

Building A Case For The Pre-Trib Rapture

Lesson #24

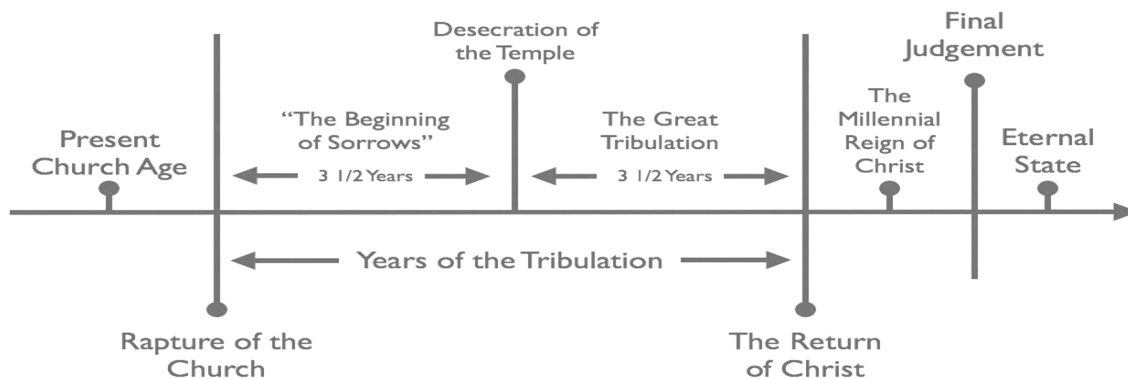
3 Differing Views Of The Rapture Of The Church July 13, 2022

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Titus 3:15 Looking for that Blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;

I Pet. 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Timeline of the End Times



Purpose: Examine the Biblical doctrine of the Rapture.

- Examine the various views regarding the TIMING of the Rapture.
- Present weaknesses in views that oppose the Pre-Trib Rapture position.
- Present a Biblical case for the Pre-Trib Rapture position.

Belief: The Rapture or catching away of Church Age believers to heaven is a Biblical doctrine.

I Thess. 4:16-18 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:

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.

¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Dan. 12:1-2 OT Believers are resurrected AFTER the 7 year Tribulation Period. [more later]

Belief: God has not appointed His Church to wrath.

Romans 5:8-9 But God commendeth [demonstrated] His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

I Thess. 1:10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

I Thess. 5:8-11 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

⁹ For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

¹⁰ Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

¹¹ Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

Note: We will discuss WRATH further in a future lesson.

Scripture reveals 2 main purposes in God's plan for this future time period.

- God will complete His discipline of the nation of Israel.
- God will judge the unbelieving, godless inhabitants of the earth and pour out His wrath.

Scripture names this period as the "Time of Jacob's Trouble."

It will surpass anything in troubles, wrath and trials that the world has ever seen.

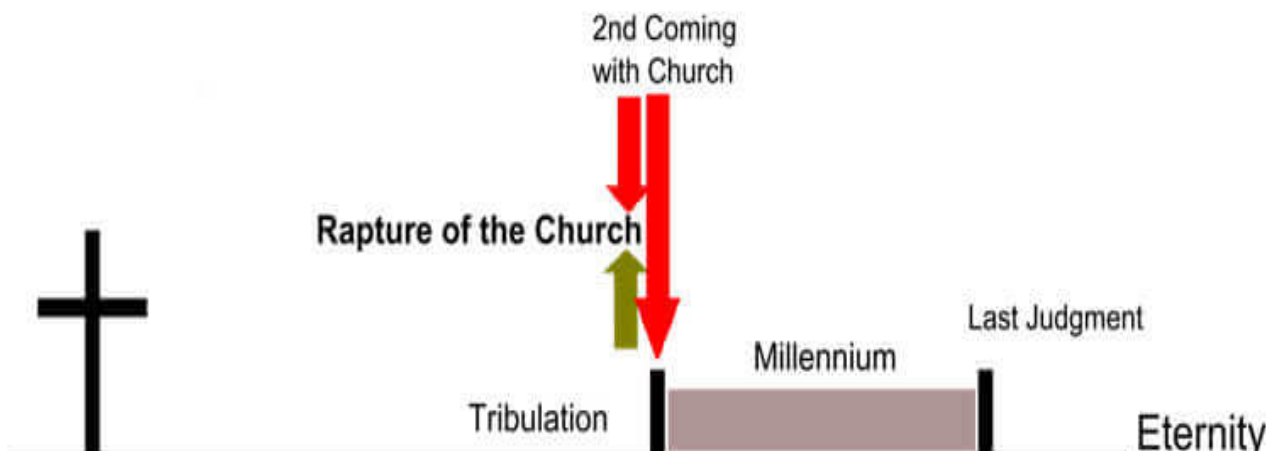
Jer. 30:7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

