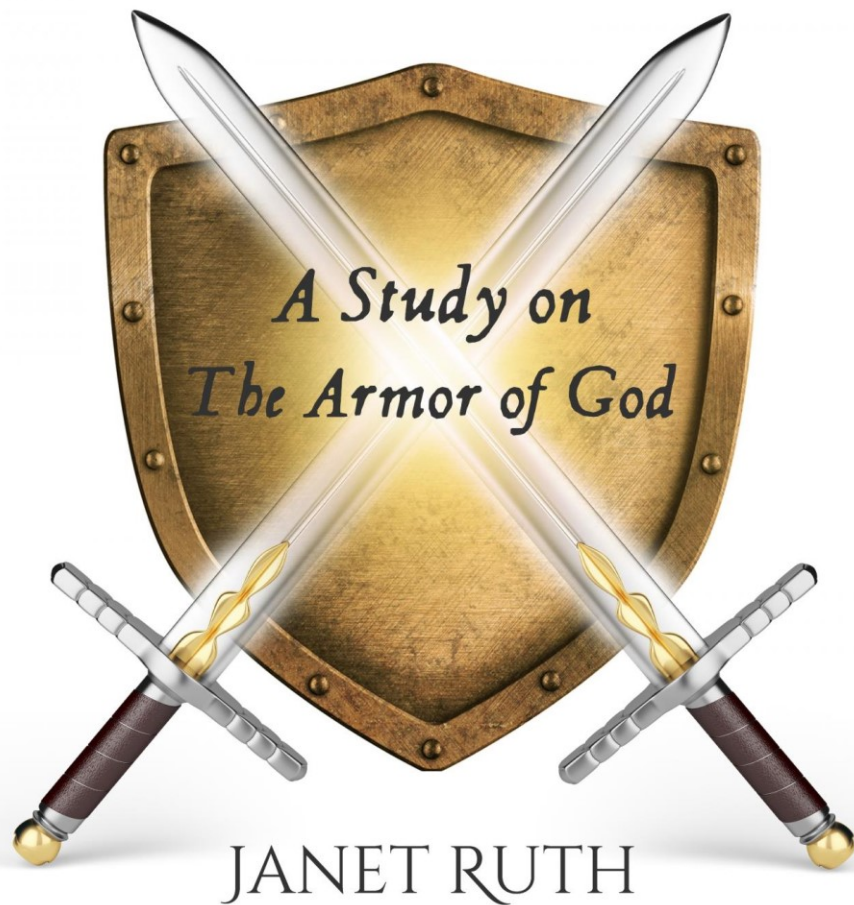


# STANDING FIRM



Additional Chapter Resources and Activities  
for Group Leaders

## Chapter One: War and Remembrance

### Opening activity:

To get things started, print out the matching game on the next page and make copies for everyone in the group. Don't forget to print the answers for yourself. For more interaction, you can divide into small groups with one matching game for each group and see which one gets the most correct answers.

### Opening discussion:

Ask group members to share their memories of any of the tragedies listed in the matching game. What do they remember about their reactions on the day of the event? How do they feel about those events today?

### Other discussion points:

Look up and read aloud Genesis 3:1-24. Consider each part of the punishment God rendered for Adam and Eve's sin (listed on page 6 of the book). This punishment, or curse, is still active in today's world, even for Christians. There is still pain in childbirth; it still takes hard work to grow food and manage our environment; men and women still battle to understand each other and live in harmony; our bodies still die. How can being a Christian change our perspective on these difficulties?

Consider the verses on page 9 under **Consider** and have the group come up with examples of persecution in the world today. These can include actions affecting your group, such as a local or national attempt to undermine Christianity, but also think of situations involving persecution in other countries. Using the verses on pages 9 and 10 under **Look Up**, discuss what kind of attitude we should have toward persecution.

Look at the website mentioned on page 11, [www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com) (Voice of the Martyrs). In addition to praying for persecuted Christians, is there anything your group can do to support Christians living under persecution?

