

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Church and Last Things, Session 17, The Millennium, Revelation 20:4-6, Dispensational Premillennialism and Three Rapture Positions

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This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on Doctrines of the Church and Last Things. This is session 17, The Millennium, Revelation 20:4-6, Dispensational Premillennialism, and Three Rapture Positions.

We continue our studies in the last things, and let us ask the Lord's help.

Gracious Father, thank you for sending your son to be the Savior of the world, even our Savior, by grace through faith. Thank you for his and the Apostles' promises concerning the future. Help us to believe your word and those promises.

May they have an impact on our lives now that you intend for them to have. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord and the coming King. Amen. We've been studying the Millennium from Revelation chapter 20, verses 1 to 6, and we've emphasized that the four different millennial positions, Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Historic Premillennialism, and Dispensational Premillennialism have more important things in common than they do differences, although they have legitimate, long-standing and probably intractable differences.

They agree on what I call the four verities, the four foundational teachings concerning the last things that Christians have always held and that I think we ought to hold up and emphasize and build our ministries around while still thinking about things that are less important, including the Millennium. The four truths are summarized in the acronym R-U-L-E. R stands for the return of Christ, the second coming, that initiates the whole consummation of the ages.

In order to make the acronym work, I couldn't put two R's together, so resurrection of the dead is signified by the humorous preposition up with an exclamation point. Return of Christ, up, showing resurrection. L stands for last judgment, and E stands for eternal destinies or heaven and hell, more specifically, new heavens and new earth and eternal hell.

And all believers from the 20th century to the 21st have held those four truths in common. And again, if I could put these millennial charts on top of one another, they would be the same in those four areas. Return of Christ, up, resurrection of the dead, last judgment, eternal destinies.

Nevertheless, good people disagree, and we have worked with amillennialism, which views the Millennium as not a future earthly kingdom. Oh, it believes in a future earthly kingdom, that is, the eternal state and the new heavens and new earth forever. But it interprets the Millennium of Revelation 20, one to six, as the current reign of Christ with his people in heaven.

Postmillennialism, which has much in common with amillennialism, says Christ comes after the Millennium, even as amillennialism does. But the Millennium is conceived as an earthly kingdom of long length, but to be achieved not by the cataclysmic return of Christ that brings the kingdom all at once. But postmillennialism is an example of gradualism.

The kingdom expands gradually, not smoothly, and always by increments, with ups and downs, but overall increasing and increasing to the point where the earth becomes Christianized. We distinguish believing gospel postmillennialism from unbelieving secular postmillennialism. Believing postmillennialists, these are tongue twisters indeed, hold that it's through the preaching of the gospel that the kingdom will be spread.

Premillennialism, as the name implies, is what is pre or what is post, which is the return of Christ. Christ comes before the Millennium, and indeed, his coming is the cause of the Millennium; unlike the gradualism of postmillennialism, premillennialism in both its historic and dispensational manifestations is cataclysmic. Kaboom! Jesus' return initiates the end of the age, and the other elements follow quickly from it.

Historic premillennialism answered the five questions in this way. Christ's reign on earth, what is the Millennium? It is Christ's future reign on earth for a thousand years, or if a language is symbolic, a very, very long time after his return and before the eternal state, new heavens, and new earth. The Millennium is viewed as the necessary time for the fulfillment of certain Old Testament prophecies that fall short of the new heavens and new earth.

So premills distinguish between golden passages and platinum passages. Certain passages teach there will still be death in the end times when Christ, when God rules. That surely wouldn't be the new heavens and new earth; that would be the precedent earthly millennial kingdom, and the platinum passages, so-called, would speak of the new heavens and new earth.

And along these lines, premills find this to be a real distinction in the Old Testament. And so, the middle of Isaiah 65, which speaks of new heavens and new earth, premills would take Isaiah 65, whatever it is, 17 to the end of that chapter, to speak to be a golden, speak of a golden age, better than golden passage. The golden age is

the Millennium and then Isaiah 66, toward the end, when it twice speaks of the new heavens and new earth, premills would take that to be indeed a platinum, the platinum rule, the platinum kingdom.

