

Four Views of the End Times Glossary

666 Number of the beast, recorded in Revelation 13:18. Neither Greek nor Hebrew had a written system of numbers. Instead, each letter of the alphabet indicated a different number. Many scholars have noted that, in Hebrew, the number of Emperor Nero's name is 666. (Nero reigned AD 54-68. He was the first emperor to persecute Christians.) Perhaps the best approach to the number is to remember that *six* is a symbol of incompleteness; 666 would, therefore, indicate absolute imperfection.

144,000 Group of believers who endure the great tribulation (Revelation 7:14). Some students believe that these persons are literally 144,000 Jews—12,000 from each tribe—who trust in Jesus Christ (see Revelation 7:4-9).¹ Others point out that, after the Assyrians conquered Israel (722 BC), ten of the tribes ceased to exist. Furthermore, in the New Testament, "Israel" and "twelve tribes" frequently refer to Christians (Rom. 9:6-8; Gal. 6:16; James 1:1; see also Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30). So, this group could symbolize the church on earth. In this case, the number would symbolize the people of God (12) multiplied by the people of God (12) multiplied by greatness (1,000)—in other words, the full number of God's people who endure to the end.²

antichrist (From Greek, *antichristos*, in place of Christ) Anyone who denies the apostle's teachings about Jesus Christ (1 John 2:18-22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7). Specifically, the antichrist is a Satanic counterfeit of Jesus Christ, described as "lawless" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-8) and as a "beast" (Revelation 13:1-18; 17:3-17). The antichrist may be a specific person who rises to power during the tribulation. Or, the antichrist may be a symbol of the false teachers and leaders who will arise when the end of the age draws near.

apocalyptic literature (From Greek, *apokalypsis*, revealing) Form of literature that uses extravagant, symbolic imagery to describe God's ultimate triumph over evil. Apocalyptic passages appear in Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. Most of the book of Revelation is apocalyptic literature.

Armageddon (From Hebrew, *Har-Megiddon*, Mount Megiddo) The city of Megiddo was located between the Plain of Jezreel and the western coast of Israel. Deborah, Gideon, Saul, Ahaziah, and Josiah fought decisive battles near Megiddo. So, the valley of Megiddo became the symbol of a point of decisive conflict. Based on the reference to "Armageddon" in Revelation 16:16, some students believe that a literal battle will occur near Megiddo. Others, however, point out that there is no such place as *Mount Megiddo*; Megiddo lies in a broad plain.³ These students understand the reference to Armageddon as a symbol of the ultimate conflict between good and evil.

Church age The time period from the beginning of the church (about AD 30) until Jesus Christ returns for everyone who has trusted in Him, as promised in John 14.

eschatology (From Greek, *eschatos*, final) Study of the Bible's teachings about events leading to Christ's second coming.

final judgement The event described in Revelation 20:11 -15, when God resurrects all people, judges them, and delivers them to their eternal destinies.

first coming of Christ The earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ, about 4 BC-AD 30.

mark of the beast Indication of a person's allegiance to antichrist (Rev. 13:16,17). The people of God receive a similar mark, indicating their allegiance to Christ (Revelation 7:3; 9:4; 14:1; 22:4). Some premillennialists believe that the mark of the beast will be an actual mark, required by the the antichrist. Other interpreters of Revelation understand the mark as a reference to a person's deeds ("hand") and beliefs ("forehead"). "Hand" and "forehead" carry this meaning in Exodus 13:9,16.

millennium (From Latin, *milte*, thousand) Christ's reign on earth, described in Revelation 20:4-6. Premillennialists believe that the millennium is a future event and that Christ will return *before* (pre-) the millennium. Amillennialists treat the millennium as a symbol of Christ's present reign among His people. Postmillennialists believe that Christ will return after (post-) the millennium.

rapture (From Latin, *raptus*, carry away) Event described in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, when Christ will return for His people. Dispensational premillennialists say the rapture and the second coming of Christ are two events. They place the rapture *before* the tribulation and the second coming *a/ter* the tribulation. Historic premillennialists say that the rapture and second coming are one event.

resurrection of the dead - All those who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ during the Church Age, and have died before Jesus returns, will be resurrected at the rapture. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 – “And the dead in Christ will rise first.”

second coming The bodily return of Jesus Christ to earth, to reign as king.

tribulation, great Time-period when severe calamities besiege the world and persons who remain faithful to Christ will suffer intense persecution (see Revelation 7:14). Amillennialists and many postmillennialists treat the tribulation as a symbol of the calamities and persecutions that have occurred throughout church history. Premillennialists place the tribulation at the end of time. Some premillennialists believe the tribulation will last exactly seven years. Other premillennialists view the seven years as a symbol of the completeness of God's dealings with the world.

¹ Hal Lindsey, *There's A New World Coming* (Santa Ana: Vision, 1973) 112-125; J. Vernon McGee, *Revelation Chapters 6-13 in Thru the Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Nelson, 1991) 64-69.

²George E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 11 7; Herschel Hobbs, "Amillennialism," in *Revelation: Three Viewpoints* (Nashville: Broadman, 1977) 99.

^Bruce M. Metzger, *Breaking the Code* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993) 84; Leon Morris, *The Revelation of St. John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 200; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) 302.