Matt. 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

The controversy surrounding the Rapture revolves around:

WHEN will The Rapture happen in relation to the 7 year Tribulation Period?

The Post-Tribulation View teaches that the Church will go through the full Tribulation period.



- Rapture & 2nd Coming are basically viewed as one event separated by a few moments.
- Some believe God will protect them during the wrath of God which they believe is near the end of the 7 years.
- Toward the end of the 7 year period, the Rapture will take place.
- Shortly afterward, Jesus returns to the earth to establish His millennial kingdom.
- With Him will be the Church that has just been raptured from the earth.
- The Church, dead and living, go out as the official welcoming committee to meet the Lord in the air and immediately accompany Him upon His return to the earth.

Historical Argument For The Post-Tribulation View

This view teaches that the early Church of the 2nd & 3rd centuries [100-300 AD] believed this.

- They believed that they were in the Tribulation period. [persecution under Rome]
- They believed Jesus was coming soon and establish His kingdom and reign on earth.
- It is apparent that some of the early Church—did believe basically a post-Trib View.

Consider: This argument is based on experience [problem], not upon the Word of God.

We cannot base a belief today in an argument which is based upon the experience of that Church and not upon the Biblical position of their view at that particular time.

We must base our argument upon something that is more than the experience of the Church of the 2nd & 3rd centuries.

Terminology Argument for the post-Tribulation view

The term *Parousia* is used in the Scriptures to picture both aspects of the Second Coming Of Jesus Christ.

- Rapture Jesus coming in the air for His Church prior to the 7 years
- Revelation Jesus coming to the earth with His Church at the end of the 7 years

The Post-Trib position: The terminology is used for both aspects.

Therefore, it implies they take place at virtually the same time.

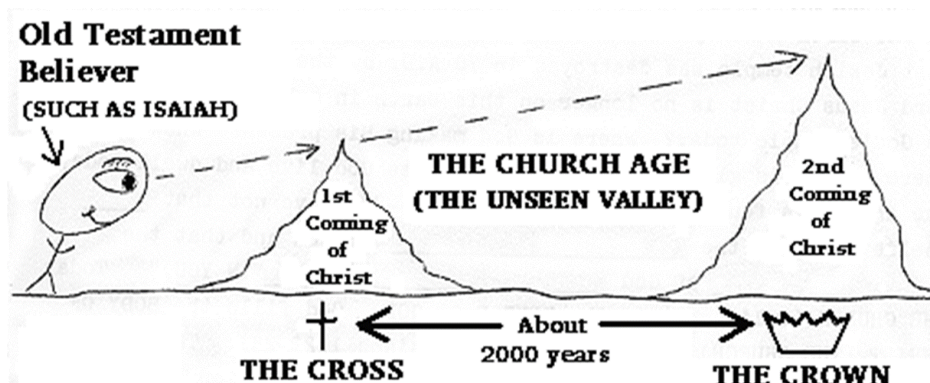
Key Point: In the OT and the NT, there are passages that bring together 2 things that are separated by a lapse of time.

From the perspective of the prophet, the 2 events appear to be on the same level or line.

Consider: The prophecies concerning the coming of Jesus Christ.