And that is the new heavens and new earth. The binding of Satan to historic premills means he'll be unable to deceive the nations during the future millennial kingdom. The timing of Christ's return before the Millennium as pre-millennialism, as the name denotes, second coming, is a single event, but yet there are two resurrections.

It's quite evident if you interpret the Bible with a historical hermeneutic, they say, a literal, grammatical interpretation. Revelation 20:6 gives two resurrections. It uses the very same language, and they came alive from Zao, Ezesan, twice. Do you mean to tell me it means two different things in the space of a couple of verses? Verses 4 and 5, I should say, of Revelation 20.

Yes, I will say it's exactly what we mean. It's like John 5, where first of all, Jesus says, around verses 24-25 in there, that there is a spiritual resurrection. People who believe in the Father through Jesus' preaching move from spiritual death to spiritual life.

At the word of Jesus, they come alive. A couple of verses later, John 5:27 to 29-ish, is the physical resurrection of the dead. It's exactly the same in Revelation 20.

Spiritual resurrection, physical resurrection. Not so, the premials say. They're both physical resurrections, and thus, here at the end of the Bible story, for the first time, this is in accord with the unfolding revelation of God in biblical theology.

Wait a minute, amils and postmills say. You mean to tell me, all the way through the Bible, there's a general resurrection of the righteous and the wicked, and now in Revelation 20, all of a sudden, you have a distinction? Exactly, premials say. That is how the biblical theology works sometimes.

If it sounds like we're in a conundrum and we're not going to agree, that is exactly right. And I told you before, Stanley Grenz, in his helpful book, *The Millennial Maze*, helped me a number of ways. Since you're dying to know, his pilgrimage is the same as mine.

I should also say that his good attitude, hopefully, is the same as mine. He accepts brothers and sisters with different conclusions. He was a dispensational premillennialist, and then as his pilgrimage moved along, he became a historic premill, and finally, he became an amil.

I might say he was friendly and not ferocious at any one of those periods. In any case, dispensational premillennialism, like many features like historic premillennialism, but

there's a difference as well. We've given worthies for each of the positions, and for this one, Charles Ryrie was an outstanding Christian man of good testimony, and as Blazing and Bach in their book, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, show, he moved dispensationalism in a very healthy direction.

Darby taught certain things. Louis Ferry Chafer improved some of his dispensationalism. Ryrie made major advances, major advances over the previous viewpoints.

For example, I was taught in Bible College that Jesus offered the Millennial Kingdom in the book of Matthew, and if the Jews had accepted it, Jesus would not have gone to the cross. Gasp! Wrong, Ryrie says. If they had accepted it, Jesus, of course, would have gone to the cross.

That is the major purpose of his coming. He dodged a bullet on that one. That is a very important improvement.

Anyway, I was taught, and again, by good people who love the Lord, and probably not all my teachers agreed at Philadelphia College of Bible in the 1970s that the Sermon on the Mount did not apply to today. It was the ethics for the coming Millennial Kingdom. Not so anymore.

So, the popular dispensationalist John McArthur has a book on the Sermon on the Mount that applies to Christians at this age. So, theologies develop. Always for good? Oh no, oh no.

There are examples of theologies moving in a very unbelieving or liberal direction, or in confusing directions, or losing their zeal for the most important things, but dispensationalism has moved in a very healthy direction, in my estimation. Dispensationalists who oppose progressive dispensationalism disagree with me, but I have wonderful friends at Dallas Theological Seminary, probably the world center of dispensational theology, and they rejoice with me in holding, as a covenant theologian, as progressive dispensationalists, they agree. The most important thing to say about the scriptures and its story is there's one overarching covenant of grace that unites the Bible, and that is really encouraging to hear.

