

The Collapse of Dispensationalism: the Seven Churches in Revelation

... and other questions

Jesus told the local churches in the book of Rev:

2:5 - Repent ... or I'll come quickly and will remove thy candlestick.

2:10 - Thou shalt have tribulation 10 days: be thou faithful unto death.

2:16 - Repent; or else I'll come ... quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

3:3 - If ... thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

By cross-referencing and amalgamating these four scriptures the reader can observe that Jesus comes QUICKLY as a THIEF with a SWORD in His mouth at a time when some saints will be in tribulation unto death, and He will come on someone as a thief, but NOT on you, IF you WATCH. The sword refers to His return at the time of Armageddon.

The "Seven Church Ages Theory" by the scholar, Scofield, do not hold up in the light of Rev chapters two and three:

Jesus warned the third church, Pergamos, that He might fight against them with the sword of His mouth;

He warned the fifth church that He might come on them as a thief;

According to the thought process of Scofield's theory, these two statements should have been directed to the 7th final church era, the Laodicean Church. Common sense tells us that all 7 types of churches or individual Christians can exist simultaneously in any era, as shown by Jesus' parable of the sower in the gospels. I brought up the subject of Scofield, because he was an ardent advocate of the pre-trib theory with a spin-off called "dispensationalism." It would seem that his theories are what Peter labeled as "private interpretations", disqualifying such eccentricities as not readily accessible to the average reader of the Bible. In the same manner, in Mat 24, Mk 13 & Lk 21, Jesus did not make a CLEAR indication of the PRE-trib rapture, though He had every opportunity to do so, since the end time signs were the very main theme of each of the three chapters. Why all the secrecy?? On the other hand, He is very clear about the 2nd coming. A wise perspective would be to hope in the PRE-trib rapture without counting at all on it. An excess dependancy on the theory could lead to severe disillusionment for many persons.

<<You have be IN a dangerous environment for God to guard, protect, and preserve you. [Rev 3:10; Jn 17:15]>>

<Is this the same meaning for "escape" in Lk 21:36?>

The Greek says, "escape or flee".

Webster's Dictionary says in support of my POST-trib view, "ESCAPE: gain freedom, evade, avoid, pass unnoticed," plus some good PRE-trib words like "flight from danger."

There is a question here as to the MEANS of "evasion" involved. And if by flight--how far? Figurative flight or literal flight? Avoidance by protection or outright removal? Passed unnoticed, overlooked by the antichrist? Remember how Jesus passed through the midst of the Jews when they sought to kill Him. [Lk 4:30]

<If God says that He comes as a thief in the night, and we know that the trib is 7 years long, then wouldn't we know when HE comes, and it wouldn't be, at least to us, as a thief in the night, because we would know that at the end of the trib, 7 years later, Jesus comes? How can we reconcile this verse?>

Answer:

He never will come as a thief to surprise the Christian. "Ye brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as thief." [1 Thes 5:4] Notice the word, "overtake", denoting speed. "Thief" refers to quickness, not sneakiness. As a thief, Jesus comes to spoil the goods of the wicked. The spoiling of the goods is at Armageddon. He comes as swift as "lightning". A thief "breaks up the house"; Jesus will break His adversaries with the sword of His mouth. Matt 24:43. This coupled with the shout and trump does not sound like a silent, secret event. ALL the Israelites in the desert [Exo, Num] heard the trump, though many were sinners, and not likely to be in heaven. (For example: Korah and Dathan and Abiram whom the ground swallowed.) --These all heard the trump. The wicked will hear the trump in 1 Thes 4:16.

Since we do NOT know when Armageddon is, we do NOT know when Jesus will return a thief. He will return as a "thief in the NIGHT." The DARKEST hour for the world is just before the end. Indeed, one of the bowl / vial judgments is "pitch darkness". Even after the tribulation begins there are chronology problems which blur the timing of His coming. Are the years going to be 365 Gregorian days or 360 Jewish days? What about the difference between 1,260 days in Rev. compared to 1,290 [Dan 12:11] The POST-tribulationist does not claim to know the day or hour of the coming of Jesus, but we can know by the signs of the times that His coming is near, even at the doors, according to the parable of the fig tree.

<If we are still on earth during the trib, how do we escape the mark of the beast, and what scripture confirms that we do? If we do not, are we beheaded as the others are? If we are beheaded, then no christians could be left on earth and no rapture would be necessary, for there would be no one to rapture?>

Those in the wilderness definitely escape the mark and death. As to those not in the wilderness: The serpent in ch. 12 then went to make war with the remnant of her seed that were not in the wilderness. Since the devil is not all-knowing or all-powerful, he cannot find or kill ALL those who don't take the mark. God will provide supernatural sustenance for His people as He did in both the Old and New Testaments. ---Manna, the vessels of oil, the feeding of Elijah by birds, the widow's cruz of meal and oil, in the Old Testament and the Miracle of the Loaves&Fishes, and water changed into wine in the New. "For I Am the Lord, I change not." (Mal. 3:6) These things are examples unto us for now and the

future.

