

Four questions on the pre-tribulational rapture.

Extracted from WHY A PRETRIBULATIONAL RAPTURE?

Richard L. Mayhue

Senior Vice President

Dean Professor of Pastoral Ministries and Theology

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The central purpose of this article is not to unveil the chief deficiencies of opposing stances, but to describe the superiority of pretribulationism as taught in major eschatological texts such as Matthew 24–25; 1 Thessalonians 4; 1 Corinthians 15; and Revelation 3, 6–18. It is not the weight of a single reason that makes pretribulationism so compelling, but instead the combined force of all the lines of reasoning.

What does Rapture mean?

The English noun/verb “rapture” comes from the Latin noun *raptura*/verb *rapio* that is used 14 times in the NT. The basic idea of the word is “to remove suddenly or snatch away.” It is used in the NT in reference to stealing/plundering ([Matt. 11:12](#); [12:29](#); [13:19](#); [John 10:12](#), [28](#), [29](#)) and removing ([John 6:15](#); [Acts 8:39](#); [23:10](#); [Jude 23](#)). There is a third use, which focuses on being caught up to heaven. It is used of Paul’s third heaven experience ([2 Cor. 12:2](#), [4](#)) and Christ’s ascension to heaven.

Will there be an Eschatological Rapture?

[First Thessalonians 4:16–17](#) unquestionably refers to a rapture that is eschatological in nature. Hence, *harpazo* is translated “caught up”:

Without employing *harpazo*, but by using similar contextual language, [1 Corinthians 15:51–52](#) refers to the same eschatological event as [1 Thessalonians 4:16–17](#):

Thus, it can be concluded that Scripture points to an eschatological rapture, even though neither of these foundational texts contains a time indicator.

Will the “Rapture” be Partial or Full?

The Partial Rapture theory rests on NT passages that stress obedient watching and waiting (e.g., [Matt. 25:1–13](#); [1 Thess. 5:4–8](#); [Heb. 9:28](#)). If this interpretation is correct, the result would be that only part of the church would be raptured, and those who are not raptured would endure a portion of or the entire seventieth week of Daniel.

However, these biblical texts which supposedly teach a partial rapture are better understood as differentiating between true believers who are raptured and merely professing, yet false believers who remain behind. Texts that refer to the final aspect of Christ’s second coming are often used mistakenly to support the partial-rapture theory.

There are numerous reasons the partial rapture theory fails to be convincing. First, [1 Corinthians 15:51](#) says that “all” will be changed. Second, a partial rapture would logically demand a parallel partial resurrection, which is nowhere taught in Scripture. Third, a partial rapture would minimize and possibly eliminate the need for the judgment seat of Christ, because judgment would have already taken place by virtue of a “partial” rapture. Fourth, it creates a purgatory of sorts on earth for those believers left behind. Fifth, a partial rapture is nowhere explicitly taught in Scripture. Therefore, it is best concluded that the rapture will be full and complete, not just partial.

Will the “Rapture” be Pre-, Mid-, or Post-Daniel’s Seventieth Week?

1. The Church Is Not Mentioned in Revelation 6–18 as Being on Earth

The common NT term for “church” (*ekklesia*) is used 19 times in Revelation 1–3, a section that deals with the historical church of the first century toward the end of the apostle John’s life (ca. AD 95). However, “church” is then used only once more in the twenty-two chapter book, and that use is at the very end (22:16) when John returns to addressing the first-century church. Most interesting is the fact that nowhere during the period of Daniel’s seventieth week is the term for “church” used for believers on earth (cf. [Rev. 4–19](#)).

Further, because Revelation 12 is a mini-synopsis of the entire tribulation period and because the woman who gave birth to the male child ([Rev. 12:1–13](#)) is Israel, then the Tribulation period focuses on the nation of Israel, not the church. How could this be? Because a pretribulational rapture has removed the “church” from the earth prior to Daniel’s seventieth week.

2. The Rapture Is Rendered Inconsequential if it is Posttribulational

(Read the paragraph in the article)

3. The Epistles Contain No Preparatory Warnings of an Impending Tribulation for Church-Age Believers

They warn vigorously about coming error and false prophets (see [Acts 20:29–30](#); [2 Pet. 2:1](#); [1 John 4:1–3](#); [Jude 4](#)). They warn against ungodly living (see [Eph. 4:25–5:7](#); [1 Thess. 4:3–8](#); [Heb. 12:1](#)). They even admonish believers to endure in the midst of present tribulation (see [1 Thess. 2:13–14](#); [2 Thess. 1:4](#); 1 Peter). However, there is absolute silence on preparing the church for any kind of tribulation like that found in Revelation 6–18.

4. First Thessalonians 4:13–18 Demands a Pretribulational Rapture

Suppose, hypothetically, that some other rapture timing besides pretribulational is true. What would one expect to find in 1 Thessalonians 4? How does this compare with what is actually observed?