Anyway, dispensational premils. Charles Ryrie, John Walvoord, famous for his eschatological books, and then the architects of the new dispensationalism, Daryl Bach and Craig Blazing, were very capable scholars. I recently enjoyed Bach's book, *Portraits of Jesus*, a summary of the story and teaching of Jesus from the Synoptic from all four Gospels.

He treats the Synoptics together, and then John, outstanding, as a New Testament scholar friend of mine said, for years I longed for a book that did that well. We have it. Darrel Bach and Craig Blazing.

They are outstanding Christian men who love the Lord, and have good attitudes toward those who disagree with them. Boy, I rejoice in that. They would hold the four verities that I've emphasized.

They also are dispensationalists, and I like to quiz them on certain details because I wouldn't be surprised if they have modified certain of these things. But number one, the Millennium. It agrees with historic premillennialism.

The Millennium is a future earthly kingdom brought about by the return of Christ. Hence, the Millennium is, the return of Christ is premillennial. What is pre or post is the return of Christ vis-a-vis the Millennium, but dispensationalists add to historic premillennialism a Jewish character for the Millennium with restored temples and sacrifices. That's what I'd like to ask the leading, cutting-edge dispensationalists because I think the book of Hebrews simply does not allow that.

Two and three, the binding of Satan means he cannot prevent; he cannot deceive the nations during the future millennial kingdom. Remember, Omnils and Postmills said, no, no. The text gives the reason for his being granted tremendous binding.

He's locked up, and they put handcuffs and put a chair in front of him. I mean, it is incredible. Great language of binding.

B.B. Warfield is an amazing scholar, and there aren't many Warfields around; he mastered both biblical languages, I mean mastered, devoted himself to the Bible, the Bible's teaching. The only reason he didn't write a systematic theology is that Hodge already had. He would have been world-famous, but his wife had an incurable disease, and he would not leave her.

Anyway, Warfield acknowledged the tremendous language of restraint on the devil in Revelation 20 and said he has a long chain. Specifically, and Postmills say, all that language of restraint then gives the purpose for it so that he might not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were ended. Well, the thousand years is the church age for Amills, and the devil is unable to present the spread of the gospel now as it has never before gone to the world.

No, Premills say, we're constrained by this context. The universe of discourse is this passage, not the whole; of course, it's the whole Bible, but more specifically, it is talking about the future earthly millennial kingdom. I'll say it again: Grenz is right.

The exegesis of the different parties is fixed. We're dug in. We're not going to have an agreement.

I do love Grenz's spirit; however, in the same book, *The Millennial Maze*, he says the exegesis differs. My language now, contradictory exegesis of the same passage, cannot be right. That would violate the law of non-contradiction.

A and negative A, where A stands for the same thing, cannot be true at the same time in the same way. Nevertheless, Grenz says, we can learn from each of the millennial positions. Oh, I agree.

I agree. definitely, dispensational premillennialism says the second coming, I'm sorry, two and three.

Three is the timing of Christ's return, like as historic premillennialism, dispensational premillennialism. Since it's pre, it says his coming is pre the millennium.

There's another difference, however, and the difference here is with all the other three positions. Uniquely, unlike A, post, and historic premillennialism, dispensational premillennialism says the second coming will occur in two stages. Thus, dispensationalists distinguish between rapture passages, where Jesus comes to take the church out of the world before the seven-year great tribulation on earth, and second coming passages, which speak of Christ coming to earth after the tribulation and before the millennium.

One more time. The second coming will occur in two stages. Number one, the rapture of the church before the tribulation, so the church is spared that time of Jacob's trouble, the time of tribulation unprecedented in the history of the world, Daniel 12, Matthew 24.

They distinguish between rapture and second coming proper, we could call it, to earth. Rapture comes in the air, the church goes up, and is taken out of the world. Second coming to earth, distinguished from the rapture in the air, happens after the tribulation and before the millennium.