Isa. 9:6a For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder:

- Combined the 1st coming, His incarnation, His birth and His Second coming to establish His Kingdom on earth.
- Between the 2 comings, there has already been ~2,000 years.
- Isaiah the prophet looked into the future and saw 2 mountain peaks converging together.
- He did not see the valley of ~2000 years between the 2 peaks.



Post-trib: It must be the same as the last trumpet in I Cor. 15:52.

Key Point: The only similarity in these 2 "last trumpets" is that both are sounded to gather the Lord's people.

	Trumpet I Thess. 4:16 & I Cor. 15:52	Trumpet Matt. 24:31
Subject	Church	Jewish believers in the Tribulation
Circum-Stances	Focus is on raising of believers who have died in Christ & rapturing living believers in Church Age	Resurrection not mentioned; focus is on regathering living believers who have been scattered over the earth
Result	Uniting of the resurrected dead with the living in a great meeting with the Lord in the air	The elect are living believers who are regathered from all over the earth to meet the Lord, who has returned to the earth in visible glory.
Signs	Preceded by NO signs	Preceded by many signs Matt. 24:4-30

The Rapture Is Rendered Inconsequential if it is Post-Tribulation

Post-trib position has a major problem when you read Matt. 25:31-33 which describes Jesus' judgment of the people still alive on earth at the time of His Second Coming.

Matt. 25:31-33 When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: ³² And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth His sheep from the goats: ³³ And He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

- Context: People coming out of the 7 Year Tribulation period ALIVE.
- Believers are pictured as sheep. Unbelievers are pictured as goats.

Problem: If the rapture occurs as Jesus is descending to earth at His Second Coming:

- All the sheep will be caught up to meet Him in the air.
- There are NO sheep on earth for this judgment.

Charles Ryrie: How will there be any left to be assembled before Him in all His glory?

The rapture/second coming will separate the redeemed from the wicked.

This judgment at the second coming does the same thing. BUT there would not be any righteous on the earth to separate since they have just been raptured.

- Separation will have taken place in the very act of translation

1. If all tribulation believers are raptured and glorified just prior to the inauguration of the millennial Kingdom, who then will populate and propagate the Kingdom?

The Scriptures indicate that the living unbelievers will be judged at the end of the tribulation and removed from the earth and consigned to the Lake of Fire. [Matt. 13:41-42; 25:41].

Yet, they also teach that children will be born to believers during the millennium and these children will be capable of sin [Isa. 65:20; Rev 20:7-10].

- This is not possible if all believers on earth have been glorified through a post-trib rapture.

2. The post-trib view of the church being raptured and then immediately brought back to earth leaves no time for:

- the Bema, the Judgment Seat of Christ I Cor. 3:10-15; II Cor. 5:10
- nor for the Marriage of the Lamb Rev. 19:7-8

Thus, it can be concluded that a post-trib time of the rapture is incongruous with the sheep-goat nation judgment and eliminates two critical events after the Rapture.

- A pre-trib rapture avoids these difficulties.

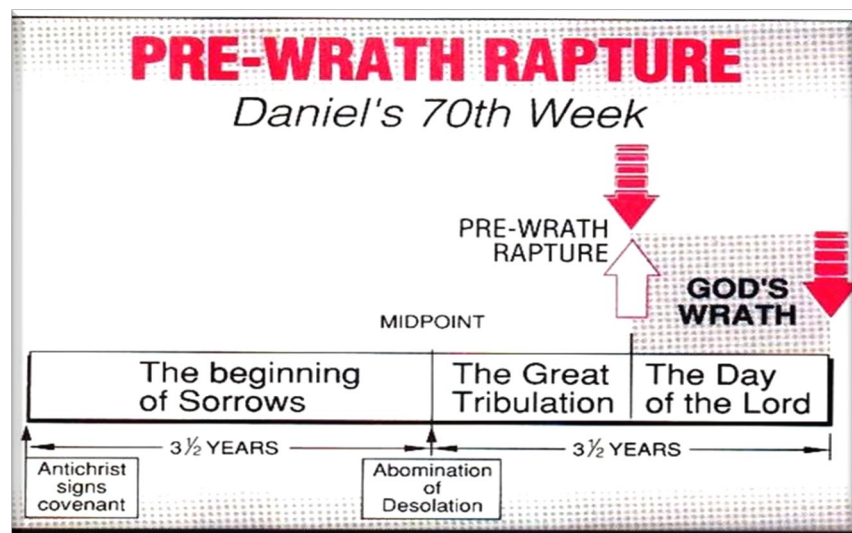
3. A post-trib view seems to deny the doctrine of imminence.

