THE RAPTURE What and When? — Part 47 THE RAPTURE by Dr. Andy Woods Andrew Marshall Woods, Th.M., JD., PhD. Sr. Pastor, Sugar Land Bible Church

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The Rapture

Course Overview

- I. What is the Rapture?
- II. When is the Rapture?
- III. Strengthening the Pre-Tribulational case
- IV. The opposing views
- V. One second after the Rapture



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What is the Rapture?



- 1. An important doctrine
- 2. Distinct from the Second Advent
- 3. Catching away of all living believers (1 Thess 4:17)
- 4. Reunion (1 Thess 4:14-16)
- 5. Resurrection (1 Cor 15:50-54)
- 6. Exemption from death (1 Cor 15:51, 54-56)
- 7. Instantaneous (1 Cor 15:52)
- 8. Mystery (1 Cor 15:51)
- 9. Imminent (1 Cor 15:51; 1 Thess 4:15)
- 10. Traditional doctrine now being recovered

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When is the Rapture?

7 Arguments Favoring the Pre-Tribulation View

- 1. Tribulation's purpose concerns Israel (Jer 30:7; Dan 9:24)
- 2. No biblical reference to the church on earth during the Tribulation period (Rev 4-22)
- 3. Church is promised an exemption from divine wrath (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; Rom 5:9; Rev 3:10; 6:17)
- 4. Rapture is imminent (1 Cor 15:51; 1 Thess 4:15)
- 5. Rapture is a comfort (1 Thess 4:18)
- 6. Antichrist cannot come to power until the restrainer is removed (2 Thess 2:6-7)
- 7. Symbolic parallels (2 Peter 2:5-9)

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Strengthening the Pre-Tribulation Case

- 1. John 14:1-4
- 2. Revelation 3:10
- 3. First Thessalonians 4–5
- 4. Second Thessalonians 2:3a
- 5. Matthew 24–25



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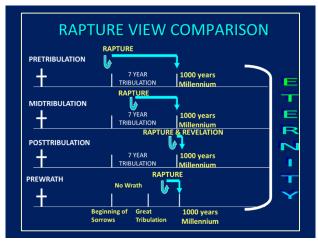


When Will the Rapture Take Place Relative to the Tribulation Period?

- Pre-tribulation rapture theory
- Mid-tribulation rapture theory
- Post-tribulation rapture theory
- Pre-wrath rapture theory
- Partial rapture theory



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Pre-Wrath Rapturism

- I. Description of the view
- II. Six problems with the view considering prior Pre-Tribulational Arguments
- III. Four additional problems with the view

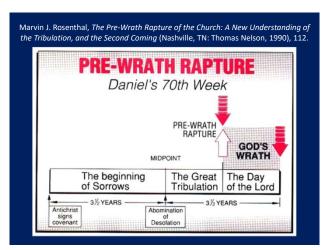


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II. Pre-Wrath Rapture Theory Problems

- A. Places the Church in Daniel's 70th Week
- B. Fails to acknowledge the missing Church (Rev. 4–22)
- C. Confines God's wrath to only a portion of the Tribulation's second half
- D. Denies the Rapture's imminency
- E. Fails to consistently explain how the rapture is a comfort to the believer (John 14:1; 1 Thess. 4:18; Titus 2:13)
- F. Misinterprets the restrainer (2 Thess. 2:6-7) as Michael the Archangel rather than the Holy Spirit

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III. Additional Problems with Pre-Wrath Rapturism

- A. It imposes an artificial construct on Daniel's 70th Week
- B. Great Tribulation (unequaled distress) before God's wrath?
- C. It places the Rapture in Revelation 7:9-17
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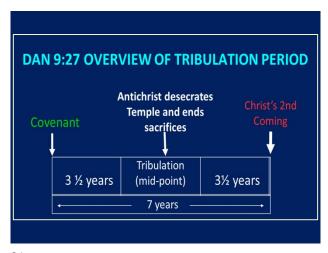
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Daniel 9:27

"And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."