Omnis and postmills have one general resurrection. Historic mills have two. Dispensational premills have three resurrections.

Let us look at our chart. As in the other positions, this is evangelical Christianity, so we start with the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. Two phases of the second coming.

The rapture of the church, I'm going to summarize, just simply the different rapture positions and their subsets of pre-millennialism; I'll just give the tags, is the rapture

pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, or post-tribulation. We'll be there in a minute, but Christ meets believers dead, resurrected, and alive in the air and returns to heaven. The rapture does not come back down to earth as it does in the other three positions.

I pointed out it does not disprove this viewpoint, but that the word to meet the Lord in the air from 1st Thessalonians 4 is used in literature contemporaneous with the Bible in the same general area anyway, time period, of representatives of a city-state, of a political entity crossing a border to welcome a dignitary, a prince or a king for example, and escort them back into their territory. Hence, it is possible to meet the Lord in the air, which means the believers dead are raised, living ones transformed, they go up to meet with Christ, and they, as the citizens of the town, accompany him back down to earth. Does that prove that this is wrong? No.

It simply says that it's allowable; there's even evidence of such a usage of that verb to meet the Lord in the air. Somehow, I think it's a noun that functions perhaps with a preposition in a verbal way. In any case, it's not important.

The distinction between the rapture of the church and the second coming to earth. In dispensational premillennialism alone, the church is spared the Great Tribulation, because it's been raptured out of the world, at least in mainline dispensationalism. It gets complicated.

You think it's complicated, it's worse. I'm simplifying. It's okay because keep the four verities in mind.

Lay the transparencies over one another. We agree that Jesus is coming back, the dead are going to be raised, there's going to be a last judgment, and they're going to be eternal destinies. That's what I stand on.

That's what I emphasize. Am I concerned about this? Yes. Do I have my view? Yes.

Would I shoot other Christians on site who disagree? No. Give me a break. The Millennium is Jewish; at least, that has been the opinion I have read.

I would not be surprised if some of the careful biblical theologians in this tradition would give up the Jewishness of that Millennium. I think Hebrews precludes the view of the restoration of the temple. It's a literalistic interpretation of the Old Testament that dispensation used to be built upon.

But the progressive dispensationism came from a pre-caucus meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, especially of younger dispensations, but not only, in which they broke the historic ironclad hermeneutic of dispensation. The Church and

Israel are always distinct. No, they said, Galatians 6, the Israel of God in that context of Galatians, speaks of the Church.

And they agreed. Everybody didn't agree, but the progressives did, and that opened the door. So now they say there is still an Israel and Church distinction in the New Testament, and that is the essence of dispensationalism.

But the Amals are right. Sometimes, the Church speaks of the New Testament speaks of the Church as the spiritual Israel. So, I appreciate that concession.

Last Judgment, New Heavens, and New Earth are traditional. Three resurrections. Amals and Postmils have one general resurrection.

Premils, based upon Revelation 24 through 6, have two. One before, one after the Millennium. Dispensationalists, by adding the Rapture, have three.

1 Thessalonians 4 solves the Thessalonians problem some of our brothers and sisters died. Are they going to miss out? No, no, no. They're going to be raised first, and we're going to go and meet the Lord together in the air.

That's one resurrection. Number two, since the Millennium is Jewish, there's a resurrection of Old Testament saints and tribulation saints, Jews, because the Church has already been raptured before the Jewish Millennium. Resurrection, I get mixed up, resurrection of believers prior to the Rapture, when Jesus comes in heaven, in the air.

Church saints, not Old Testament saints. The Rapture is for Church saints, not Old Testament saints. They were raised before the Millennium.

That fits. It's a Jewish economy, and people are saved during the Tribulation, according to premillennial exegesis. They're raised, too, to take part in the Jewish Millennium.