4. Another argument against the Post-trib view: There is no reference to the rapture in Rev. 19:11-21 which describes the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Consider: If the rapture happens in conjunction with His Second Coming, you would expect this main passage about His 2nd Coming to make a reference to the rapture.

- There is NO mention of a rapture of saints being caught up to heaven in all of Rev. 19.

John Walvoord: If details like the casting of the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire are mentioned and the specific resurrection of the Tribulation Saints is described, how much more the Rapture and translation of the Church should have been included IF, as a matter of fact, it is part of this great event. Revelation 19-20 is a major problem for post-trib proponents. There is no scriptural proof for a post-trib Rapture in the very passages that ought to have included it.



This view places the timing of the Rapture about 5½ years or so into the Tribulation. This view's foundational point is that believers in Christ must endure the Seal and Trumpet Judgments because they claim those judgments are from Man and/or Satan, and not from God.

Believers will only be exempt from the Bowl Judgments of Revelation 16.

- Only the bowl judgments are from God.

My Belief: God's Wrath will be poured out during the entire 7 year Tribulation Period.

J.I. Packer: God's wrath is His righteousness reacting against unrighteousness.

Context of Rev. 4: The scene is the Throne Room of God in Heaven

Context of Rev .5: John's vision of the 7 sealed scroll which will unleash ALL the judgments:

The seals, the trumpets and the bowls

Key Point: There is only ONE who is worthy to open it and let the judgments begin.

- Only the Lamb of God is worthy to open the scroll. Rev. 5:5
- Jesus opens the very first seal that starts the judgments. Rev. 6:1

Rev. 6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals

Rev. 6:3 when He [the Lamb] had opened the second seal,

Rev. 6:5 when He [the Lamb] had opened the third seal

Rev. 6:7 when He [the Lamb] had opened the fourth seal

Rev. 6:9 when He [the Lamb] had opened the fifth seal,

Rev. 6:12 when He [the Lamb] had opened the sixth seal,

Lamb Opens
Every Seal

Rev. 6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts [cherubim; messenger] saying, Come.

Rev. 6:3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come

Rev. 6:5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come

Rev. 6:7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the the fourth beast say, Come

- Cherubim say "Come" for the 1st 4 seals. They don't work for man or Satan.
- 4 living creatures come from the throne room of God [messengers of God; Rev. 4:6]

Rev. 6:16-17 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

- Some are teaching that during the first 3 ½ years, when over 2 BILLION people die, represents the wrath of Satan!
- This argument constitutes a serious challenge to the sovereignty of God - as if Satan is free to do as he pleases.

The trumpets of the Trumpet Judgments are handed out before God which indicates the wrath comes from God Himself. Rev. 8:2

The Bowl Judgments COMPLETE God's Wrath, not begin it. Rev. 15:1

Key Point: Revelation makes it very clear that the wrath poured out on the Earth from the very beginning of the Tribulation Period comes from God's throne.

Scripture makes null the foundational point of the Pre-Wrath view.

Mid-Tribulation Rapture



Note: Mid-Trib position agrees with Pre-Trib >

The Rapture and Second Coming are two distinct events separated by a period of time.

Mid-Trib: Christ will rapture His church at the mid-point of the 7 years prior to the outpouring of God's wrath.

- The Church will experience the beginnings of sorrows - the first 3 ½ years.
- They do not believe the first 3 ½ years are God's Wrath.
- The Church is exempt from the Great Tribulation or last 3 ½ years.

