

Defending the Pre-Trib Rapture



By Chris Schang

One of the most hot-button topics in Bible Prophecy is the timing of the rapture of the church. The rapture of the church is a secret event in which the Lord Jesus Christ comes in the air to "rapture" or "snatch up" his church age believers and take them to Heaven to the place prepared for them since he left Earth almost 2,000 years ago. The Bible makes this promise in John 14:1-4:

Jhn 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

Jhn 14:2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Jhn 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also.

Jhn 14:4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

As we can see from the above scriptures the Lord has promised to "come again" to take believers to the place he has prepared for them in Heaven. The rapture of the church is a secret event in that it can happen at anytime since the First Coming. One of the most common mistakes made when studying the rapture is that people oftentimes confuse it with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. While the rapture of the church can happen at anytime, the Second Coming on the otherhand can't occur until certain events have taken place on Earth (Matt. 24:29-30). These events are mainly the seven year covenant made between Israel and the Antichrist, the Abomination of Desolation, and basically the rest of the Tribulation period. The fact that the rapture of the church occurs before the Tribulation or 70th week of Daniel is why it is referred to as the pre-tribulational rapture.

While some individuals maintain a pre-wrath, mid-trib, and post-trib rapture timing view, it is my opinion that after studying the scriptures, the only view that is sound and in line with God's word is that of the pre-tribulational rapture. Some of the more popular pre-trib rapture verses are listed below:

Matthew 24:44 "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh"

1Th 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1Th 4:17 Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1 Thes. 1:9-10 They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead? Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

1 Thes. 5:9 ?God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.?

The above verses show that the rapture of the church is an event that God uses to remove believers from the Earth before he pours out his wrath on unbelievers, which will be both unrepentant Jews and Gentiles. The purpose of Tribulation period is to punish unbelieving Israel and unrepentant Gentiles who have turned away from the God and delighted in their wicked ways. For almost 2,000 years Israel has refused to accept the Messiah named Jesus Christ who was the promised Messiah that God said he would send to save the world from their sins. As we know from Bible history, the Jewish authorities of almost 2,000 years ago crucified him in stead of accepting him. However, God knew this would happen and in turn used this rejection to serve as the basis for church age of salvation of grace through faith in the completed work of Jesus on the Cross. Jesus served as the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world for all of those who would believe in Him.

As a result of this work on the Cross, those that believe in Jesus are made righteous by having God's righteousness imputed to them through grace through faith in Jesus Christ. As we showed above, the Bible tells us that we who accept salvation through Jesus Christ are not appointed to the wrath of God. In the context of end times and church age believers, this would be the 70th week of Daniel or the Tribulation period.

Some of the common ojections to the pre-trib rapture is that "nowhere in the Bible, can you find the word "rapture". While this is true, the above scriptures we have already covered show that the literal rapture event is clearly taught. The Bible teaches that the Lord will descend from Heaven into the air, and take believers to Heaven to the place he has prepeared for them. Just because a term is not used in a text, does not mean that the event is not there. This objection is one of those empty "red-herring" objections that simply has not substance. In fact, nowhere in the scriptures does the word "bible" appear, but that doesn't stop people from referring to the collective scriptures as the Holy Bible. One final note is that while the word "rapture" does not appear in the scriptures, the equivalent of the word rapture does. It is referred to in the Greek in 1 Thes. 4:17 as the "harpazo" which means in Greek ?to raise from the ground? and "take for oneself? which is exactly what the Lord does when he removes the church from Earth before pouring out his wrath on the unbelieving world.

Critics of the pre-trib rapture also like to point to the fact that the Bible never refers to the rapture of the church as the "pre-trib rapture" yet on the same hand neither does the Bible refer to the rapture as the "pre-wrath, mid-trib, or post-trib rapture" either. This is yet again a "red-herring" objection with no substance at all in it. As was covered above in 1 Thes. 5:9 the Bible promises us that we are to not to be subjected to the wrath to come, which is the Tribulation period or 70th week of Daniel.

Another argument that critics of the pre-tribulational rapture like to use is that the pre-trib rapture started with a girl named Margaret MacDonald in the 1800's as the result of some kind of demonic vision she had, which in turn was passed on to John Darby who wrote extensively about it and thus popularizing the theological view. This is just not so. The pre-trib rapture was the rapture event described by the apostles and recording in the New Testament as evidenced by the scriptures we have already covered. Besides the New Testament prophets mentioning the pre-trib rapture, some of the oldest writings we have from around the time of the completion of the Bible (around 90-100AD) is from Epharaem the Syrian who wrote in 373 AD that: "For all the saints and Elect of God are gathered, prior to the tribulation that is to come, and are taken to the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to overwhelm the world because of our sins." This statement by Epharaem the Syrian is a definite pre-trib rapture statement. To say otherwise is simply ridiculous. The confusion will be the Tribulation period and all the satanic influences, judgments from God, etc. that will cause chaos, confusion, and uncertainty in the world during the time that is referred to as the Tribulation period. The last half of the seven year Tribulation period is referred to as the Great Tribulation in that the judgments from God will be like no other time in history, nor will there ever be again.

Yet another objection to the pre-trib rapture revolves around the mentioning of the "last trumpet" in 1 Cor. 15:52 and 1 Thes 4:16. Critics of the pre-trib rapture like to assume that the last trumpet sounding fro the rapture is the same one found in Revelation 11:15-18, Joel 2:1, and Matthew 24:31, which are trumpet soundings in the Tribulation period. The problem with pre-wrathers is they try to tie together the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15-18 with that of the trumpet sounding in 1 Cor. 15:52. The problem with this idea is that the 1 Cor. 15:52 trumpet can't refer to the one in Revelation 15:15-18 because that trumpet was not mentioned until many years later by the apostle John. How in the world can apostle Paul be referring to something that had not even been

written at that time? It just doesn't make sense, but that does not deter the critics from trying to twist the scriptures to fit their pre-conceived views of a pre-wrath rapture. To further add to the pre-wrathers error and confusion, we must note that there are several "last trumpets" in Bible and Jewish tradition. The problem with the reference to the trumpets in Joel 2:1 is that the context of that passage is the Day of the Lord, not the rapture.

By this time we've pretty much covered the most common objections raised by critics of the pre-tribulational rapture. There are more objections, but yet they all have the same common issue of being out of context or simply misunderstood. But to help you give you added assurance, you can even find hints of the rapture in the Old Testament. For example, look at this verse found in Isaiah:

Isaiah 26:19-21 But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead. Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until his wrath has passed by. See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins.

What a wonderful Lord we serve, one who won't punish the righteous with the unrighteous. Since God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow we know that he can't change his mind. It would violate his character if he did. So with the blessed hope of the rapture of the church, the sudden vanishing of church age believers from the earth, we should always be looking up as each day passes for our redemption is drawing nigh.

[Chris Schang - Rapture Forums](#)