Those Christians NOT in the wilderness are, I believe-- 1. late converts and 2. "lone ranger" Christians who strand themselves alone from the church family, because of their isolationist tendencies (often being rebellious or easily offended). I am referring to "the remnant of her seed" whom the dragon shall make war against.[Rev. 12:17]

The Bible says that the tribulation period is limited to 7 yrs so that all flesh will not be destroyed. Yes, I do believe that one half of the unsaved world will die by the Lord's plagues/judgments [Rev. 6:8; 9:15]. Simultaneously one half of Christians will die by beheading. No Tribulation Christian whatsoever will die by means of any plague. Their death will bring glory to the Lord. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

<MECHANICAL QUESTIONS: timing of the wedding supper ... where and how long? Is Jesus going to come from heaven with an army of white horses with no riders? How do you explain that?>

There are some saints in heaven already. [Rev 6:9; Eph 4:8; 2 Cor 5:6,8] All those horses won't be without riders; even so, an army of horses without riders is no more unusual than the concept of a herd of horses grazing up in heaven waiting for the rapture to provide them with riders. Whether post-trib or pre-trib, God doesn't have a problem with where or how the horses are going to materialize. <grin> He can just SPEAK them into existence in the same manner that our bodies will be changed at the sound of His voice.

The beginning of the wedding supper is clear according to Rev 19:9. It begins at the time of Armageddon. The duration of the supper is not stated, but eating is mentioned in Ezekiel 40-48 regarding sacrifices in a temple which has never yet been built, believed to be the millennial temple. Ezekiel chapter 47 talks about fishermen casting nets into the "healed" salt waters, evidently not pertaining to the new heavens and earth, because residual salt marshes will remain. The same Living Water causes fruit trees to grow along the riverside. I say all this only to illustrate that there is eating during the millennium. The wedding supper appears to be a synonym for the millennial reign, in relation to Rev 3:20 "... If any man open the door, I will come in to him, and will SUP with him, and he with Me," speaking of eternal communion with the Lord. We must remember that the actual marriage of the bride is at the end of the next millenium [Rev 21:2]. There are others not yet born, whom the Lord wants to bring into the Holy City, His bride.

Timing:

We'll be changed (into glorified bodies) in the twinkling of an eye, fast as light. The equipping of God's army can be as fast. It's all miraculous. Jesus is the Light of the World. Certainly an infinite God is faster than natural light, because He created light, and the Creator IS GREATER than the creation. As speed reaches infinity, the clock stops. This is a law of physics. When we become glorified IN Jesus the Light, our perception of the passage of time radically changes.

We know that Jesus went to heaven and returned within a few hours on the day of His resurrection. The trip may have been instantaneous, but we know it was a maximum of hours. He told the woman at the tomb not to touch Him (the High Priest) until He went to the Father. Jesus could not be defiled, because He had to put His own blood supernaturally on the mercy seat in Heaven. [The ark: Rev. 11:19] The women could only touch His feet, which were to be washed in

the heavenly laver (spiritually speaking) before approaching the ark.
Hours later, He was back on earth saying, "... Handle Me, and see ..." [Lk 24:39]
Eph. 4:8-10 says He descended into Seoul, then ascended
on high, leading captivity captive. This must mean a trip to heaven on
His resurrection day. Ancient saints were seen in Jerusalem the day
of His resurrection [Matt 27:52,53]. He loosed them from paradise
(a nice place, but not Heaven) and took them to Heaven. There
are souls under the altar in Heaven right now. [Rev 6:9-11]
I said all this to show how fast one can go from heaven to earth.
The Lord can do anything in the span of the twinkling of an eye.
He created the entire universe in seven days. Our God is an awesome
God!!

<How do we receive our crowns in heaven, if we are going to
be raptured to Armageddon, then to the Mount of Olives to reign
in Zion, but not raptured up to heaven? Explain that one, please.>

There is a mystery time gap of forty-five days mentioned in
Daniel 12:11,12 1,335 minus 1,290 equals 45 days.
"Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the 1,335 days."

Again, if the Lord can create the cosmos in 7 days, He can
take us to heaven and distribute a lot of crowns in 45 days.
We don't really know where Heaven is, but the Word says in Isa 40:22
referring to God: "He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth" ...
Heaven, where the Father and Son are seated, may be closer than we think.