

Post Tribulation Rapture - Defined and Refined

Post- behind; following after; subsequent to

Tribulation- distress or suffering resulting from oppression or persecution

Rapture- the catching away of the saints

Posttribulation rapture-- catching away of the saints that takes place after distress and persecution

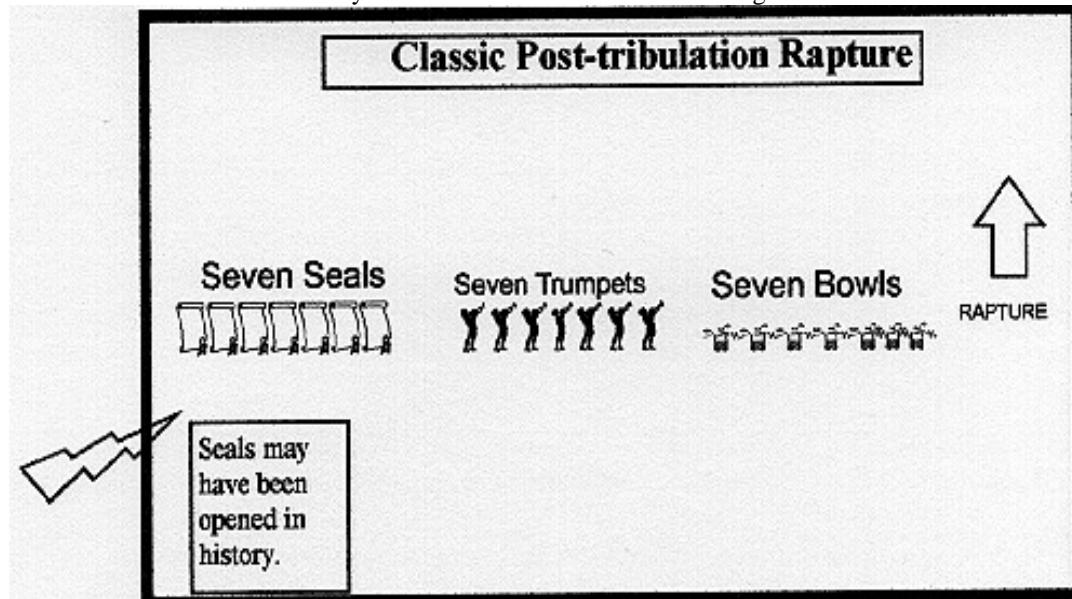
If you believe in a particular writer's view of posttribulationism you might believe in a classic or futuristic or dispensational view of posttribulationism. The meaning of post tribulation does not change no matter how the details work out. In very simple terms you define when the tribulation ends and then the rapture occurs.

The post tribulation interpretation of eschatology has changed through the years with our understanding of history and the fulfillment of the scriptures. Here are some of the views that are summarized below.

Views of Posttribulation

Classic Posttribulationism

In summarizing classic posttribulationism as illustrated in the writings of J. Barton Payne, it has been demonstrated that four major interpretations are involved: (1) Classic posttribulationism holds to the imminency of the second coming of Christ as an event which could occur any day. (2) It holds that the second coming is posttribulational, that is, coming after events that describe the time of trouble preceding the second advent. (3) In order to preserve the imminency of the second coming of Christ, it adopts a non literal interpretation of the tribulation, finding the events either fulfilled in the past or in the contemporary situation. (4) In spite of almost a complete commitment to non literal interpretation of prophecies relating to the tribulation, the classic view holds with the early church fathers to a literal millennium following the second coming of Christ. The probable reason why most conservative expositors, regardless of their eschatological position, have rejected classic posttribulationism is the inherent inconsistency of combining in one system a very literal interpretation of the last four chapters of Revelation while at the same time holding to an almost completely non literal interpretation of the preceding chapters. The problems inherent in this position also explain why most adherents of a completely non literal interpretation of the earlier chapters of Revelation are amillennial rather than pre millennial and apply the non literal interpretation both to the tribulation and to the millennium which follows. Although many posttribulationists would undoubtedly agree with some of the arguments advanced by Payne against pretribulationism, contemporary posttribulationism has largely abandoned premillennialism on the one hand in favor of amillennialism and has abandoned the doctrine of imminency in favor of a deferred second coming of Christ.