According to Daniel 9:27, the Anti-Christ makes a 7 year covenant with the nation of Israel. He will break his covenant with the Nation of Israel at the middle of the 7 years.

Isa. 28:15 calls this "a covenant with death."

This will precipitate tremendous persecution upon Israel and worldwide trials and troubles.

It is at that moment, then, that the Church will be raptured. [Mid-Trib view]

This view is based almost exclusively upon two premises:

Gleason Archer, a proponent of Midtrib Rapture, believes the harvest in Rev. 14:14-16 describes the Rapture.

Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

- There is no specific mention of a rapture or of a resurrection.
- The surrounding context and tone of this passage is judgment, not salvation.

J. Oliver Buswell: Identifies the mid-trib rapture with the 7th trumpet in: Rev. 11:15-17 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. And the 24 elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O LORD God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

Buswell correlates the 7th trumpet in Revelation 11 with the last trumpet in I Cor. 15:51-52. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

- It says that at the last trump, the resurrection will take place and we who are alive and remain will all be changed in the twinkling of an eye in a moment.
- It is certainly clear in I Cor. 15 that the Rapture takes place at the last trump.

Consider: However, they fail to take into account the fact that John wrote Revelation 40 years after Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians. How could Paul refer to something that was not yet revealed?

There are several prominent differences between the trumpets in these 2 passages which indicate they should not be linked together.

	Trumpet I Cor. 15:52	Trumpet Rev. 11:15
Subject	Church	Wicked World
Result	Catching up of the Church to be with the Lord	Judgment of Sinners
Character	Trumpet of God's grace Blessing for believers	Trumpet of God's judgment on unbelievers
Timing	Signals the close of the life of the church on earth. It is the last trumpet of the Church Age.	Marks a climax in the progression of tribulation judgments
	Trumpet is sounded by God	Trumpet is sounded by an angel
	Trumpet brings resurrection Calls the dead in Christ out of grave	Brings out the last great judgments upon the world & mankind
	Brings translation of living saints	Brings out the 7 vials or bowls
	Summons Church into the Lord's presence	precipitates the conclusion of the Tribulation; establish His Kingdom

Consider: Just because the trumpet in I Cor. 15 is called the "last" trumpet does not mean it is the last trumpet in God's whole prophetic program.

Illustration: During a school day there are several "last bells" that ring. There will be a last bell for the 9:00 am class but it is not the last bell of the school day. There will be a last bell to signal the end of the lunch hour, but it is not the last bell of the day.

Consider: The last trumpet of I Cor. 15:52 is the last trumpet of the Church Age that summons God's people to meet Jesus in the air.

Key Point: The 7th trumpet in Revelation 11 is not the last trumpet of the end times.

Remember: Matt. 24:31: There is a trumpet that will blast to gather the elect at Jesus' Second Coming.

Note: The context of I Cor. 15:51-52 harmonizes better with I Thess. 4:16

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

- Both speak of the rapture and judgment is absent from both.
- The trumpet in both is the last of final command the Lord gives to His Church.
- This call results in the translation of the dead in Christ and living believers.

Weaknesses of Mid-Trib view:

1. Contradicts Rev. 6 which states the SEALS at the beginning of the 7 years are specifically from the wrath of the Lamb and the throne of God.
2. This view denies the Doctrine of Imminency which says Jesus Christ can return at any moment. There are no signs for the Rapture.
3. If Christ can't come until the middle of the 7 years and the tribulation period has not yet started, then Christ cannot come for at least 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ years.

Paul Feinberg: The entire tribulation period is a time of God's wrath, from the first seal to the last bowl.

Paul Benware: It is the Lord Jesus who breaks the seals and releases judgments on the earth. All the judgments come from the 7 sealed scroll and the One who is worthy to break all the seals. All are demonstrations of divine wrath. Scripture does not support restricting God's wrath to the trumpet and bowl judgments as some views propose.

I Thess. 4:16-18 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:

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.

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