First, one would expect the Thessalonians to be joyous over the fact that loved ones are home with the Lord and will not have to endure the horrors of the tribulation. But the Thessalonians are actually grieving because they fear their loved ones have missed the rapture. Only a pretribulational rapture accounts for this grief.

Second, one would expect the Thessalonians to be grieving over their own impending trial rather than grieving over loved ones. Furthermore, they would be inquisitive about their own future doom. But the Thessalonians have no fears or questions about the coming tribulation.

Third, one would expect Paul, even in the absence of interest or questions by the Thessalonians, to have provided instructions and exhortation for such a supreme test, which would make their present tribulation seem microscopic in comparison. But not one indication of any impending tribulation of this sort appears in the text.

First Thessalonians 4 fits only the model of a pretribulational rapture. It is incompatible with any other time for the rapture.

5. John 14:1–3 Parallels 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

[John 14:1–3](#) refers to Christ’s second coming. It is not a promise to all believers that they shall go to Him at death. It does refer to the rapture of the church. Note the close parallel between the promises of [John 14:1–3](#) and [1 Thessalonians 4:13–18](#). First, the promise of a presence with Christ: “. . . **that where I am, there you may be also**” ([John 14:3](#)) and “. . . **thus we shall always be with the Lord**” ([1 Thess. 4:17](#)). Second, the promise of comfort: “Let not your heart be troubled . . .” ([John 14:1](#)) and “Therefore comfort one another with these words” ([1 Thess. 4:18](#)).

A posttribulational rapture demands that the saints meet Christ in the air and immediately descend to earth without experiencing what the Lord promised in John 14. Since John 14 refers to the rapture, only a pretribulational rapture satisfies the language of [John 14:1–3](#) and allows raptured saints to dwell for a meaningful time with Christ in His Father’s house.

6. The Nature of Events at Christ's Posttribulational Coming Differs from that of the Rapture

If one compares what happens at the rapture in [1 Thessalonians 4:13–18](#) and [1 Corinthians 15:50–58](#) with what happens in the final events of Christ's second coming in Matthew 24–25, at least eight differences are observable. These differences demand that the rapture occur at a time significantly different from that of the final event of Christ's second coming.

- At the rapture, Christ comes in the air and returns to heaven (1 4:17), but at the final event of the second coming, Christ comes to the earth to dwell and reign ([Matt. 25:31–32](#)).
- At the rapture, Christ gathers His own (1 4:16–17), but at the final event of the second coming, angels gather the elect ([Matt. 24:31](#)).
- At the rapture, Christ comes to reward (1 4:17), but at the final event of the second coming, Christ comes to judge ([Matt. 25:31–46](#)).
- At the rapture, resurrection is prominent (1 4:15–16), but at the final event of the second coming, resurrection is not mentioned.
- At the rapture, believers depart the earth (1 4:15–17), but at the final event of the second coming, unbelievers are taken away from the earth ([Matt. 24:37–41](#)).
- At the rapture, unbelievers remain on earth, but at the final event of the second coming, believers remain on earth (M 25:34).
- At the rapture, there is no mention of establishing Christ's Kingdom on earth, but at the final event of the second coming, Christ has come to set up His Kingdom on earth ([Matt. 25:31](#), [34](#)).
- At the rapture, believers will receive glorified bodies (cf. 1 15:51–57), but at the final event of the second coming, no one will receive glorified bodies.

Additionally, several of Christ's parables in Matthew 13 confirm differences between the rapture and the final event of Christ's second coming.

- In the parable of the wheat and tares, the tares (unbelievers) are taken out from among the wheat (believers) at the second coming ([Matt. 13:30](#), [40](#)), but believers are removed from among unbelievers at the rapture (1 4:15–17).
- In the parable of the dragnet, the bad fish (unbelievers) are taken out from among the good fish (believers) at Christ's second coming ([Matt. 13:48–50](#)), but believers are removed from among unbelievers at the rapture (1 4:15–17).

Finally, the rapture is not mentioned in either of the most detailed second coming texts—Matthew 24 and Revelation 19. This is to be expected in light of the observations above, because the pretribulational rapture will have occurred seven years earlier.

7. Revelation 3:10 Promises that the Church Will Be Removed Prior to Daniel's Seventieth Week

The issue here is whether the phrase “keep you from the hour of testing” means “a continuing safe state outside of” or “safe emergence from within.”