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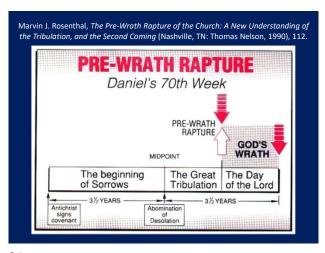
PROPHETIC SYNONYMNS

- A. Division of the Tribulation into two 3½ year periods
 - 1. 42 months Rev. 11:2; 13:5
 - 2. 1260 days Rev. 11:3; 12:6
 - 3. Time, times, and a half a time Dan. 7:25; 12:7; 12:14

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Matthew 24:15-16, 20 "15 Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand) 16 then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains...20 But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath."

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Three Parts?

"...the Scriptures never divide the Tribulation period into thirds. Daniel's prophecy divides the seventieth week in two (Dan 9:27); half of the Tribulation is described as numbering 1260 days (Rev 11:3; 12:6). In fact, since Revelation 12:14 explains that God will protect fleeing Jews for 'a time, and times, and half a time' (1260 days); and since the beginning of this period is the beginning of the last three and one-half years, the Great Tribulation (Matt 24:15-22) must last for 1260 days. The Bible never divides the 1260 days into two 630 days."

Larry D. Pettegrew, "The Messiah's Lecture on the Future of Israel," in Forsoking Israel: How It Happened and Why It Matters, ed. Larry D. Petegrew (The Woodlands, TX: Kress Biblical Resources, 2020), 340...

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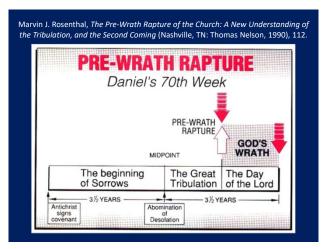


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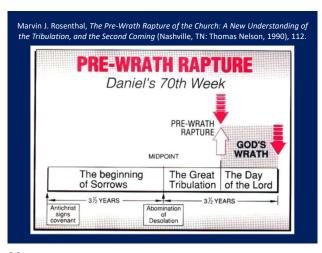
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George Zeller

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"The PRE-WRATH view teaches that the Day of the Lord begins after the Great Tribulation and that the Day of the Lord is the time of God's wrath. Matthew 24:21, Daniel 12:1 and Jeremiah 30:7 all teach that the Great Tribulation is the greatest time of trouble that the world has ever known. Therefore, if the Day of the Lord is distinct from the Great Tribulation, then the Day of the Lord must be LESS SEVERE than the Great Tribulation. But how can the great day of God's wrath be less severe and less troublesome than the Great Tribulation?"

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George Zeller

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"How can God's wrath be less severe than man's wrath? How can the trumpets and bowls be less severe than the fifth seal? How can God's wrath be less severe than Satan's wrath? How can unregenerate men and Satan cause more trouble for this world than the wrathful JUDGE Himself? The PREWRATH view, when compared with Matthew 24:21 and these other verses, makes the Day of the Lord an ANTICLIMAX!"

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Unequaled Distress?

"A...flaw in the prewrath interpretation of Matthew 24:22 is its logical failure. The reason that the Great Tribulation is shortened, according to this verse, is that if it were not, no flesh would be saved. The point of the Scripture is that when the Great Tribulation is over, something better comes on the scene. In the prewrath scheme, however, something more horrible occurs after the Great Tribulation—the Day of the Lord."

Larry D. Pettegrew, "The Messiah's Lecture on the Future of Israel," in Forsoking Israel: How It Happened and Why It Matters, ed. Larry D. Petegrew (The Woodlands, TX: Kress Biblical Resources, 2020), 341.



Unequaled Distress?

"If no flesh would have survived if the Great Tribulation were allowed to continue on twenty-one months, surely no flesh would survive if the Great Tribulation were to be cut short and followed by twenty-one months of a more horrible Day of the Lord. Moreover, Matthew 24:21 says that the Great Tribulation will be the worst time ever. So, how can it be replaced by the Day of the Lord which is more horrible? Wouldn't that be the worst time ever? In fact, the Great Tribulation (Matt 24:21) and the Day of the Lord (Dan 12:1; Jer 30:7) are both said to be the worst time ever, so they must be the same time period or at least overlap."