The resurrection of all the dead at the Last Judgment, then, largely concerns unbelievers. Let me do a little bit with Grenz's point. How many times have I said the four verities? I won't do it again, okay? That's what I emphasize.

But Grenz is right. The exegesis is dug, the exegetes are dug in. We're not going to agree.

I hope we could agree on the four points, and accept each other in love, and continue the debates, but whether we can or we can't, the positions seem to be intractable. But, Grenz says we can learn from each of the Millennial positions. I agree.

From Dispensationalism, we learn we need to give attention to the whole Bible, including its prophetic passages. Now, the prophets largely ministered to their contemporaries, but they did speak of the future, and we need to come to terms with that. And, as a matter of fact, Dispensational exegesis and theology has influenced our Millennialism.

Here's the parade example. Anthony Hoekema, in *The Bible in the Future*, concedes our Mills have erred by consistently interpreting Old Testament land promises spiritually. No, he says, sometimes those land promises speak of the new earth.

That is a good, I think, sound concession, based upon not only the exegesis of the Old Testament prophets but of the New Testament exegesis of the same. I appreciate, always, Hoekema's attitudes, but I think that is correct. So, we can learn from each other.

I'm not a post-millennialist, but I'll tell you what: the post-millennial optimism from the gospel is really good. That is, they're breathing the air of the Bible's teaching when they talk about that. Yes, pre-Mills are right.

Scripture says things are going to go from bad to worse, okay? And, although we're limited in our time frame, and I've heard preachers say it over and over again, over decades, you know, this passage in Isaiah exactly speaks of our terrible plight today, like that. You know, everything's always falling apart, but surely today, it looks to us like things are really bad, right? I don't think we have God's perspective, and I agree, I agree, I don't think we have God's perspective on what he's doing in the whole world. So, I still hold an optimistic view of the gospel, but I agree with some of that premillennial pessimism concerning culture and its decay.

I also agree in the reformed principle of trying to renew culture through the gospel and so forth. Anyway, we can learn from all the positions, and I hope we accept one another as God has accepted us in Christ. Romans 15, and I better get that verse down for a change, 15:7. The rapture.

I'm simply going to present the positions. I might say this is a totally a premillennial concern, okay? The question is, when does Jesus' coming occur with reference to the Millennium? Now the question is, we have a premillennial, even a dispensational, we have a dispensational perspective assumed. Within that is the rapture before the tribulation, in the middle of the tribulation, at the end of the tribulation.

The timing of the church's rapture with reference to the tribulation period is a special concern for premillennial, even, not only dispensation, but premillennial eschatology. It becomes an issue with the dispensationalist teaching that there are two stages to

the second coming. The rapture of the church before the tribulation, and the second coming to earth after the tribulation, and before the Millennium.

Since amillennialism, amillennialism, post-millennialism, and historic premillennialism, on the next class break, I want you to say those ten times backward quickly. Agree, post-mill, mills, historic mills, that the second coming is a single event. They also agree that the rapture takes place after the tribulation.

Does Jesus come for his church? Yes. I understand rapture has a special meaning, but if we designate simply his coming for his church as the rapture, then they all believe in the rapture is at the same time as the coming to earth, but, and it occurs after the tribulation. There are three positions on the timing of the rapture within dispensational premillennialism with reference to the tribulation.

Pre-tribulational rapture, mid-tribulational rapture, post-tribulational rapture. Did I tell you we theologians rejoice in this kind of stuff? It keeps us employed. You need us with it.

Anyway, enough of falderol. I'm going to give worthies for each one. Pre-trib, John Walvoord, Dwight Pentecost, Blazing, and Bach.

Mid-trib, J. Oliver Buswell Jr., first president and professor of systematic theology, great Christian man at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis. Post-tribulation rapture, the most famous representative, George Ladd. Another contemporary, Douglas Moo.

There is a book, Zondervan, three views, I think it's three, on the rapture. Moo represents, and argues for post-tribulation premillennialism. I'd like to know his views on some of these.