### For the young at heart:



A "Just for Fun" Activity: It's hard to think about wars and battles and persecution without being a bit depressed or anxious. Playing some sort of "war" game before or after your study can help everyone relax. Try having a nerf gun battle, play steal the flag, or try this interesting form of tag: [GROG!](#)

## Chapter One – Matching Game

United States history has experienced numerous unforeseen attacks and tragedies. See if you can match the following events with the date they occurred or began:

December 7, 1941	Bombing at Boston Marathon kills 3 and injures more than 170 people
October 8, 1962	Bombing of Oklahoma City Federal Building kills 168
November 22, 1963	Columbine High School shootings - 15 dead and 23 wounded
March 30, 1981	Hurricane Katrina; 80% of New Orleans flooded
April 19, 1995	Shooter kills 20 children and 6 adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School
April 20, 1999	Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor
September 11, 2001	Hurricane Sandy causes at least 132 deaths and an estimated 82 billion in damages
August 30, 2005	49 killed, 58 injured in Orlando nightclub shooting
August 3, 2019	9 killed by a shooter in Charleston, S.C. church
February 9, 2012	22 killed & 24 wounded by a gunman at El Paso Walmart
December 14, 2012	Attempted assassination of Ronald Reagan
April 15, 2013	Assassination of President Kennedy
June 12, 2016	59 killed, more than 500 injured in Las Vegas mass shooting
June 18, 2015	Cuban missile crisis
September 20, 2017	9/11 terrorist attacks – over 3000 killed
October 1, 2017	Hurricane Maria leads to thousands of deaths within a year in Puerto Rico

## Chapter One – Matching Game answers

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## Chapter Two: Getting Ready

### Opening activity:

In small groups, build structures from dominoes or playing cards. Have a contest to see who can build the highest structure. When the groups are done, see how easily their structures fall down by shaking the table. Or, let each group knock down a structure made by a different group by rolling small rubber balls or throwing wads of paper at them.

### Opening discussion:

In the first chapter, we talked about how hard it is to be prepared for the unknown. Yet we often feel unprepared to deal with things we *know* we will struggle within our lives, such as temptations to sin, bad attitudes, and finding time every day to pray and read God's Word. Ask some of your group members to share a spiritual struggle they face. Then ask others to share a verse or story in the Bible to inspire them to keep trying.

### Other discussion points:

Most of this book speaks to individuals who are trying to gain spiritual victory over the enemy, but the book of Nehemiah reminds us that this should be a group effort. Take an honest look at your church or group of believers and ask, how well are we doing at helping individuals find victory over sin and the difficulties of life? In what ways could we be more effective? As individuals, are we sharing our needs and spiritual struggles with our fellow believers? If you're holding back, what's the reason?

See if your group can find additional references in the New Testament to the command to "stand firm." Four are mentioned in this chapter, but there are many more!

Help your group find Christian resources in your area. Are there any Christian bookstores where you can find good books and music? Are there live events you can attend? Click here to [Find a Christian radio station near you!](#) Social media is another great place to find Christian encouragement. Search for hashtags such as #Christianblogs or #scripture and follow the ones you like.

### For the young at heart:



If you have more time on your hands and a group with more energy, try this variation of the opening activity. Challenge two or more groups to make a building out of dominoes or playing cards on different tables separated by at least 5 feet. Have a "no man's land" between the tables where no players may enter. Give each group spoons and something small and hard like wrapped candies, and allow the teams to lob the items at the other teams in an attempt to knock down their buildings.

## Chapter Three: The Belt of Truth

### Opening activity:

I hope you didn't cringe when you read the first paragraphs of this chapter. You don't *have* to play dodge ball. Although if you lead an active group (youth, young adults, the young at heart), a good game of dodge ball will get you in the spirit for this chapter. But I do have another suggestion for an opening activity that won't cause any bruising – coloring! Many people are visual learners and they remember things best when they create something visual. Look for an Armor of God coloring page online, print it out, bring in crayons or markers, and have fun!

### Opening discussion:

Speaking of dodge ball, let your group describe their experiences with the game (or sports in general). Are they intense players, half-hearted stand-ins, or “don't let me get hit” avoiders?

