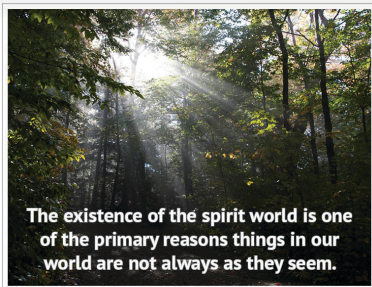




Our Daily Bread University
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The Doctrine of the Spirit World

1. Q. What is the spirit world?

A. It is that invisible realm inhabited by holy angels who actively serve God for our good (Heb. 1:14) and by Satan's demonic forces who oppose God and seek to harm us (Eph. 6:12).

Its existence is one of the primary reasons that things in our world are not always as they seem. Our challenge is far greater than merely to deal with the visible details of life. Our primary struggle for well-being does not depend just on our flesh-and-blood relationships but also on unseen friends and enemies as well.

2. Q. What are angels?

A. Angels are created (Ps. 148:1-5), powerful (Ps. 103:20), personal (Lk. 1:26-38; 15:10), deathless (Lk. 20:36), spirit beings (Heb. 1:14) designed to worship (Heb. 1:6) and serve the Lord (Ps. 103:20), and to minister to believers (Heb. 1:14).

While natural observation does not reveal their importance to us, faith in the Word of God assures us that God's sovereign provision in our lives is often mediated by these invisible servants. Even more astounding is the assurance of the Scriptures that they do not always remain invisible. Because of this, the letter to the Hebrews urges us, "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels" (Heb. 13:2).



Angels visit Abraham



3. Q. Who is Satan?

A. Satan is an especially powerful angel who rebelled against God. His act of rebellion is not described directly in the Bible but is alluded to in Isaiah's description of the king of Babylon (14:12-15) and Ezekiel's reference to the king of Tyre (28:11-19). He is also referred to in the Bible as the devil, Lucifer, Beelzebub, Belial, serpent, dragon, ruler of this world, god of this age, prince of the power of the air, angel of light, accuser, tempter, deceiver, murderer, liar, and evil one.

Because of his constant activity against God and the people of God, he is a far greater threat to us than any other enemy, personal or national.

4. Q. Who are the demons?

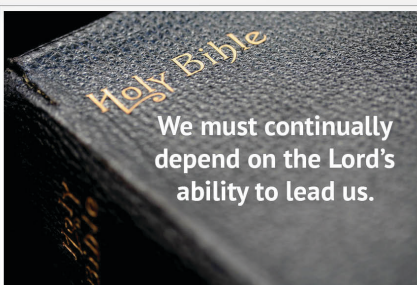
A. Demons are fallen angels who apparently joined Satan in his rebellion. Some are active as members of Satan's army (Eph. 6:12) while others have been imprisoned by God (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).

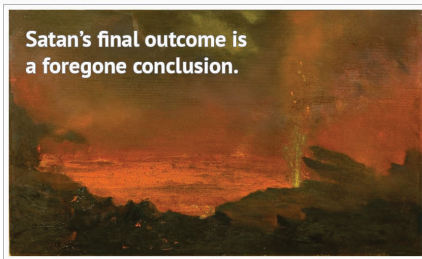
These personal agents of Satan's evil empire can stimulate and arouse the worst capacities and desires within us. They don't make us evil, but they willingly dominate those who refuse to surrender their hearts to God.

5. Q. What are the activities of Satan?

A. With the help of his demon followers, he plants false Christians among the true (Mt. 13:24-30; 2 Cor. 11:13-15). He seeks to devour the Lord's people (1 Pet. 5:8). He falsely accuses God's children (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-5; Zech. 3:1-10; Rev. 12:10). He rules over the unsaved world (Jn. 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2). He deceives people through his outright lies (Jn. 8:44) and his cleverly designed thought-systems (2 Cor. 4:4; 11:14-15; Col. 2:8,20-23; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 1 Jn. 2:15-17; 5:19). And he can possess nonbelievers (Mk. 5:1-13; 6:13; Acts 5:16; 16:16-18; 19:11-12).

We are constantly interacting with the workings of this evil strategist. Often, like Peter (Mt. 16:23), we are so unaware of the ways of God that even our good intentions can serve Satan's purposes. For that reason we must continually





depend on the Lord's ability to lead us.

6. Q. What did Christ do to assure the ultimate defeat of Satan and his forces?

A. By His death and resurrection, the Lord Jesus broke Satan's power (Col. 2:14-15; Heb. 2:14-15). So the devil and his forces operate today as defeated foes who know they are doomed to the lake of fire (Mt. 8:29; Jas. 2:19; Rev. 20:10).

It is absolutely essential to keep in mind that Satan's final outcome is a foregone conclusion. His predetermined fate is a terrible reality that should help us to avoid either carelessness or despair.

7. Q. How can we defeat Satan?

A. We who have placed our trust in Christ can overcome Satan in our daily lives by submitting to God and resisting the devil (Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8-9); by being aware of his strategy and avoiding the sins that give him a foothold in our lives (1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 2:10-11; Eph. 4:26-27; 1 Tim. 3:6-7); by putting on the full armor of God (Eph. 6:11-18); and by totally rejecting all forms of occult activity, including magic, spiritism, and witchcraft (Lev. 19:26,31; 20:6,27; Dt. 18:10-12; Isa. 8:19; Mic. 5:12; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8; 22:15).

