

**Millennium/
New Covenant Era**

**Tribulation/Rebellion/Lawless
ness**

**Visible Return; Resurrection (Transportation);
Last Battle; Judgement**

Eternal State: New Heaven, New Earth or Hell...

The millennium is only described in Rev 20:1–6. Following an idealist interpretation of Revelation it describes the New Covenant period, “authority” is what Jesus gave the Church in Mt 28, Satan’s binding is the “strongman bound” in the Gospels (he is on a tight leash!), and death is a reference to martyrdom.

This is made clearer by verses that teach only one General Resurrection: Jn 5:28–29; Acts 24:15; Dan 12:2. Scripture is looking forward to one momentous event (Tit 2:13), the Day of the Lord. This is confirmed by Jesus alluding to no future period beyond the New Covenant before the End (Dan 9). We live between the Ascension and His Return, the first and second advent. These are the “Last Days.” This is the simplest reading.

This is also the majority view of Church history, supported by early church authors and the Apostles Creed, Augustine-Aquinas-Luther-Calvin. Many from the last century such as Shields, Sproul and Packer hold this. It is the official position of many Protestants, the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Church. It is something when these three agree!

The Church has always known tribulations, as idealistically described across Rev 4–20. Even so the Gospel advances. Jesus said we should expect this (Jn 16:33; Rev 1:9) and gave no indication we’d escape the Tribulation (T) (Rev 2:10). Still, toward the end tribulation will increase. It will be a time of peace and security like in Noah’s day (1 Thes 5:3) but one of moral corruption and rebellion (2 Ti 2:3) where Christians are persecuted. The T will culminate in the anti-Christ (1 Jn) or the Man of Lawlessness (1 Thes 2) who will be known for his deception and false worship. Just as the 10th plague passed over Israel so believers will generally endure through the T & “immediately after” be vindicated by Christ’s return (Mt 24:29; Mk 13:24; c.f. 1 Thes 4:16; 1 Cor 15:51–52).

Jesus’ return will be personal (1 Thes 4:16; Rev 1:7) and visible (Rev 1:7-eye; Acts 1:11-same way/saw ; Mt 24:27- lightning 1 Thes 4:16-cry/trump). No one will miss it. It will also be sudden like Noah’s flood (1 Thes 5:2–3, Mt 25). Finally it will be triumphant (glory-Heb 9:28; clouds- Rev 1:7; angels-1 Thes 1:7; and saints-1 Th 3:13). He will descend to Jerusalem? This event will come at “an hour you do not expect.” We must be ready! This imminency must also be balanced with unfulfilled signs, such as a revival amongst ethnic Israel (Ro 11:26), the expansion of missions (Mt 24:14) and the coming of the Anti-Christ. However, like the fall of the USSR the Lord is able to bring these events about quickly.

We’ve already seen passages about a General Resurrection (R), when all the dead shall be raised and reunited with their spirits. 1 Cor 15:52- we shall be changed and share in Jesus’ R. 1 Thes 4:17 refers to a catching up (rapture/transportation). This *apantesis* means to go out to welcome home a dignitary. The elect are collected up by angels (Mt 24:31 to return. We are rescued and vindicated.

Rev 19 and 20 put forward the gathering of anti-God forces led by Satan Himself who will come out against Christ; the culmination of rebellion and pride. However, it will be a short battle. By His breathe/word/fire Jesus will defeat His enemies (2 Thes 1:8; Rev 19:21).

There will be a General Judgement (Rev. 20:11) around Christ’s throne. We will be judged for our deeds (2 Cor 5:10) but ultimately our faith (Lk 18:8; Heb 11:6). Though believers will be included (2 Cor 5:10), we’ll ultimately not be condemned because of Christ (Ro 8:1).

Following the Judgement earth will flee away (2 Pe 3:12–13) and the eternal state will begin.

Intermediate State. Hell and heaven are both present and future realities. When we die we all face judgement (Heb 9:27). In the parable of Lazarus Jesus spoke of the present reality of hell (Lk 16:23); like a prisoner beginning to serve their sentence. To the repentant their on the cross Jesus assured him of immediately entering paradise (Lk 23:43). However, even in heaven our spirit will long for our full salvation, the Resurrection of our bodies (Phil 4:20–21).

Eternal State Resurrected, unbelievers will go away into an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Rev 20:14). Believers will be rewarded through welcome into the New Heavens and New Earth (Isa 65:17; 2 Pe 3:13; Rev 21:1). Here we will be with Jesus for eternity in a physical existence where “every chapter is better than the one before.” It will be “further up and further in.” (c.f. C.S. Lewis, *Last Battle*)