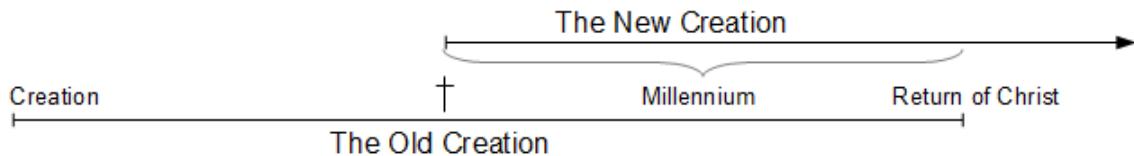


Comparison with Other Eschatological Views

I. Remember the basic principles / observations that guide my approach

1. John's book brings the OT prophets to a climax (Rev 1:3; 10:7; 22:7).
2. The book is not in a simple chronological order. John often circles back to the beginning of this age to revisit the timeline from a different perspective. (e.g., ch. 12)
3. Some visions depict general spiritual realities, rather than a specific once-only event in history (e.g., the wars and famines in the first seals).
4. Even some of the "once-only" events (e.g., the final destruction of Babylon) had a shadowy first fulfillment in the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, and will have a second ultimate fulfillment later.
5. Everything is symbolic.

II. My conclusions about eschatology ("inaugurated millennialism")



- This eschatological view is identical with rest of the NT (not just Rev).
- These are the last days; this is the tribulation, although it will intensify at the end.
- This present period is marked both by:
 1. The victory of the church (the emphasis of postmillennials), where "victory" is defined by: people believing in Christ and growing in faith.
 2. The suffering of the church (the emphasis of amillennials) as a result of opposition from those who reject Christ.

III. Alternate view #1: Premillennialism (most of conservative evangelicalism)

See diagrams of premillennialism on pp 2457, 2459 of the ESV Study Bible

- Differences of starting point: they disagree with all five of my basic principles.
 - Their perspective tends toward seeing Revelation as a “code book” with intricate descriptions of end times events.
- Millennium (which is only mentioned by name in Revelation 20):
 - For premill’s, 20:1 is not a restart, but a description of what happens *after* the end of ch. 19. Hence they understand that all the dire tribulation described prior to ch. 20 happens *before* the millennium.
 - But:
 - All enemies of Christ are dead at the end of ch. 19 (see vv. 20–21)!
 - The defeat of Gog and Magog in 20:8–9 has already happened in 19:17–18 (see Ezek 39:6, 17)
 - Satan is already bound because of Christ’s work! (Matt 12:28–29)
 - Why interpret the “one thousand years” as a literal number when this flies against the whole way apocalyptic literature operates (see how “weeks” is used in 1 Enoch 93; or how all of Daniel speaks in symbolic time symbols)?
 - Why would this important part of the shape of history not be attested anywhere else in the Bible?

IV. Alternate view #2: Partial Preterism (many reformed people)

See diagram of partial preterism on pp 2457 of the ESV Study Bible

- The basic idea is that most of Revelation (especially the many judgments in chs. 4–19) describes past events: the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD, the fall of Rome, etc. Hence we should have an optimistic view of this age (which is why partial preterists are usually also postmillennialists).
- Differences of starting point: they disagree in particular with #4 (Revelation 4–19 as about both *a first and an ultimate fulfillment*).
- Arguments in their favor:
 - The “near expectation” texts:
 - Revelation as about “the things that must soon take place.” (Rev 1:1; see also 22:6, 7, 12, 20)
 - “This generation will not pass away until all has taken place.” (Luke 21:32; see Matt 23:36; 24:34; Mark 13:30)
 - Babylon clearly portrayed as Rome (e.g., 7 mountains in Rev 17:9; the exports in 18:11–13)
- But:
 - In biblical prophecy, things are often portrayed as imminent when they are actually far off. For example, Hag 2:6: “Yet once more, *in a little while*, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land”; Hag 2:21: “I am *about* to shake the heavens and the earth.” (See not just Matt 28:2; but also Heb 12:25–29!)