### Other discussion points:

The first line on page 26 says that sometimes Satan can “discourage us enough that we take ourselves out of the game and sit on the sidelines.” Have you ever been trying to do something good but felt so discouraged that you wanted to quit? Or have you been hurt by someone you were trying to help and you wanted to give up? Did you realize these experiences were part of a spiritual battle?

Satan's lies are everywhere, and many of them are targeted at who Jesus was, whether the Bible is true, and what God wants from us. As a group, make a list of some of the things you have heard about God, Jesus, or the Bible which trouble you. Don't try to analyze them now; just list them. Then consider planning a future Bible study or two around finding the truth about these troubling claims.

What are you doing to study and learn God's Word? If you have a system that works for you, that gets you into the Bible on a regular basis, share it with your group. If you struggle to find time for the Bible, or you don't get much out of daily readings, share that with your group. Then encourage each other to make Bible study an important part of your life.

### Additional resources:



Consider reading through the Bible in a year using a list or an online reading tool: [www.biblestudytools.com/bible-reading-plan/](http://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-reading-plan/) or [biblegateway.com/reading-plans/](http://biblegateway.com/reading-plans/)

It's also great to subscribe to an e-mail devotional such as:

My Daily Bread - [odb.org/email-sign-up/](http://odb.org/email-sign-up/)

Christian Devotions - [christiandevotions.us/](http://christiandevotions.us/)

K-Love - [ww2.klove.com/ministry/verse-of-the-day](http://ww2.klove.com/ministry/verse-of-the-day)

## Chapter Four: The Breastplate of Righteousness

### Opening activity:

Try a balancing activity today to remind your group how hard it is to keep everything in balance and not let things fall. Group members can take turns walking around with a book (or multiple books) on their heads. Or try a game of 'pass the plate.' Give each person at a table an item of unusual shape. (The fewer people playing, the larger the items will have to be.) One person places their item on a flimsy paper plate and passes it to the next person who places their item on the plate and passes it on again until the plate is very full and hard to handle without items falling off. The plate has to be held at all times - no setting it down. If you have multiple groups playing, the one that goes the longest without dropping any items wins!

### Opening discussion:

Ask group members to share what they were taught about doing good works when they were growing up. Were good works important, necessary, or not important at all in their minds?

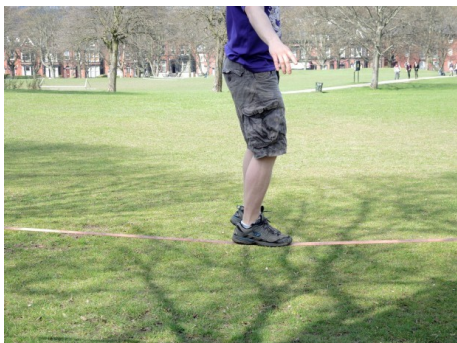
### Other discussion points:

On pages 41-42 we see that righteousness is about more than what we do or don't do. Our motivation and attitudes are important, too. Look up and read aloud 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 and Galatians 5:22-26. Discuss what are the right reasons for doing good based on these verses. What are some wrong reasons?

Consider the list in the middle of page 45. Ask your group if anyone is willing to share a time being disobedient to God led to one of these consequences.

Read again the verses at the bottom of page 48. If Jesus is living in us and through us, it should be easy for us to be "the light of the world" since Jesus' love and power will shine through us. Discuss practical ways your group members can be a light in their world. What things can they do - big things or little things - to shine a light that might lead someone to Jesus?

### For the young at heart:



There are two tightrope illustrations in this chapter, so why not try out your own tightrope balancing act? Have group members walk along a narrow line (a line on a basketball court or a parking lot or a piece of tape on the ground) without stepping off. To make it more difficult, try carrying a number of things of different sizes, shapes, and weights, representing the things we try to hold onto and carry through life - material possessions, power, popularity, wealth, etc.

