosperity on earth before Christ's return or before the end, the eternal age.

But since they're Bible-believing Christians and since Revelation 20 talks about a thousand years, they've got to believe in the millennium, right? So, they do believe in the millennium.

[30:56] They just explain it differently than these other views do. The thousand years they see as standing figuratively, not a literal thousand years, but as the numbers in the book of Revelation often are figurative, they see this standing for a large chunk of time that began at the return of Christ into heaven and that will end at his coming back from heaven.

That this whole gospel age equals, is the millennium. You see that on that drawing. That's an equal sign. This is the millennial period. This is that thousand years that Revelation talks about.

And they teach that Christ then will come after this quote, millennium as they understand it, is completed. His return brings about the general resurrection of all the dead, the final judgment of the righteous and the unrighteous, and begins the eternal state.

Now, this has many similarities with the post-mill position as you can see, but there are strong differences, so strong that it merits being a different view. This view is not nearly so optimistic as the post-mill, the post-mills are as to what this millennium is and the present gospel age.

We would all love to see revival sweep the world such that most people in the world were Christians and all their nations were being governed in righteousness.

[32:31] It's not that the amillennialists don't want that. They just don't see that being taught in scriptures that in this present age, before the eternal state, that there will ever be such a time.

They rather see scriptures that remind us that men will go from bad to worse, that situations will get bad and at the end time it will not be with the church reigning victorious and righteous, but they rather see that there's going to be a great apostasy, a great turning away from the truth and there's going to be this antichrist figure who will come and will persecute the church so that things are understood as being far more difficult in the amillennial scheme than these postmillennialists who speak of such sweeping success of the gospel trickling down to the nations.

So they see evil operative in the world right up to the return of Christ and it is the return of Christ that marks the destruction of evil in the world and so brings in an eternal state where peace and righteousness reigns in a new heaven, in a new earth.

Not in this present age but only in the eternal age after Christ returns. That's amillennialism. Are the general features clear then on this one?

Yes, Marcus? What do they mean by alchemists? Do they mean just that instead of things getting worse and worse they just kind of stay the same? I think it all has to do with how much weight you put on those passages that speak of great revivals and speak of nations being born in a day and speak of multitudes returning and coming to the Lord and going up to Zion.

[34 : 21] Do you see a possibility for revivals? I think many amillennialists would say yes. We can see sweeping revivals and things happening in the world but we don't see that things are getting better and better until finally you bring in this golden age and then Christ comes.

So if they're calling themselves more victorious, optimistic, amillennialists they're just saying we don't discredit and say things are only going to get worse. We recognize the gospel can enjoy great success in this present age.

All right, quickly, let's press on to the historical premillennialism. We're running out of time. We're going to have to come back next week.

This is called historic to differentiate it from present day dispensationalist premillennialism. This form of premillennialism is found early on in the church.

Dispensational premillennialism is a more recent schema of things. It's also been called covenant premillennialism because it's based on an understanding of covenant theology.

[35 : 37] Now, there are greater differences between this one and the first two. Now, with postmillennialism, they believe that the millennium is this great golden age on earth of spiritual and material blessing where righteousness is triumphant.

There's peace on earth and all of this is prior to the eternal state. But differently from postmillennialists, they hold that this will only happen when Christ comes back and establishes his reign and this peace on earth.

So, they have the same idea of this golden era, at least with many they would hold that in common. But they say, no, that's going to happen only after Christ returns.

So, Christ is going to come first. That's why it's premillennialism. Christ comes pre to this golden era and it takes Christ coming to destroy the evil and to establish the righteousness on earth.

Now, each of these three views have had their days of prominence in church history. Historical premillennialism was widely held in the early centuries and again in the 1800s.

[36 : 52] Again, all of these have had their proponents at different places, but amillennialism was the dominant view more in the Middle Ages, 400 to the Reformation with Calvin and Luther being more amillennialist.

and then postmillennialism was widely held in the 1600s and the 1700s, especially among English and Scottish Puritans. And now we come then to the fourth view of eschatology, which is currently enjoying its day in the sun.

This is the predominant view of evangelicalism, at least in the United States and as we seem to export our views elsewhere, probably in the world at large.

Dispensational premillennialism. Now they're like historic premillennialists in some ways, hence the name. They're a form of premillennialism and yet they're so unlike them in such significant ways that they must be viewed as a different breed of cat.

Here's the SUV. This isn't the same. There's too many differences to be thrown into the same pot with the historic premillennialists. Now notice the features here under the dispensational premillennialists.