Anyway, that's enough. Pre-trib rapture, number one, the church will be absent during the tribulation. I'm just going to read references, not even turn.

Matthew 24:31, there's no mention of the church in Revelation 4 through 19. Compare 7, 4, 7, 9. Yeah, but it talks about the saints—no mention of the church.

The seven churches occur in chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 22, the Spirit and the church say, come to the Lord Jesus. Isn't that right? One should not wing these things when one is lecturing or videotaping. Spirit and the bride.

Anyway, that is correct. The word ecclesia, church, does not appear in Revelation 4 through 19. Oh man, Matthew 24:31, I can't help myself.

It looks to me like the one taken and the one left behind. No, it doesn't talk about that. Okay, good, good, good, good, good.

Number two, pre-trib, the church is promised it'll be spared from the coming wrath. 1 Thessalonians 5:9, Revelation 3:10. I think wrath means hell in 1 Thessalonians 5:9, but that's okay.

Three, we must distinguish between Christ's coming in the clouds for the church. 1 Thessalonians 4:15 to 17, and it's coming to earth with the church. Four, Christ can come for his church at any time.

Titus 2:13, we look for the blessed appearance of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Mid-trib rapture, J. Oliver Buswell Jr. There must be others, I don't know. The church will experience a portion of the tribulation, but will be raptured and spared the worst of it.

We must distinguish between tribulation and wrath. The church will experience the former and be spared the latter. It's so funny, I have good friends, and some, this is from years ago, a wonderful man and his wife.

Somehow, this came up. Oh, I said, we just, we believe what the Bible says, and I wasn't being a wiseacre. I said, what is that? The mid-tribulational rapture, of course.

I didn't argue with him. That just shows, man, you can just assume your conclusion, and everything becomes clear. Two, the vials of God's wrath, Revelation, in the book of Revelation, the vials of God's wrath will be poured out after the tribulation of those days.

Coordinating the book of Revelation with Matthew 24:29. Three, the rapture will take place at the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Revelation 11:15 is correlated in this theology with 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

My friend said, obviously it's talking about the same thing. I wasn't sure, and it wouldn't have edified to debate that, and they were into it more than I was. Rapture will take place at the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

Revelation 11:15, compare 1 Thessalonians 4:6. Post-tribulational rapture. I praise George Ladd for doing much good.

Teaching the kingdom of God means the rule of God, not just his rule over an earthly kingdom, which Ladd believed in, but it's the rule and reign of God. It occurs in the Old Testament, and Jesus comes, preaches the kingdom, extends the kingdom, and so forth. We distinguished in our introduction to eschatology between the kingdom in the New Testament.

It was inaugurated in Jesus' earthly ministry through miracles, exorcisms, and messages. It was extended at his pouring out the spirit at Pentecost, and it will only be consummated at his return. Post-tribulational premillennialism.

So, all of these, it's pre-tribulational premillennialism, mid-tribulational dispensational premillennialism, and post-tribulational dispensational premillennialism. Again, I smile and collect my paycheck. The church will be present in the tribulation, although God will protect it, and it will be spared his wrath.

Ladd says, look, look at the Bible. God doesn't take his people out of the world. He cares for them in the midst of the terrible judgments.

The second coming of Christ is a single event. 1 Thessalonians 4:13, and following the rapture passage, is part of 1 Thessalonians 4:13 to 5:11. It's one. Chapter divisions aren't inspired, and it's one coming in which the Lord brings blessing to his people, and relief, relief, and judgment on unbelievers.

Ah, the meaning, apontesis, of 1 Thessalonians 4:17 refers to the church being caught up to meet Christ at the end of the tribulation. Immediately thereafter, it will descend with him to earth in triumph. Compare Matthew 25:6 and Acts 28:15 and 16.