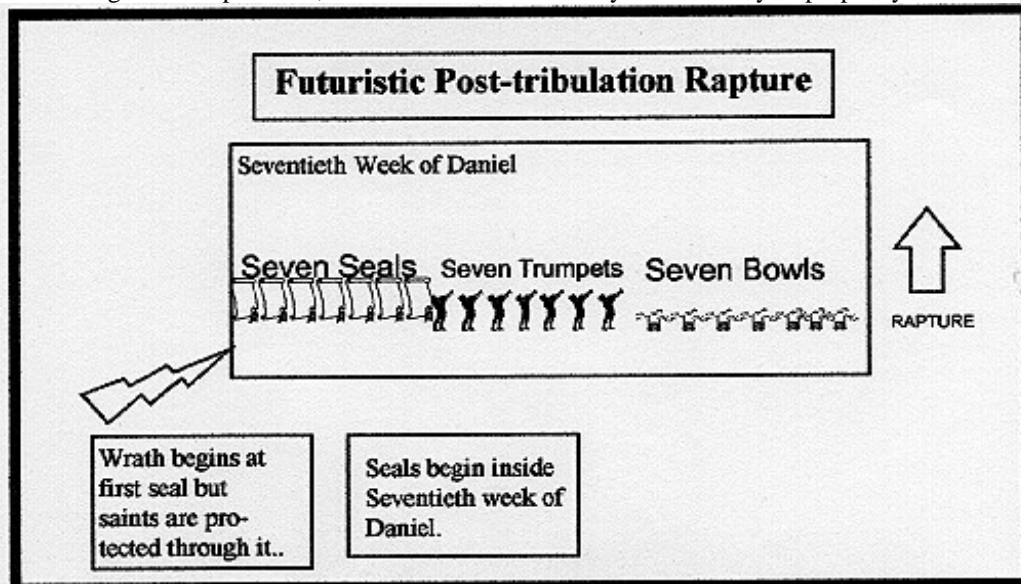


Semiclassic Posttribulationism

Posttribulationists are not in agreement on the character, nature, and extent of the time of trouble preceding the second coming of Christ. While they hold that the church will go through the tribulation, they are in disagreement among themselves as to what the tribulation itself is. In general, they may be divided into three classifications: (1) those who hold that the tribulation extends throughout the entire age from the first coming of Christ to the second coming; (2) those who hold that the church is already in the tribulation but that the great tribulation is still future; (3) the futuristic school which, in contrast to the semi classic interpretation, holds that the tribulation is completely future, usually identifying it as the last seven years preceding the second coming of Christ, based on a futuristic interpretation of Daniel 9.27 & Revelation 4-18. Semi-classic tends to support at least some of the findings of the historical school (which believes that the fulfillment of the seals is in some sense already under way.)