- The Greek preposition *ek* can mean “emergence from within,” or it can mean “a continued state”
- *tereon* is used in [Acts 12:5](#), [1 Peter 1:4](#), and [Jude 21](#), and implies “previous and continued existence within.” Therefore *tereon ek* logically must be understood as “continued existence

- If the immunity of saints to wrath through the tribulation was intended to teach a posttribulational rapture, then John would have used *tereon*, *eis*, or *dia* in [Revelation 3:10](#).
- Consistent with the previous observation, *tereon* meaning “to keep within” in [John 17:15](#) would contradict [1 John 5:19](#) if, in fact, it implied “previous existence ”
- If *tereon* in [Revelation 3:10](#) implies “previous existence within,” it contradicts the prayer in [John 17:15](#) in limiting immunity to God’s Or its alleged promise of total immunity is rendered null and void by the slaughter of saints in [Revelation 6:9–11](#) and [7:14](#).
- Only the interpretation of *tereon* in [Revelation 3:10](#) which understands that the Philadelphian church will not enter the tribulation, that is, they will be kept out or guarded from entering, satisfies a consistent exegesis of the This finding is in perfect harmony only with a pretribulational understanding of the rapture.

It does not seem like the fact of the pre-tribulational “Rapture” is a concern however lately it seems the timing of it is the issue.

The Rapture: A Pre-Darby Rapture

Petterson, David Part of the The Rapture ~ David Petterson series.

No, you didn't miss it. Neither did Darby. The article title is not suggesting that the Rapture occurred before the days of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), but rather is pointing out that a belief in the Rapture of the Church (in particular, a pre-tribulation Rapture) existed and was taught before Darby's birth. As an example of the allegation that belief in a pre-tribulation Rapture is relatively recent, Michael Bird wrote, "The pretrib view ... did not appear on the scene of church history until J.N. Darby in the 1830s." [1] In this article, we will examine some of the references in biblical works pre-dating Darby that either explicitly taught or appear to teach a pre-tribulation Rapture.

The article covers writings in the time of:

Early Witnesses Clement of Rome (35-101), Ignatius of Antioch (died 110), *The Didache* (a late first-century anonymous Christian treatise), *The Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas* (circa 70-130), and *The Shepherd of Hermas* (second century), Victorinus of Petrovium (died 304) was a bishop in modern Slovenia, Syrian church father Pseudo-Ephraem (fourth to sixth century) wrote all reference Christ's imminent return.

The Middle Ages Admittedly, the influence of Origen and Augustine was successful in turning the established church to a belief in amillennialism by around the fifth century. This view would dominate the Medieval period, with little-known exceptions. However, one exception was the Apostolic Brethren in northern Italy. This new (and thus, persecuted) ecclesiastical order eventually numbered in the thousands and evidently held a pre-tribulation Rapture position. In 1316, an anonymous treatise entitled *The History of Brother Dolcino* articulated some of the beliefs of the Apostolic Brethren. [9] Their leader, Brother Dolcino, believed he and his followers would be taken to heaven and protected from the actions of the Antichrist before later descending back to earth, thus holding to a belief in a pre-tribulation Rapture.

Open Archives (post Gutenberg's movable type) Resulted in works or sermons made more widely available from notable authors such as Increase Mather, Cotton Mather, Philip Doddridge and John Gill. William Sherwin (1607-1687) Boston Puritan Increase Mather (1639-1723), father of Cotton Mather, Morgan Edwards (1722-1795)

Far too many references to the Rapture in Watson's published findings to articulate here. He cites Thomas Collier, John Asgill, Robert Maton, John Archer, James Durham, Jeremiah Burroughs, Archbishop James Ussher and dozens of others.

The archives have opened, and the allegation that belief in the Rapture did not appear until Darby in the 1830s simply won't hold.

<https://truthandtidings.com/2020/07/the-rapture-a-pre-darby-rapture/>

Ice, Thomas D., "A Brief History of the Rapture" (2009). Article Archives. 4.
https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/pretrib_arch/4

THE EARLY CHURCH Since imminency is considered to be a crucial feature of pretribulationism by scholars such as John Walvoord,¹ it is significant that the Apostolic Fathers, though posttribulation, at the same time just as clearly taught the pretribulation feature of imminency. Since it was common in the early church to hold contradictory positions without even an awareness of inconsistency, it would not be surprising to learn that their era supports both views. Larry Crutchfield notes, "This belief in the imminent return of Christ within the context of ongoing persecution has prompted us to broadly label the views of the earliest fathers, 'imminent intratribulationism.'" Expressions of imminency abound in the Apostolic Fathers.

Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, The Didache, The Epistle of Barnabas, and The Shepherd of Hermas all speak of imminency. Furthermore, The Shepherd of Hermas speaks of the pretribulational concept of escaping the tribulation.

...Conculsion

... another scholar who is reading through many Latin manuscripts of previously unpublished documents that he has found a number of previously unknown pre-trib rapture statements from pre-nineteenth century Christendom. He is planning on publishing his material in a few years. What these pre-Darby rapture statements prove, if nothing else, is that indeed others did see the rapture taught in Scripture similar to the way that pretribulationists in our own day teach. Thus, the argument that no one ever taught pretribulationism until J. N. Darby in 1830 is just not historically true and it is becoming increasingly clear with each passing year. Maranatha!

https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=pretrib_arch