

Recently, a friend asked me what I thought about various views of the end times. After reviewing relevant scripture, commentaries, books, and articles, I've come to some definite conclusions. Before I discuss my conclusions, I want to make it clear that I respect the time and effort that so many people have put into their study and analysis of eschatological issues. There is value in the study of prophecy and eschatology, and each of the end times perspectives I mention below have scriptural support and provide valuable insight for believers. However, as a review of relevant web sites will show, disagreement regarding these issues sometimes leads to harshness toward those with different interpretations. That's why I am addressing the controversy.

Regarding millennialism, I'm quite confident about the following;

If you believe that scripture teaches amillennialism, and it turns out that you are mistaken, your misunderstanding, in and of itself, will not affect your entry to the premillennial or postmillennial kingdom. If you believe that scripture teaches premillennialism or postmillennialism and it turns out that you are mistaken, your misunderstanding will not keep you out of the kingdom of the new heaven and new earth. **Your eternal salvation does not rest on your interpretation of the scripture passages that deal with these things.**

As to the timing of the resurrection(s) of the dead and the catching up (rapture?) of living believers to Jesus Christ:

Whether you call the catching up "the rapture" or something else will not affect whether or not you spend eternity with God. If you truly belong to Jesus Christ, and you expect midtribulation rapture or posttribulation rapture, but the rapture occurs before any sort of Great Tribulation, you will be raptured anyway. If you expect pretribulation rapture and you are mistaken, you will have to wait longer than you expected to see Jesus face to face, but you will if you belong to him. If you expect midtribulation rapture and you are mistaken, you will either be pleasantly surprised or have to wait a bit longer than you thought. **Your eternal salvation does not rest on your interpretation of the scripture passages that deal with these things.**

Some of you are now thinking of the "practical problems" that a wrong interpretation of these things might cause. For example, amillennialists and postmillennialists might spend too much time involved in political or social causes in order to make the world a better place. On the other hand, premillennialists might show too little concern for these things. A person expecting a pretribulation rapture might not prepare spiritually for the possibility of persecution. On the other hand, a person expecting a mid or posttribulation rapture may not be watchful and become lax in their devotion, expecting plenty of warning time in which to "clean up their act."

But these "practical problems" all have the same solution. **Live as Jesus Christ told you to live.** Love God with your whole heart, soul, and mind. Love others as yourself. Devote yourself to prayer, worship, and the study of scripture. Serve others in love and humble submission, considering others more important than you. Rejoice when you are considered worthy to share in Christ's sufferings. If the Holy Spirit leads you do something (i.e., live quietly, or become politically active, prepare for a time of scarcity, or live day to day) **DO IT!** Don't base how you live on your eschatology. Live for Jesus Christ!