[38 : 09] The return of Christ is before the millennium, hence premillennial. And his return ushers in a literal thousand year reign for most of them of Christ on the earth before the eternal state.

It's this golden age of which we've spoken. So they are premillennialists. But now notice the differences and additions. The most telling difference in the dispensational scheme holds that there's this separation between Israel and the church.

That those two must never ever be blurred or seen as the Israel developing into the church of the New Testament. No, these are two separate peoples and God has two separate plans for them. God has a plan for the nation of Israel and God has a plan for the church and these two do not meet. These are separate tracks that God is pursuing. And so you have Old Testament, the period of the law.

God was dealing with national Israel. But then we have this parenthesis in God's dealings with Israel, national Israel.

[39 : 23] And now God's dealing with the church, the Gentiles. And they call this a mystery that was not spoken of, that the Old Testament did not prophesy about this.

It's a mystery parenthesis. An age, the church age, the Gentile church age, interrupts this plan of God. It comes to a halt.

And only after the church is raptured does the prophetic clock begin ticking again as God goes on his plan with national Israel. So there is, that's a huge difference from historic premillennialists.

They believe that Old Testament Israel develops into the new Israel, the church, as you see in the line under historic premillennialism. And it's this new Israel that God's plan for the nation of Israel is fulfilled in the church by the gospel.

And that plan is won and goes from beginning to end. Rather than the dispensation of the chops these up and says, no, God's pursuing one, the nation of Israel.

[40 : 33] He stopped that when Christ was resurrected. They rejected their Messiah, so that's over with for now. Now he's working a whole different plan for the Gentiles. And when the fullness of the Gentiles has come, then he'll begin the clock ticking again with his treatment of national Israel.

So that's one of the key differences. also, instead of a single second coming of Christ, they have two phases to the second advent.

They say that Christ will come the first time secretly and will rapture his church away and only will come gloriously seven years later when he comes all the way down to earth.

So they have made the second coming of Christ really second and third comings, or at least two phases, separate distinct phases, rather than just one return of Christ, as all three of these other views held to, that Christ only comes once in glory at the time that he comes.

Now we've got this secret rapture of the church before a period of tribulation, and then Christ coming again those seven years later, and then the thousand year millennial reign in which God will be pursuing his plan for Israel again.

[42 : 04] Those two then, the church and Israel must be kept distinct. So dispensational premillennialism introduces many new features and new distinctions never before seen in these views of the end times.

They also have two separate resurrections then, a resurrection for the righteous and a resurrection for the unrighteous. They have two separate judgments, one for the believer, another for the unbeliever, two different places and times.

So differences from historical premillennialism. Now over the past decades, this view has been and remains the popular view in American evangelicalism.

I want to ask not how many of you grew up under that teaching, but how many of you did not grow up under that teaching? Okay, I see three or four hands.

Does that mean that most of the rest of us were brought up under this teaching or you're just confused by all these charts and you don't know what you are? I think it's safe to say that most all of us probably were raised under this fourth view of eschatology.

[43 : 21] And again, I just want to remind us of the newness of some of these features of this scheme. Two resurrections, two judgments, two stages to the return of Christ, a secret rapture theory, a separation of Israel and the church.

those things were not held in historic premillennialism. Those came in more in the 1800s when Edward Irving began emphasizing his popularist futuristic views and then were really hammered out by J.N.

Darby with a whole full-blown system of dispensationalism. And he defended his secret rapture theory by emphasizing the distinction between Israel and the church.

You always have to keep these separate. And that's why Christ comes first for the church and raptures her away and then begins his program with Israel. Now again, let me just quote Darby at this point.

I deny that the saints before Christ's first coming or after his second coming are part of the church. The saints before Christ's coming were Jews. They're not a part of the church.

[44 : 37] Those after his second coming who will be saved will be Jews. They are not a part of the church. Now that may sound familiar to us if we've been raised on that, but it was a novelty in the mid-1800s when Darby proposed it.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon happened to be alive when Darby was putting forth this teaching.

Wouldn't it be good if we could know what Spurgeon thought of that new idea?

Well, we can because he wrote about it. Let me just read the quote. We have even heard it asserted that those who live before the coming of Christ do not belong to the church of God. We never know what we shall hear next.

And perhaps it is a mercy that these absurdities are revealed one at a time in order that we may be able to endure their stupidity without dying of amazement. Now, we're not laughing at premillennialism in any form.

We're laughing at Spurgeon. Spurgeon. Spurgeon. Spurgeon.