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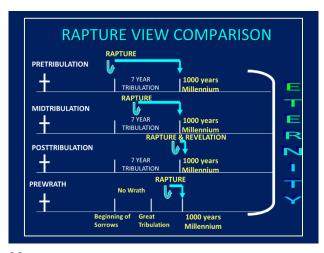
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Revelation 7:9, 13-14

"9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and *all the* tribes, peoples, and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands...¹³ Then one of the elders responded, saying to me, . . .



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Revelation 7:9, 13-14

. . 'These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?' ¹⁴I said to him, 'My lord, you know.' And he said to me, 'These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation [thlipsis], and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'"



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Marvin Rosenthal

"That great multitude represents the true Church which goes into the Seventieth Week of Daniel. They are raptured and at the end of the Great Tribulation but before the Day of the Lord begins. They are raptured before God's wrath is poured out but are not exempt from the ultimate rebellion of unregenerate men...Therefore, in chapter 7 the Church is raptured. But immediately prior to the rapture of the Church the 144,000 Jews are sealed...The 144,000 must be sealed for protection to go through the Day of the Lord before the Church can be caught up to the throne in heaven."

Marvin J. Rosenthal, The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church: A New Understanding of the Tribulation, and the Second Coming (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 185.

PRE-WRATH RAPTURIST – ALAN KURSCHNER			
MATTHEW 24	PARALLELS	REVELATION 6-7	
4-5	The Antichrist / False Christs	1st Seal (6:1-2)	
6-7	Wars	2 nd Seal (6:3-4)	
7	Famine	3 rd Seal (6:5-6)	
9, 21-22	Martyrdom / (Great Tribulation)	4 th Seal (6:7-8)	
9, 21-22	Result of Martyrdom / (Great Tribulation)	5 th Seal (6:9-11)	
29	Celestial Disturbances	6 th Seal (6:12-17)	
30-31	Raptured Saints	Interlude (7:9-17)	
14, 30, 37-40	Day of the Lord's Wrath	7 th Seal (Trumpet, Bowls)	
Alan Kurschner, The Antichrist Before the Day of the Lord: What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Return of Christ (Pompton Lakes, NI: Eschatos, 2013, 99.			

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Revelation 7:9, 13-14

13 . . . 'These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they <u>come</u> (<u>erchomai</u>) from?' ¹⁴ I said to him, 'My lord, you know.' And he said to me, 'These are the ones who <u>come</u> (<u>erchomai</u>) out of the great tribulation [thlípsis], and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'"



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"in a moment [atomos], in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."

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Rev. 7:14

Robert L. Thomas, Revelation 1–7: An Exegetical Commentary, ed. Kenneth Barker (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 497, n. 119.

"A...possible understanding that it is a departure after the Great Tribulation is completed (Marvin Rosenthal, The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990], p. 185) can be dismissed because it neglects the ongoing nature of the departure indicated by the present participle ἐρχόμενοι and rests on an unwarranted distinction between the Great Tribulation and the day of the God's wrath."



Gerald B. Stanton

Kept from the Hour: Biblical Evidence for the Pretribulational Return of Christ (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956; reprint, Miami Springs, FL: Schoettle, 1991), 390.

"However, the innumerable multitude is not like the Church, which goes to heaven as a group at the rapture. Rather, they are martyrs who one at a time lay down their lives throughout the seven-year period. The Greek present tense in Revelation 7:14 stresses that they 'continually come' out of great Tribulation, and obviously do not go to heaven as a single group. It is likewise strange, if they do represent the Church, that John could not recognize them, for John was an apostle of Christ, a member of the early Church, and part of its essential foundation. Also, the Church is composed of all believers since Pentecost, and cannot be limited solely to Tribulation martyrs."

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Distinctions Between 144,000 & Multitude			
144,000	MULTITUDE		
Revelation 7:1-8	Revelation 7:9-17		
Numbered	Innumerable		
Jews	All nations		
Sealed	Slain		
Sealed <u>before</u> the Tribulation	Converted out of the Tribulation		
Hitchcock and Ice, The Truth Behind Left Behind, 77			

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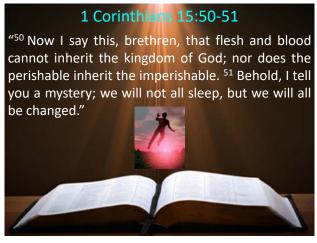
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¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be <u>caught up</u> together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words."