The Doctrine of the Future

1. Q. What happens to us when we die?

A. Our "life" (soul-spirit) separates from our body. The body "dies" and returns to dust (Genesis 3:19) and the life God breathed into humans at creation (2:7) lives on eternally. Ecclesiastes 12:7 speaks of death as the separation of the soul from the body. James stated that the body without the soul is dead (James 2:26). Jesus made a clear distinction between bodily death and spiritual "death" in Matthew 10:28 where he warned, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body; but cannot kill the soul." Life and death is not a matter of existence and nonexistence but a transition from life existing in a body to life waiting for resurrection, God's

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- Our **soul-spirit** separates from our **body**.

See transcript for Scripture references

1. What happens to us when we die?

- Our **soul-spirit** separates from our **body**.

Lives on eternally

Returns to dust

See transcript for Scripture references

2. What happens to our souls after we die?



judgment and the experience of living in our eternal state.

2. Q. What happens to our soul after we die?

A. When a person's soul-spirit (or life) leaves the body, it goes either to Hades where it awaits resurrection, judgment, and eternal separation from God's presence (2 Thessalonians 1:8–10), or to heaven where it awaits resurrection, judgment, and eternal life in God's presence. John 5:28–29 states that “a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.” Those who have accepted God's gift and have passed from death to life (Ephesians 2:1–5) will be with Him in paradise (Luke 23:40–43). Paul expressed his confidence that when he departed from this life he would be in Christ's presence (Philippians 1:20–24; 2 Corinthians 5:6–10).

3. Q. When will Christ return and judge the earth's people?

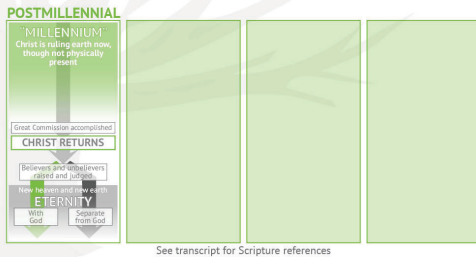
A. Jesus said that neither He nor the angels knew the time of His return. But He assured them that He would return. It could be at any time, and they should be prepared and ready for that moment (Mark 13:32–33).

4. Q. What about the events that Scripture says will take place before Christ's return?

A. Jesus taught that there would be a time of trouble before He returned (Matthew 24:1–35). John referred to that time as a period of great tribulation (Revelation 7:14). Yet in spite of the events described in Matthew 24 and Revelation 5–18, Jesus said, “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man” (Matthew 24:36–39).

5. Q. What will happen when Christ returns?

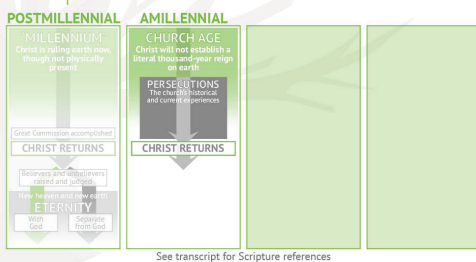
5. What will happen when Christ returns?



A. Bible-believing Christians have understood the details of Christ’s return in four different ways. The answer to this question, while important, is not a matter of Christian orthodoxy. Unlike primary doctrinal questions like Jesus’s deity, the inspiration of Scripture, salvation by grace alone, and other matters of Christian orthodoxy, this question is of secondary importance. Christians can and do agree to disagree on details about this and other secondary questions.

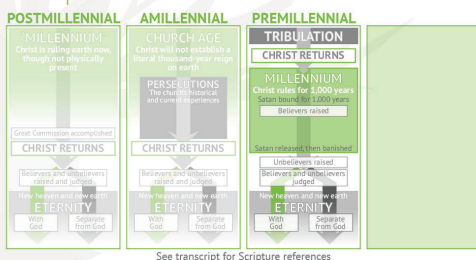
Revelation 20 describes a reign of Christ over the earth for a period of one thousand years. People who take the Bible seriously have interpreted this phenomenon called the millennium in different ways.

5. What will happen when Christ returns?



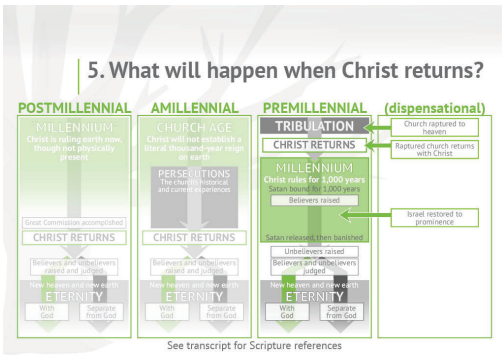
A. A postmillennium understanding of this millennial reign of Christ teaches that we are presently living in Christ’s kingdom and He is ruling earth now even though He is physically absent. The thousand years are understood figuratively. Postmillennial belief posits that Jesus will return to earth when the church has successfully spread the gospel and God universally reigns in human hearts. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20) will have been accomplished, and Jesus’s promise in Matthew 24:14 that “this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come,” will be fulfilled and Christ will return. Believers and unbelievers will be raised (John 5:28–29); the believers to eternal presence with God and unbelievers to eternal separation from God.