## Chapter Five: The Gospel of Peace

### Opening activity:

This week I recommend trying something more serious for your opening activity. Give each person a small piece of paper and a pen or pencil and ask them to write a few words about something troubling them right now - some difficulty, challenge, illness, doubt or fear. Have them fold up the paper and hold it close to their hearts while the group leader prays in general for each person present. Ask God to provide guidance, comfort, help, and - most of all - peace for each person. Then ask each person to rip up their paper and throw it away, reminding them to leave in God's hands what they have placed there and to trust him for the answer to their prayers.

### Discussion points:

Have someone read out loud the quote from the World War II soldier on page 55. What do you think he meant when he said he, "after that, I wasn't scared"? Does it help us face difficult situations in our life when we remember that God is in control?

Compare the list of negative emotions on page 60 to the circumstances Paul wrote about on pages 64-65. Could Paul have suffered from any of these emotions? Instead of dwelling on negative emotions, what did Paul focus on? How can we encourage one another to stay focused on the good news of the gospel instead of on the negative things in our lives? Think of some specific actions and make a commitment to help each other keep focused on God.

Sometimes reading about people in the Bible can seem like reading about characters in a fairy tale. It helps to learn about people in more modern times who have gone through terrible circumstances but kept their faith in God. Two of my favorite Christian role models are Corrie Ten Boom (author of *The Hiding Place* and many other books) and Gladys Aylward, missionary to China. Among your group, share who your Christian role models are. If you have books about these Christian heroes, why not share them or offer them to your church library to inspire others?

### For the young at heart:



Find numerous items big enough for someone to put on one foot but difficult to walk in - shoe boxes, paper or plastic bags, plastic bins, wastebaskets, cardboard boxes, etc. Create a racecourse (straight, round, or with obstacles to go around) and divide your group into teams. With all the odd items in one pile between the two teams, have one member from each team grab an item, put it on their foot, and run the racecourse. When the first team member returns to the line, the second team member chooses an item, puts in on their foot and takes off. The first team to have everyone come back to the starting line (with the items still on their feet) wins! Smaller groups can have team members put items on both feet; larger groups can reuse items, making it harder as the items rip or fall apart.



## Chapter Six: The Shield of Faith

### Opening activity:

Divide your group into three or more teams. Have each team choose a “champion” who will answer questions for the team. Then engage the champions in a short trivia contest, with a prize going to the team represented by the winning champion. (Candy is always agreeable.) I found some fun, printable trivia games you can choose from at [https://quiz.lovetoknow.com/Printable\\_Fun\\_Trivia\\_Questions](https://quiz.lovetoknow.com/Printable_Fun_Trivia_Questions)

### Opening discussion:

Ask members of the winning team how it felt to put their faith in their champion. Why did they choose that champion? Then ask the same question of the teams that did not win. Did they have faith in their champion? Was their faith enough to win the game?

### Other discussion points:

Faith is a popular topic these days, but many people focus more on their faith than the thing in which their faith is placed. What do you think people really mean when they say, “Just have faith”? What is a good way to respond if someone says that to us?

It can be hard to have faith that God will provide for our needs when we don’t receive the things we pray for. Ask your group members to share a time when they continued to trust God even when it seemed he wasn’t answering their prayers. If you have time, discuss some of the Faith Warriors in Hebrews 11 who had to wait a long time to receive what God had promised.

The end of the chapter talks about the need for Christians to stand together and strengthen each other. Ask the group if anyone thinks their team would have done better in the trivia game if everyone on the team would have been allowed to offer answers!

### For the young at heart:



For a younger group with lots of energy, a good game of Red Rover helps to illustrate the importance of standing strong together. For other groups, you can choose a more difficult trivia game and allow everyone on the teams to help.

[http://www.gameskidsplay.net/GAMES/strength\\_games/redrover.htm](http://www.gameskidsplay.net/GAMES/strength_games/redrover.htm)

## Chapter Seven: The Helmet of Salvation

### Opening activity:

Why not start this session with a scavenger hunt? Bring in several newspapers, magazines, and/or catalogs and divide them among a few teams. Give each team a copy of the list on the next page. Give the teams ten minutes to find as many items on the list as they can. In the last minute, allow them to use their phones or tablets as well.

