

Pre-Tribulation Rapture

This chapter taken from the book *When Faith Came* by Franklin Whittenburg © 1998-2006

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And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke 21:27,28 KJV).

One trap I fell into when I was discussing with someone about the rapture you need to look out for. The discussion that I got into was with a person from another denomination who does not believe in the rapture. This happened in front of a lot of unsaved people, which is usually where people like to pick the "rapture" fight. The first thing they said was "show me where in the Bible the word "rapture" is located"? Everybody was staring at me and I was stuck! I had to admit that the word "rapture" is not found in the KJV Bible! The event is though, which is called the "redemption of the body" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 KJV)(Titus 2:13 KJV), but not the word "rapture", which IS found in the Latin bibles. The very next thing the guy did was say "because I believed in a word that could not be found in the Bible that I was preaching false doctrine". He then went on to say, "Since one part of my doctrine is false, then the rest of my doctrine was also false"!

The way to win the "rapture" argument is not getting caught up in it from the beginning. When someone wants to talk about the "rapture", I immediately follow with the question, " Do you mean the "redemption of the body"? Now they are caught, because the "redemption of the body" IS spoken of in the KJV Bible. This may seem like splitting hairs, but if you don't make this distinction, they can make you look like a false teacher! Also, these verses refer to the event, but do not place it in the framework of time.

It is very important to understand what the pre-tribulation "rapture" belief is, and where it falls into end time events. Many churches that used to believe in the "pre-tribulation" rapture are starting to refer to their churches as "pre-millennial" in their doctrine. By doing this, these churches can accept people with pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, or post tribulation views and still be considered "pre-millennial", but only one of these beliefs is correct. I heard a very popular radio evangelist and his pastor discuss this briefly and then stated that they didn't believe the rapture was a heaven or hell issue and wasn't worth arguing over. It most certainly is! If you are not at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb with Jesus during the great tribulation, then you are on the earth worshipping a false messiah! To explain the pre-tribulation view and how it fits in the framework of prophetic events, I will approach it from a different angle than most people do.

Many refer to the end times as the "tribulation". I approach it from the term "day of wrath" found in Revelation 6:17 KJV. In the book of Revelation, after Jesus finishes speaking to the angels of the seven churches in chapter 3, the word "church" is not spoken of again until everything is fulfilled. In Revelation chapters 4,5,6 the scene

changes from earth to what is going on in Heaven. At the end of chapter 6, we find this troubling period of time on the earth referred to as the "day of wrath".

***For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?
(Revelation 6:17 KJV)***

The Bible doesn't say whether these seals of judgment of chapter 6 are opened over a period of days or all on the first day, but regardless the Bible says, "the day of wrath is come". Herein lies a strong argument for "pre-tribulation" belief. Do Christians go through the "day of wrath" which is plainly spoken of as starting sometime at the BEGINNING of the tribulation? The Bible says:

For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye 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, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1:9,10 KJV).

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Thessalonians 5:9 KJV).

In the Old Testament, we also find an interesting story that shows that God will not pour out judgment or wrath on the righteous with the wicked. When God was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, God said that He could not destroy the city till Lot, who Peter called righteous (2 Peter 2:6-8 KJV), was taken out of the city.

Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground (Genesis 19:22 KJV).

The Bible also speaks of a special crown given to all those that are looking for the appearing of Jesus!

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (2 Timothy 4:7-9 KJV).

I have heard of the "post-tribulation" people argue that the church is like Noah, who was protected by God through the judgment, but Jesus' own words refute this doctrine and at the same time make the "pre-tribulation" doctrine even stronger.

But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and

giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be (Matthew 24:37-39 KJV).

Jesus said that His coming was as the days of Noah, **BEFORE the flood!** Jesus was using the flood in this discourse to describe the “tribulation” and judgment in the end time. Once again, the way to win the “rapture” argument is not getting caught up in it in the first place.

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