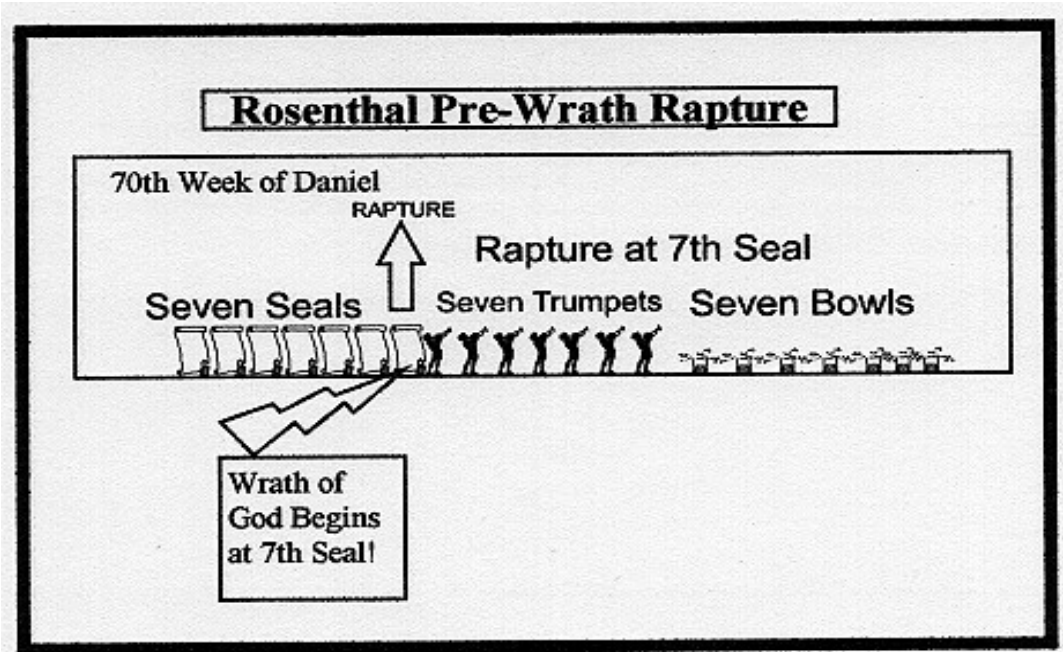
Futuristic Posttribulationism

With the emergence of premillennialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a relatively new view of posttribulationism was advanced which can be called the futurist view. In contrast to posttribulationism which characterized amillennialism and the Protestant Reformers who considered themselves already in the tribulation, the new view contended that the last seven years of Daniel's prophecy of Israel's program revealed in Daniel 9. 24-27 should be considered as still future. In harmony with this position, it was often also contended that Revelation 4-18 describes a future rather than an historic situation. The leading twentieth-century exponent of the futurist view is George E. Ladd who sets forth his position in his work The Blessed Hope, published in 1956. The Premises of Futurist Posttribulationism As illustrated in Ladd, futurist posttribulationism is built on the premise of premillennialism. He states, "One thing should be emphasized: the author would affirm his belief in the personal, premillennial second advent of Jesus Christ. He is looking for His coming; it is his Blessed Hope." In adopting premillennialism, Ladd also holds to a futurist view of the Book of Revelation. Although he deviates in some minor respects from the futurist view of that book, in general he follows the concept that there is yet ahead a seven-year period climaxing in a great tribulation which will fulfill literally the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments that describe this time of trouble immediately preceding the second coming of Christ. In taking this interpretation, Ladd assumes the authority and accuracy of prophecy and usually interprets it literally.



