



SERIES: October “Back to the Future”

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Saturday, 10/16/2021

Scripture: Revelation 20:4-5

TITLE: Jesus’ Return: Pretrib or Posttrib?

Alright, I expect this to be a clean fight. So no low blows. And keep the gloves on.

This seems to be appropriate advice for our topic today. As we've discussed, the return of Christ is a much-debated topic. And there is likely not a more fiery debate than that of Christ's return and whether it is before or after the tribulation. And, I'll just be honest, it saddens me that people can become so dogmatic about a non-salvific topic.

Does Jesus' return matter? Yes. Does it matter when? Sure. It matters to God. But it does not determine our salvation nor our value to God. So let's approach today's time with humility and grace.

So when will Jesus return? We discussed the a-mil and post-mil positions yesterday. Today let's look at the two popular versions of pre-millennialism: pretrib millennialism and historical pre-mil.

Revelation 20:4-5 (CSB) says:

“Then I saw thrones, and people seated on them who were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and who had not accepted the mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed.”

According to pre-tribulational premillennialism, the present church age will continue until, suddenly, unexpectedly, and secretly, Christ will return part way to earth and then will call believers to Himself. This secret return and rapture are formed around 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. Paul writes:

“For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel’s voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.”

This view defends that a secret rapture will occur, and then a seven-year period of tribulation will occur. The many signs the Bible describes before Christ's return will occur here. The pre-

trib position became popular in the 1800s and has continued through the writings of Tim LaHaye and Hal Lindsey.

The alternative is what scholars call historic or classical pre-mil. It's called this because it dates back to the early church fathers. It states that Christians will endure the tribulation, and then Christ will return and catch up the believers with Christ. These usher in the millennial kingdom. Historic pre-mils view 1 Thessalonians 4 as a public event that is not a secret. They also view Christ returning once and not twice.

So who has it right? I may lean towards one, but I think the point is Christ is coming back and will resurrect the believers, establish His Kingdom, deliver judgment, and finalize the renewal process. The point is God can be trusted.

So I have no doubt you have more questions. Put them in the comments below. But my encouragement and challenge for you are to trust God that He will fulfill what He has promised. It doesn't matter if we get pulled out before the tribulation or after. Christ promised to come back and finish the job. We can trust Him in everything He has promised.

We can trust Him in all matters, and that will impact how we live today and tomorrow. There is no doubt God can be trusted. So let's trust Him. When we do, friend, we will win the day.