### Opening discussion:

Choose one or two advertisements and ask how the group feels about them. What emotions do the advertisements appeal to? Does the appeal work? Does anyone want to buy these products?

### Other discussion points:

There is a discussion on page 87 about the difference between (1) being saved from the penalty of our sins and (2) being saved in our daily struggles with Satan. Take some time to make sure everyone in your group understands the difference. It's possible that not everyone in the group will agree on the issue of eternal salvation, but move the focus to the topic of the chapter, which is our daily struggles against temptation. You may wish to come back to the issue of eternal salvation another time and review the plan of salvation outlined in the appendix to the book.

The topic of marriage “as God designed it” is mentioned on page 92. This is a sensitive subject for many people. Try to avoid getting side-tracked from the main point of the chapter, but remember that not all Christians agree on what the Bible teaches on marriage.

The “Consider” question on page 96 can lead to another detour. The point of this chapter is not to discuss how our society should behave or what laws the government should impose. It is about how *Christians* should behave. We need to make good choices to guard our minds against the garbage of the world regardless of how the world around us acts. In what ways might our individual choices affect our society in general?



### For the young at heart:

Younger groups may have a more difficult time with this chapter than older groups. They may not see the point of giving up TV shows, movies, and games their peers enjoy. Challenge the group to give up something for the duration of this Bible study (three more weeks, if you're meeting weekly). With everyone's input, make a list of things on TV or the Internet that have questionable values, and have each group member choose one thing to give up. At the end of the Bible study, anyone who has failed in the challenge gets a bucket of ice water dumped on them (or another suitable consequence).

Scavenger List:

Find the following items for sale and mark where you found it.

	Newspaper	Magazine	Catalog	Internet	Other
Shoes					
A house					
Curtains					
Tickets to an event					
A stuffed animal					
Jewelry					
A car					
A cell phone					
A board game					
An apron					
A book					
A robot					
A living plant					
Internet service					
Sunglasses					
Any type of school supplies					
A chair					
Hair supplies					
Handyman services					
Cake!					

## Chapter Eight: The Sword of the Spirit

### Opening activity:

Remind everyone to bring a Bible with them to class this week and have a few extras just in case. It's time for a Bible drill! Have each person hold a Bible on their lap, then read a Bible citation (such as John 1:1 or Isaiah 9:6) and shout "Go!" The first person to find the verse should stand or raise their hand and read it aloud. If they found the correct verse, they receive a point. You can play to a certain number of points or for a certain time and then give an award to the person(s) with the most point.

### Opening discussion:

Ask group members what type of Bible they prefer to read and what version they use. Why do some prefer to read the Bible on their phone or tablet while others like a print version? How many in the group use a study Bible with notes or look up information on passages using an online tool like [www.BibleGateway.com](http://www.BibleGateway.com)?

### Other discussion points:

Many Christians think of their faith as something to comfort and protect them. We look to the Bible for words of encouragement and hope. Ask group members to give an example of a time they used God's Word to fight the lies of the enemy and help them overcome a difficult situation.

Page 104 provides three examples of the apostles standing up against false teachers in the early church. Do you think it's still important to defend the truth of the Bible in our churches today? How can we do that?

Christian churches of different denominations vary in how open they are to the work of the Holy Spirit. Some churches place great emphasis on the Holy Spirit while others rarely mention him. If your church or denomination has a statement of faith or list of core beliefs, what does it say about the Holy Spirit?

### For the young at heart:



Divide your group into teams. Print a copy of the next 2 pages for each team and cut the pages apart so only one or two words are on each piece. Mix up the order of the words and provide one set for each team. Have them race to unscramble the words and put them in the correct order with the Bible citation.

If you have more time and energy, print the pages for each team using a different color of paper. Hide the words around the room or a larger designated area. Assign a color to each team and have them race to find the words printed on their color paper, unscramble them, and put them in the correct order.