Marvin Rosenthal's Prewrath Rapture

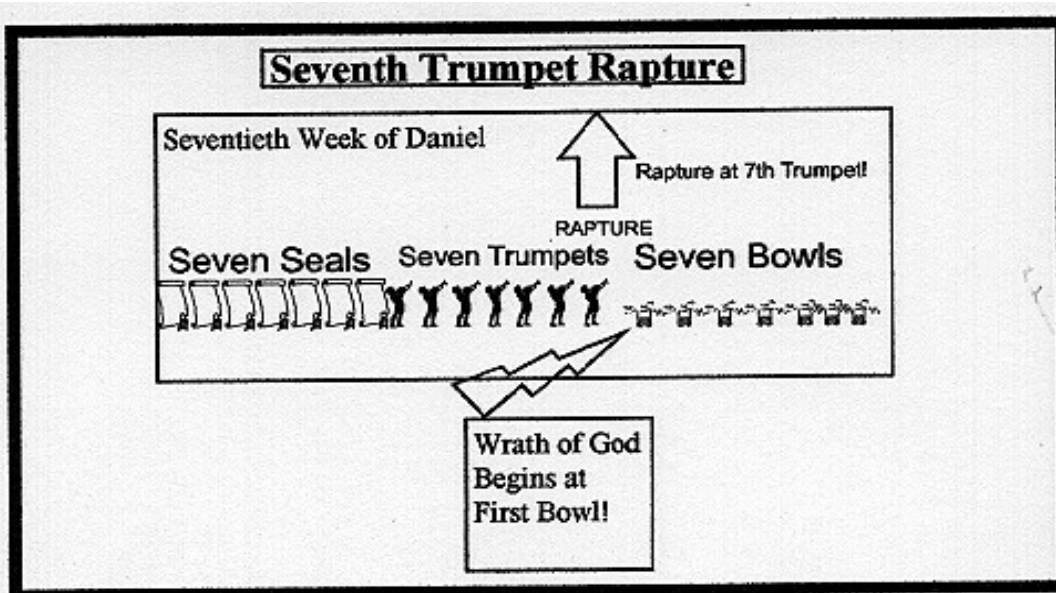
Mr. Rosenthal lays out a view of the rapture in his book The PRE-WRATH RAPTURE of the CHURCH that is pre-millennial, post-tribulation but pre-wrath. His view would be futurist in that he believes it will happen after the last week of Daniel's prophecy has begun. He would put the rapture at the 7th seal. The wrath would then be contained in the 7 trumpets and the 7 bowls. This would be well into the 70th week of Daniel. He believes that the rapture is in the future and after the signing of the covenant with the Antichrist. The sixth seal is of major significance to him and would mark the convergence of all the signs and lead to the rapture on the seventh seal. In harmony with the definition of post-tribulation the words pre-wrath rapture simply mean that the rapture takes place before the wrath of God is poured out. Marvin Rosenthal lays out a particular view of how the rapture is to take place at the seventh seal and then the wrath of God is poured out. An accurate name for his position would be the seventh seal rapture. This is one interpretation of the scriptures but it cannot lay claim to the words pre-wrath and mean that this is the only way it can be interpreted. Although this is a relatively new view it has gained wide notoriety and some acceptance.



Building on these ideas and studies from other writers a new definition of when the rapture will occur is here put forth for your review.

Seventh Trumpet Rapture *(new definition proposed by James Underwood)

A new definition proposed by James Underwood would be the Seventh Trumpet Rapture. It builds on a very literal interpretation of scripture. It agrees with the classic early church father's in that it holds that the second coming is posttribulational, that is, coming after events that describe the time of trouble preceding the second advent. It would also believe in a literal 1000 year reign of Christ. However it is also futuristic and agrees with the view that the last seven years of Daniel's prophecy of Israel's program revealed in Daniel 9: 24-27 should be considered as still future until the seven year covenant is signed. In harmony with this position, it also agrees that Revelation 4-18 describes a future rather than an historic situation. It also agrees that Israel and the Church do have distinct identities but not to the extent that it believes Israel must again go back under the old system of the Law. The Law is fulfilled in Jesus Christ and Israel will not go under that system again. There are dispensations but the system that would put Israel under the law again is ultra dispensationalism. The seventh trumpet rapture view would believe that we are in the New Covenant until the 1000 year reign of Christ and He institutes the Peace Covenant. In addition since the rapture is before the wrath is poured out in the bowls it would make the seventh trumpet rapture a pre-wrath rapture. In harmony with the definition of post tribulation the words pre-wrath rapture simply mean that the rapture takes place before the wrath of God is poured out. The Seventh Trumpet Rapture view sees the rapture occurring literally at the sounding of the seventh trumpet in Revelation. **The sounding of the seventh trumpet would mark the end of the tribulation, mark the rapture, and mark the beginning of the wrath of God.**



The 7th trumpet rapture view is then both pre-wrath and post tribulation in timing.

In summary each of the definitions of posttribulationism have some very good aspects. The best definition of posttribulationism would build on the Biblical studies of those who come before us. They are not all wrong or all right but we must use their studies to help refine our own understandings.

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