5. What will happen when Christ returns?

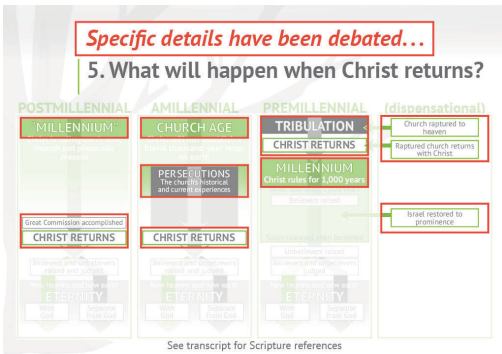


B. The amillennial view, as its name suggests, teaches that Christ will not establish a literal thousand-year reign on earth. The church is spiritually fulfilling the figurative “thousand years” of Revelation 20 during the present church age. The persecutions described in Matthew 24 and Revelation 5–18, are a description of the church’s historical and current experiences and will cease when Christ returns. Believers and unbelievers will be raised (John 5:28–29); the believers to eternal presence with God and unbelievers to eternal separation from God.

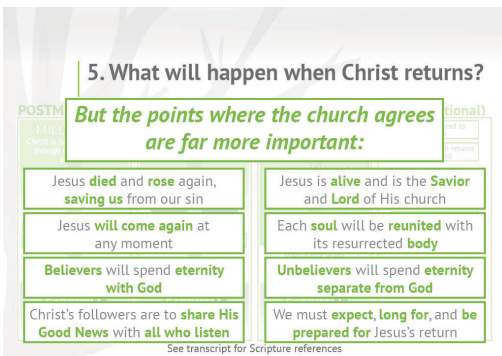
C. The premillennial understanding of Christ’s return reads Revelation 20 (especially verses 4–6) literally and believes Jesus will rule on the earth for a thousand years after He



returns. Jesus’s second coming follows and brings to an end a time of unprecedented tribulation, described in Matthew 24 and Revelation 5–18. Satan will be bound for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1–3). Believers will be raised and will reign with Christ during the millennium. At the end of the millennium, Satan will be released for a short time and then be banished to eternal punishment (20:3, 7–10). Unbelievers will be raised from the dead, will be judged and condemned (20:11–15). As in the postmillennial and amillennial views, a new heaven and a new earth appear and the eternal state is initiated.



Some premillennial believers identify a few differences with other premillennialists regarding the events associated with Christ’s return. Two are of special significance. First, dispensationalists believe that the church will be raptured to heaven before (or some believe in the middle of) the tribulation period. The rapture, described in 1 Thessalonians 4:15–18, delivers Christians from the suffering that occurs on earth during the tribulation (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9). After the time of tribulation, Jesus will return with the raptured church (Revelation 19), and will personally rule on the earth for a thousand years.



A second dispensational distinction is that Jesus will restore national Israel to its prominence in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies (Ezekiel 37:24–27). King David and Israel will play a significant role in Jesus’s millennial kingdom (2 Samuel 7:8–16).

For centuries, godly, Bible-believing theologians have discussed and debated these four different understandings of Jesus’s return as they seek to clarify specific details. But far more important are the points where the church agrees.

- Jesus died and was raised again to save us from sin’s power and penalty (John 3:16–17).
- Jesus is alive and is the Savior and Lord of His church (Colossians 1:13–20)
- Jesus is coming again and could return at any moment (Matthew 24:36–42).
- When Jesus returns, each person’s soul will be reunited with his or her resurrected body and will live eternally, either in



God's presence or separated from Him (John 5:28–29).

- Jesus commissioned all of His followers to be His witnesses and to tell all who will listen that Jesus came into the world to save sinners (Luke 19:10; Acts 1:8).
- We are to wait longingly and expectantly and be prepared at any moment for Jesus's return (Matthew 24:42–44).

Conclusion

In Lesson 1, we defined doctrine as, "Bible truths that are taught, believed, and practiced." This Theology Basics course presented a brief introduction to eight Bible doctrines:

- God (theology proper)
- Jesus Christ (Christology)
- The Holy Spirit (pneumatology)
- The Bible (bibliology)
- Salvation (soteriology)
- The church (ecclesiology)
- Angels and demons (angelology)
- Last things (eschatology)

Now that we have been introduced to these Bible truths, we can invest time developing a greater understanding, a stronger conviction, and a more consistent practice of God's truth. But Jesus's Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20) commanded us to go beyond learning truth about God and His will. He said we should make disciples of all nations by baptizing them and teaching them to observe all that He commanded us.

Learning doctrine, as essential as it is, was never intended to be an end in itself. Jesus launched us into a glorious mission when He said, "You will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). We have the privilege of taking what we have learned and spreading the good news that Jesus came into the world to seek and to save lost sinners (Luke 19:10).



See transcript for Scripture references