**The Lord is my shepherd; I  
shall not want. Psalm 23:1  
Rejoice in the Lord  
always; again I say,  
rejoice! Philipppians 4:4**

**For God so loved the world  
that he gave his one and  
only Son, that whoever  
believes in him shall not  
perish but have eternal  
life. John 3:16**

## Chapter Nine: All Kinds of Prayer

### Opening activity:

The Telephone Game is a simple activity to open this session. Directions and variations of the game can be found at <https://icebreakerideas.com/telephone-game/>. You can have one or more circles, depending on how large your group is.

### Opening discussion:

If you had more than one group playing the Telephone Game, ask each group to share something funny about their experience with the game.

### Other discussion points:

Sometimes our prayers can feel stale and empty. Why not try mixing it up? Ask group members to share their preferences for prayer time. Do they pray early in the morning, at bedtime, or any time of day? Do they kneel, sit, close their eyes? What do they call God when they pray? Heavenly Father, Abba, Jesus, or something else? Make a list of the different ways people pray, then ask group members to commit to making one change in their prayer life this week—just to see how it feels.

Discuss different ways we can make sure our prayers are not self-centered and self-serving. What language can we add to our prayers to change the focus from meeting our needs to learning God's will?

Look at the protective armor listed on page 119. How can remembering our armor help us pray more effectively?

### For the young at heart:



Practice your communication skills with the Blindfold Game. You will need an open area for this game and moveable obstacles such as chairs and boxes.

Divide your players into teams of two. Tie a blindfold on one member of each team and have them stand at one end of the designated area. Then construct an obstacle course out of the chairs, boxes, and other items. The second member of each team must guide the blindfolded member through the course by calling out directions from a distance. You can have each team go separately through a narrow obstacle course or have several teams try to navigate a wider course at the same time. When everyone reaches the other side, have the team members switch roles, rearrange the obstacles, and have the teams work their way back to the starting point.

## Chapter Ten: The Final Battle

Congratulations! You've made it to the last chapter. This is a challenging one, and I hope you will spend time in prayer preparing your own heart before meeting with your group. Pray for your group members as well.

### Opening discussion:

Since this is the end of this study, let's talk about endings. Ask group members to share the title of a favorite story from a book or movie. Then ask those who shared if they liked the story because of how it started or because of how it ended? Most of us will not think of a story as a favorite if we didn't like the ending. A good ending is very important! Have everyone turn back to **page 5** of the book and ask someone to read the bolded sentence at the bottom of the page: *"Right now, we're in the middle of the story conflict abounds and all is frightening and uncertain—except to those who have read to the end of the book."* Now, let's finish this book.

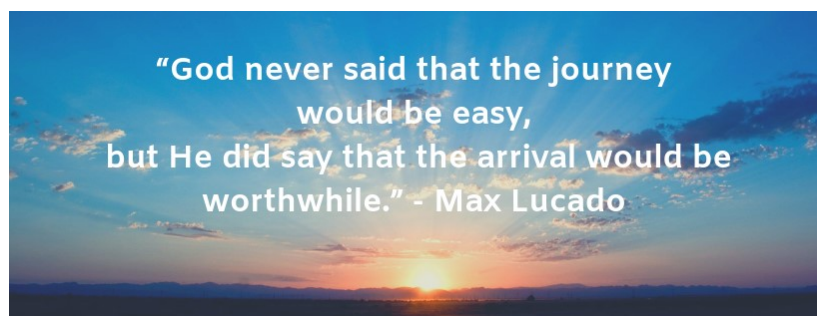
### Reading suggestions:

During this study, you may have been reading the chapter aloud during meetings or having everyone read on their own before the meeting. For this chapter, I suggest you read at least some of the sections out loud.

- Ask different group members to read aloud the bullet points on page 128.
- Have different group members read aloud the blessings on pages 136-37.
- Have one person read the sentences on pages 138-39 while everyone reads in unison each "Do you trust him?" line.

