

No Pre Tribulation Rapture

REVELATION 20:4-6 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

This passage tells us that tribulation martyrs will be among those "dead in Christ" resurrected at the rapture. It follows, then, that the rapture takes place some time AFTER the antichrist starts persecuting those who will not take his mark. In order that they hang on to their "pre-trib" rapture hope, some Christian authors posit a second rapture during the tribulation which will account for those saints described in Revelation 20:4-6. A "pre-trib" rapture would have already removed the faithful prior to antichrist's persecution, so according to this theory these tribulation martyrs must be those newly converted, having missed the "pre-trib" rapture.

However, there can be no "pre-trib" rapture/resurrection and then a "second rapture/resurrection" at some point within the tribulation. We are clearly told that "THIS is the first resurrection", the resurrection which INCLUDES THOSE SAINTS MARTYRED DURING ANTICHRIST'S PERSECUTION. The rest of the dead do not live again until after the thousand years. The Bible says nothing of three resurrections of the dead. There are merely the two: the first resurrection of the dead in Christ, which will include those martyred during the antichrist's persecution BECAUSE it takes place at some time after antichrist comes to power, and the resurrection of the rest of the dead after Jesus Christ's millennial reign.

If one can get past the basic arguments for a "pre-trib" rapture perhaps we in the Body of Christ can piece together a more Biblical end time chronology. We here at watcher have heard the pre-trib arguments many times, and the scripture used to support these arguments remain unconvincing. Really, we would love to optimistically believe that we will be raptured prior to antichrist...but all the arguments for this just don't make sense.

Here are some typical comments we get, and our response.

The word Rapture is only used once in the Bible describing what happened to Phillip. Rapture means caught away, taken away (suddenly) and FALLING AWAY. Many have said that there will be a great falling away and equated that with men/women turning away from the Faith. Men and women are constantly "falling in and out" of faith and this is too ambiguous a sign to signify the end.

Let's just take it for granted that we in the Body of Christ who use the term "rapture" refer to the mysterious event in which the dead in Christ will be resurrected, and then the living in Christ will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and we will all receive glorified, incorruptible bodies. We can all agree that the word "rapture" and the word "apostasy" are quite different in meaning, and should not be used in place of one another. If the Bible says apostasy, it means apostasy.

The Bible is precise, and does not use the word apostasy in II Thessalonians to refer to the simple "falling in and out" of faith of the common wishy-washy religious folk. The apostasy of the end times is on a grand scale. It is when a huge number of those who thought themselves Christians, who claimed to believe in Jesus Christ, will SUDDENLY NOT BE ABLE TO BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST AND THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE ANY LONGER. Somehow the end time deception of the antichrist will convince formerly religious folks to fall away from the Truth. This falling away will be dramatic and final, not wishy-washy, and sudden, not a gradual growing cold in faith.

This sudden mass denial of the truth of Jesus Christ will PRECEDE the rapture, we are told. II Thessalonians provides more specific details of what comes BEFORE THE RAPTURE.

II Thess 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him (the rapture)... Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

This passage tells us the "gathering together unto" Jesus, the rapture, will not occur until two other things come first. There will be the falling away-- the apostasy, the dramatic mass denial of the truth of the Word. And most importantly, the rapture will not occur until THAT MAN OF SIN BE REVEALED. The antichrist will come to power before the rapture. The antichrist comes to power when the treaty of Daniel is

signed--the treaty specifically dealing with the rebuilding of Jerusalem's temple and the daily sacrifice. The tribulation begins when this treaty is signed, so the tribulation will begin before the rapture. There can be no pre-tribulation rapture.

II Thess 2:6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with his brightness of his coming:

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; Many will argue that the Holy Spirit within the Body of Christ is what restrains the antichrist from coming to power, and that the Body of Christ must first be removed before the tribulation can begin. Some even argue that the "saints" during the tribulation who are persecuted are Jews, not Christians, because the Holy Spirit would prevent antichrist's continued rule. Revelation clearly tells us that there are Christians, those washed in the Blood of Christ, during the Tribulation...so there must still be the presence of the Holy Spirit and the Body of Christ during the Tribulation. The Holy Spirit must not be what restrains antichrist.
an angel addresses Daniel

Daniel 10:12 ... I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days; but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days...

There are angels associated with nations. This angel was not powerful enough to get past the opposing angels who have authority over the kingdom of Persia. It was necessary to have the angel Michael intervene to get this particular messenger past the powerful rebel angels of Persia. Michael is the angel who is associated with Israel...he has authority over what goes on with respect to Israel.

The antichrist will set up his kingdom in Israel, and even defile the temple in Jerusalem. If a man who is empowered by satan himself is going to do such things in Jerusalem, don't you think that the angel of Israel, Michael, would know about it? For this to occur the angelic authority over Israel must allow it...Michael must step aside and let it happen. Michael is the being in charge of "allowing and preventing", of "letting and restraining" things of a spiritual nature from occurring with respect to Israel. Michael, not the Holy Spirit within the Body of Christ, is the "restrainer" preventing the antichrist from coming to power before God's appointed time. When it is time for the tribulation, the time of Jacob's Trouble, a time of trouble for Israel, God will give the cue to Michael to step aside.

Daniel 12:1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time:

Another argument is: *The Rapture is the Falling Away. We are not appointed unto Wrath. The Christian saints can't go through any parts of the Tribulation because Jesus Christ covered us from all of the Wrath that will be determined on this Earth. The Tribulation, The Great Tribulation is 7 years of actual Hell on Earth. The Church (which means the Lord's) is the body of Christ. The body of Christ has already suffered once and to try and say that we must go through even one day of the 7-year tribulation would be saying that what he did was not good enough to save us, wouldn't it? If not then how can our suffering or persecution add anything to our salvation? Well it can't because nothing more is needed.*

The Rapture and the Falling Away are two separate things. We are not appointed to God's wrath, but notice that the wrath of God is not poured out onto the earth until Revelation 16. Many awful things happen during the Tribulation prior to the actual pouring out of God's wrath...much harm and persecution can befall Christians which can not be considered "the wrath of God". It in no way negates Christ's sacrifice to say that the Church will endure persecution and suffering -- look at the early Christian martyrdoms! Of course no one says that the Body of Christ needs to suffer for our salvation, but no one said being Christian would be a picnic, either. Why shouldn't we suffer as much as the Early Church? We are no better than they. I pray for their kind of courage.

By that point in the tribulation in which God's own wrath is poured out, yes, we will be raptured. Even if we were not raptured by that point, it would be obvious who took the mark of the beast and who didn't -- God would surely be able to delineate whom to pour out His wrath upon. Is it clear that the "not appointed to wrath" argument for a "pre-trib" rapture is not compelling?

Rev. 16 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.