Compare Matthew 25:6 and Acts 28:15 and 16. Our next topic is the resurrection of the body. Some preliminaries, we've actually already taught these things, but systematic theology gathers together things, for the most part, that we already know.

It organizes them. Isn't that dangerous? Yes. If it does so wrongly, it could distort things, but if it does so exegetically and carefully, with a view to God's unfolding story, that is biblical theology, it's a big help, even in exegesis.

The timing of the resurrection is at the end of the age, John 6:39, 40, 44, 54. Repeatedly, Jesus says this. This is his bread-of-life discourse.

The last day, that's the terminology. John's terminology is, this is the will of him who sent me, John 6:39, just reading the first one, first reference, that I should lose nothing of all he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. It's at the end of the age when the resurrection occurs.

I'll tell you when there's disagreement. It's coming up. The resurrection of the body of believers and unbelievers, as a matter of fact, although Scripture speaks more of the former than the latter, it does speak of the latter, as we will see, occurs after the second coming of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:23, as in Adam, so also in Christ shall all be made alive, but each in his own order. Christ the firstfruits, Jesus was raised as the firstfruits of the coming eschatological harvest, his resurrection is thus the resurrection in part already. There's a not-yet full harvest.

Each in his own order, Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming, those who belong to Christ. Very plainly teaching, it's at the coming of Christ a resurrection will occur. And 1st Thessalonians 4, 16 says the same thing.

The dead believers are not going to miss out on the goodies. Paul teaches that they're not going to be denied the future dimension of the kingdom and the blessings associated with it. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the sound of the trumpet, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Before believers go to be with the Lord, the dead are raised, dead believers are raised. Resurrection of the body, timing, at the end of the age, after the second coming of Christ. Here comes debate, in one stage, two stages, or three stages.

One stage, amillennialism and postmillennialism. One general resurrection. Historic premills, two resurrections, Revelation 20.

One before the millennium, one after the millennium. Dispositionalism, three resurrections. One just before the rapture, one before the millennium, one at the end of the very, at the very end.

Unbelievers have to be raised so they can appear before the last judgment. The scope of the resurrection, universal. Daniel 12:2. Sometimes exegesis messes with my theology.

I'm being facetious. At that time shall arise Michael the great prince, who is the Archangel Michael, who is in charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been, since there's been a nation till that time.

Jesus quotes those words in Matthew 24, of the so-called great tribulation, which, other than postmillennialism, is still the future. But at that time, your people will be delivered. Everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. Some to everlasting life, the only Old Testament occurrence of that exact expression. The idea is in other places.

Many of those who sleep, that is, who have died in the dust of the earth, shall awake. Some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Later on we're going to say, these are two eternal destinies already in the Old Testament.

Resurrection to eternal life. Resurrection to shame and everlasting contempt. Does that mean that after they are exterminated, the contempt continues? I don't think so.

That's not a normal reading of the passage. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above. And those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars, forever and ever.

Jesus refers to that business, shining like stars, in some of the parables of the kingdom in Matthew 13. Why did I say this message in my theology? It seems to specifically speak of the many who sleep being raised. The word many doesn't mean not all, always.

But it seems to be a contextual notion of dealing with the great tribulation especially. But I would take that, I would acknowledge that, as I have in, I think, Hell on Trial, maybe two views of hell, to be representative of a general resurrection. The church has taken this historically as the Old Testament antecedent of a general resurrection.

John 5 is as clear as a bell. After speaking of spiritual resurrection, in verses 24 and 25, Jesus says, in verses 28 and 29, do not marvel at this. An hour is coming.

John distinguishes for us between the already and the not yet with terminology. The already is like this. The hour, an hour, is coming and is now, has already come.

An hour is coming and is now here. Other times, he says, an hour is coming. It's beautiful.

He distinguishes the already and not yet. Not always, but sometimes with that very terminology. Do not marvel at this.

An hour is coming. In verse 25, right here. Do not marvel at this.

Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and is now here. When the dead hear the voice of the Son of God, those who are here will live. In light of the verse before it, he's talking about spiritual resurrection.

People are moving at Jesus preaching; they believe in the Father since he so reveals the Father. Jesus preaches that they believe in the Father, and Jesus moves them from death to life. That hour has come.

Old Testament predictions are fulfilled already. Ah, but they're not fulfilled already completely. There's more to come.

Don't marvel at this because an hour is coming. It is not here. When all who are in the tombs will come out, hear his voice, and come out.

Those who have done good to a resurrection of life, those who have done evil to a resurrection of judgment. My point right now is that I know that those who have done good are stumbling you, but for right now, general resurrection, right? The resurrection of life, the resurrection of judgment. What about those who have done evil? That's no problem.

What about those who have done good? I thought we're saved by grace through faith. Salvation from the beginning to the end of the Bible, it gets clear as the story moves along, is by grace alone through faith alone. In God alone, in the New Testament, in Christ alone.

Those who have done good, think about it, and we'll deal with this later under the last judgment. What is the basis of judgment in the Bible? Consistently, it is based upon deeds. I didn't always teach this.

I started becoming a Hell-meister, studying Hell. It's in every passage, almost. It's never contradicted.

What do you mean? Isn't judgment based on faith? James 2 helps me out. Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by works. The first is an impossibility.

How can you show faith without evidence? What shows up at the last judgment, if I do a complete study, is thoughts, words, and deeds, especially deeds. Erga, the Greek word works or deeds, is in passage after passage. As you might imagine, the foundation is in the Old Testament Psalms.

Jesus quotes that in his own ministry. The apostles. The big last judgment passage is Revelation 20.

The dead were judged according to their deeds. Deeds reveal thoughts, words, and deeds reveal the presence or the absence of faith. In any case, Herman Ridderbos, this is my favorite book on Paul.

It's dated, but it is so good. He introduced me to the indicative and the imperative. You're already in the not yet.

He said that he's a Dutchman, but he didn't say it, but Americans read the Bible individualistically. He didn't say that. I say that as I read when he says Paul's thought is corporate.

He's right. The thought of the whole Bible is corporate. First of all, of course, it's individual.

Anyway, Ridderbos blows me away. He's got a chapter titled, Judgment According to Works. We don't read our theology into the Bible.

We read our theology out of the Bible. It's called exegetical theology. Is that contradicting salvation by grace through faith? It is not.

It is not salvation. It is judgment. Judgment is based upon what people do, revealing whether they have been saved by grace through faith or not.

Anyway, my point right here is John 5:28, 29. There is a general. This teaches a general resurrection of a universal general resurrection of the saved and the lost.

And Acts 24. Paul is in trouble, and he pulls out a trump card to divide the Jewish groups against the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Oh, he's a sly devil this time.

I'm speaking figuratively, of course. Acts 24, 15. He's before Felix at Caesarea.

It's getting hot. His enemies really hate him and want to put him away. But Acts 24:14.

But this I confess to you, Paul says, is according to the way in the book of Acts, it's a way. It's a way of speaking of believers and their lifestyle. It's one of the ways I'm stuck.

It's one of the methods Luke uses. It's part of the vocabulary he uses to speak of the Christian faith in action. According to the way which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the law and written in the prophets.

So far, so good. Having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept. Now comes a zinger.

That there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. Sadducees. That ticks them off.

He's deliberately tweaking their beaks, pulling their beards to cause strife between his accusers. Anyway. Revelation 20:11, 15.

It is generally taken to speak of the resurrection of everybody. The lost and the saved. I believe all the eschatological positions will agree with that.

In our next lecture, we will discuss the fascinating and important issue concerning the nature of the resurrection body.

This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on Doctrines of the Church and Last Things. This is session 17, The Millennium, Revelation 20:4-6, Dispensational Premillennialism, and Three Rapture Positions.