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18











John A. Sproule

"An Exegetical Defense of Pretribulationalism" (Th.D. diss., Grace Theological Seminary, 1981), 53.

"Where does Paul mention the darkening of the sun (Matt. 24:29), the moon not giving its light (Matt. 24:29), the stars falling from the sky (Matt. 24:29), the powers of the heavens being shaken (Matt. 24:29), all the tribes of the earth mourning (Matt. 24:30), all the world seeing the coming of the Son of Man (Matt. 24:30), or God sending forth angels (Matt.24:31)?"

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Paul D. Feinberg

'Response: Paul D. Feinberg," in The Rapture: Pre-, Mid-, or Posttribulational, ed. Richard R. Reiter (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 225.

"Notice what happens when you examine both passages carefully. In Matthew the Son of Man comes on the clouds, while in 1 Thessalonians 4 the ascending believers are in them. In Matthew the angels gather the elect; in 1 Thessalonians the Lord Himself (note the emphasis) gathers the believers. Thessalonians only speaks of the voice of the archangel. In the Olivet Discourse nothing is said about a resurrection, while in the latter text it is the central point. In the two passages the differences in what will take place prior to the appearance of Christ is striking. Moreover, the order of ascent is absent from Matthew in spite of the fact that it is the central part of the epistle."

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Preview of Matthew 24-25

- I. The problem
- II. The larger context
- III. The immediate context (23:37-39)
- IV. The Disciples' questions (24:1-3)
- V. The Tribulation's first half (24:4-14)
- VI. The Tribulation's mid-point (24:15-20)
- VII. The Tribulation's second half (24:21-22)
- VIII. The Second Advent (24:23-31)
- IX. Eight parabolic exhortations (24:32-25:46)





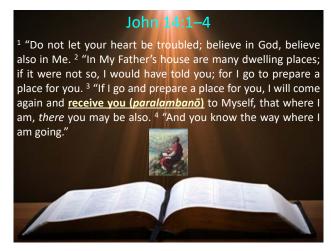


"11 Then it will happen on that day that the Lord Will again recover the second time with His hand The remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, And from the islands of the sea. 12 And He will lift up a standard for the nations And assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth."

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Matthew 24:36-41 36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. 37 For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took (airō) them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. 40 Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken (paralambanō) and one will be left. 41 "Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken (paralambanō) and one will be left."

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Robert Van Kampen

The Rapture Questioned Answered: Plain and Simple (Grand Rapids: Fleming Revell, 1997), 181-82.

"But is that what the text really teaches? The Greek answers, 'No!' The Greek word behind took that is used in connection with Noah—'the flood came and took them all away'—is from the Greek word aírō. But when Christ describes how it will be at 'the coming of the Son of Man,' when 'one will be taken and one will be left,' the Greek word for taken is entirely different. Here the Greek verb is paralambánō. That difference is both important and exciting! Paralambánō does not mean 'to be taken away,' as does the Greek verb aírō; it means 'to embrace or to receive intimately, to or for oneself.'... Christ uses this word...in John 14:3...the most...

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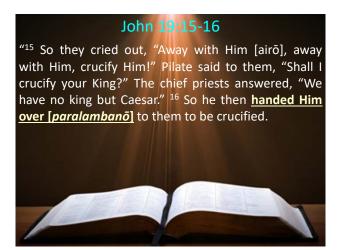


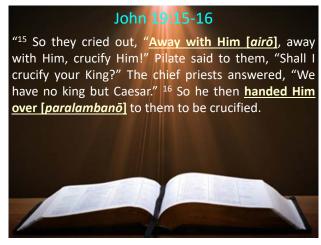
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"...quoted of all Rapture passages in the New Testament...'
Receive' translates paralambánō. Rather than picturing someone who is being taken away to judgment, this Greek verb conveys quite the opposite. Paralambánō means to intimately receive someone to oneself, as in the passage above. It would be more than a little confusing, then, if Christ used the word paralambánō five times to refer to the wicked being taken away to judgment—which is absolutely contrary to the real intent of the Greek verb—and then the last time used it to refer to the righteous being received in an intimate manner by Himself at the rapture of His saints!"

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Conclusion

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