### Other discussion points:

The "end times" is a difficult subject to cover, partly because Christians have very different ideas about what the Bible has to say about our future. I've included a synopsis of the three major beliefs about the end times on the next pages. (It's an excerpt of a new book I've written but not yet published.) You may share this information with your group if you wish, but then try to get back to the point of the chapter. The point is this—no matter what the future holds, we need to be ready for whatever the enemy throws our way, and being ready means trusting our God and standing firm in our faith.





### Three Views on the End Times – an excerpt from a book by Janet Ruth

One of the hallmarks of Christianity is the hope for a future in which sin, death, evil, and sorrow have been defeated. We look forward to a day when God “will wipe every tear from [our] eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Revelation 21:4). However, Christians differ widely in their understanding of what is still to come before we are able to celebrate that eternal victory.

Much of this disagreement centers on the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible. Some Christians believe the book is mostly prophetic, explaining what will happen in the future during the “end times” of our earth in its present form. Others believe the book does not contain actual prophecy but was written about events which happened during the first century after Jesus’ death and resurrection. It’s not just the words of Revelation under scrutiny, but also prophecies contained in the Old Testament books of Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Zechariah and the words of Jesus and Paul in the New Testament which may point to a future fulfillment.

Most Christians do believe Jesus will return to earth at some point in the future. There are three main thoughts on the timing of that great day.

**Premillennialism:** The term “premillennial” refers to a belief that the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth will occur *before* a millennial period described in Revelation 20 and *directly after* the Great Tribulation described in Revelation 6-18. Most who adhere to this view believe there will be a literal 1,000 year time period (a millennium) when Jesus will personally live on the earth and rule over all the nations of the world. Satan will literally be bound and unable to deceive the inhabitants of the world until the end of the 1,000 years.

Christ will reign with his saints here on earth prior to the establishment of the eternal new heavens and new earth. The millennial reign will be characterized by international peace and justice resulting from the universal enforced rule of Christ over saved and unsaved alike. At the end of this time, Satan’s brief period of freedom will put humanity to one final test just before the final judgment.<sup>i</sup>

There is much debate about the events of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21-22; Revelation 7:14) and whether Christians will live through this horrible time or be raptured before it begins (supernaturally snatched up from the earth to meet Jesus in the sky) (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). There is also debate about who will reign with Jesus in the millennial kingdom.

**Postmillennialism:** Another view is that the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20 refers to a real historical period which will *precede* the second coming of Jesus to earth. It may refer to a specific time period in the future, or it could refer to the full length of time following Jesus’ return to heaven as the Kingdom of God has spread around the world (giving 1,000 years a symbolic rather than a literal meaning). In this view, the Great Tribulation spoken of by Jesus and the author of Revelation is seen as a past event, probably the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD and the dispersion of the Jewish people out of Judea, and only the final two chapters of Revelation remain as future events.

Most Christians in this group believe Jesus will return to earth to usher in a final judgment (Revelation 20:7-15) and the “new heaven and new earth” (Revelation 21) but only after the requirements of the millennial period are fulfilled.

The 1,000 years of peace will be accomplished through no other agency than that which is already in possession of the church, i.e. the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. The world will become Christianized, either as the result of worldwide revival and mass conversions, or through the imposition of Christian ideals by converted rulers and Christian governments—or both.<sup>ii</sup>

**Amillennialism:** Augustine of Hippo was one of the early church fathers who discarded the idea of a literal millennial kingdom and became an amillennialist (no millennium). In this view, the battles and tribulation throughout Revelation are usually seen as symbolic references to the ongoing spiritual struggle between God’s people and the forces of evil. The millennial kingdom of Revelation 20 is believed to refer to the entire Church age, the time between Jesus’ ascension to heaven and the end of time. Some who hold this view believe that Jesus already “returned” to judge Israel in 70 AD and has continued to be “present” in the lives of believers ever since then. Others expect Jesus to come again at the end of the world to usher in a final judgment and a new earth.

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<sup>i</sup> Gregg, Steve. *Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated*. Thomas Nelson, 2013, pp. 46-47.

<sup>ii</sup> Gregg, p. 517.