

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE RAPTURE AND THE SECOND ADVENT

1. The basis of the pre-tribulation rapture position:
 - A. The pre-tribulation rapture position rests squarely upon the premise of the literal method of interpretation of Scripture.
 - 1) This means to interpret the passage in the light of the original language and its context. This requires training in the languages of Hebrew, Chaldean, Aramaic and Greek.
 - 2) The interpreter should begin his work by studying the grammatical sense of the text with the aid of the languages of that text.
 - a) The grammatical sense is the starting point of all correct, edifying Bible study.
 - b) If the student does not understand how the words were used in the time in which they were written, in the language they were written, then he will not reach any correct understanding of the text.
 - 3) Grammatical and historical interpretation are synonymous.
 - a) The special laws of grammar were the result of each circumstance the writer found himself in, and history will throw us back into these circumstances.
 - b) The writers of Scripture used their languages of the day to record Scripture. They wrote so that the people of that day would receive God's message for them.
 - c) The writers obeyed the laws of grammar and syntax as they wrote under the leading of the Holy Spirit, 2 Peter 1:20-21.
 - d) As we investigate the original languages in their historical settings, then we see exactly what God had to say to the people of that day. Also, we see what He is saying to us today by way of application.
 - e) The Bible has only one interpretation and it comes from the grammatical-historical interpretation of the Holy Scriptures!

However, it applies to every generation of mankind for all time because although time moves on, God does not change, and the basic nature of man does not change!

- 4) The grammatical-historical method of interpretation is the method which most fully commends itself to the judgment and conscience of Christian scholars.
 - a) Its fundamental principle is to gather from the Scriptures the precise meaning which the writers intended to convey.
 - b) It applies to the Bible the same principles, the same grammatical process and exercise of common sense and reason which we apply to other books.
 - c) The person who is trained educationally, intellectually, and morally will, with the suitable qualifications, be able through the grammatical historical method to accept the claims of the Bible without prejudice or preconceived ideas, with no ambition to prove them true or false, investigate the language and import of each book with fearless independence.
 - d) He will master the language of the writer, the particular dialect which he used, and his peculiar style and manner of expression.
 - e) He will inquire into the circumstances under which he wrote, the manners and customs of the age, and the purpose or object which he had in view.
 - f) He has a right to assume that no sensible author will be knowingly inconsistent with himself or seek to confuse his readers.

2. Arguments of the pre-tribulation position.

A. Literal method of interpretation.

- 1) The difference between Amillennialists and Premillennialists is the method of interpretation of the Scriptures. The problem comes in the area of interpretation of prophecy.
- 2) Premillennialists use the literal method; Amillennialists use the

figurative method.

- 3) Premillennialists believe that Christ will literally return to earth and set up His earthly kingdom for one thousand years, which is based on Old Testament prophecies and promises.
 - 4) Because of this the same literal method will be applied to the Rapture teaching.
 - 5) While the Postmillennialist interprets the book of Revelation using the allegorical or spiritualizing method of interpretation. He will interpret it as yet future but spiritualize away the literalness of the events in an attempt to harmonize these events with other Scriptures in the light of his interpretation.
- 6) The Mid-Tribulational position will apply the literal method only to the last half of the Tribulation. The Midtribulationalist will spiritualize the first half of the Tribulation to permit the Church to enter. This is inconsistent; either you use one method all the way through or not at all; don't change horses in midstream.
- 7) The literal method consistently employed in the interpretation can lead to no other conclusion than that the Church will be raptured before the 70th week of Daniel.
 - 8) Note that this does not lead to Ultradispensationalism for that system does not come from being literal, it arises from exegetical considerations.
- B. The second argument for premillennialism is the nature of the 70th week of Daniel.
- 1) The 70th week of Daniel is described as:
 - a) Wrath, Revelation 6:16-17; 11:18; 14:19; 15:1, 7; 16:1, 19; I Thessalonians 1:9-10; 5:9; Zephaniah 1:15, 18.
 - b) Judgment, Revelation 14:7, 15:4; 16:5-7; 19:2.
 - c) Indignation, Isaiah 26:20-21; 34:1-3.
 - d) Punishment, Isaiah 24:20-21.

- e) Hour of trial, Revelation 3:10.
 - f) Hour of trouble, Jeremiah 30:7.
 - g) Destruction, Joel 1:15.
 - h) Darkness, Joel 2:2; Zephaniah 1:14-18; Amos 5:18.
 - i) Note that each of the above terms describes the entire Tribulation period, not just some portion of it. The Tribulation is a period of divine wrath, God's anger upon mankind.
- 2) Those who are spiritually born again are not subject to God's divine wrath, but have been delivered from it.
- a) Romans 8:1, "There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus..." See doctrine of positional truth.
 - b) I Thessalonians 5:9 states clearly that we will not be judged because of our salvation in Christ.
 - c) See the doctrine of eternal security.
 - d) See the doctrine of the 44 positional possessions.
 - e) See the doctrine of the Book of Life.
 - f) Each passage that is associated with salvation promises the believer "eternal life," "everlasting life," which indicates God will not allow judgment, or loss of salvation, for one who has believed. John 3:16; 3:36; 20:31; John 1:12; 2:23; Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 1:13; I Corinthians 1:21.
- 3) The scope of the 70th week for Israel.
- a) The Tribulation is a period of history where the anger of God is poured out upon the whole earth for their refusal to accept Christ as their Savior, Revelation 3:10; Isaiah 34:2; 24:1, 4-5, 16-17, 18-21.
 - b) While the whole earth is in view, the specific time of the

Tribulation is referred to as the time of “Jacob’s Trouble,” which refers to Israel, Jeremiah 30:7.

- c) It is called the “Day of the Lord,” or the “Day of Jehovah,” which shows it’s relationship to Israel.
 - d) The Tribulation is part of the prophecy to Daniel in chapter 9 of Daniel and refers to Israel, not the Church.
 - e) The Church was a mystery to the people of the Old Testament as explained in Ephesians 3:1-6, and Colossians 1:25-27. Therefore, THERE IS NO PROPHECY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WHICH CONCERNS THE CHURCH AGE!
 - f) The Church did not have its existence until after the death of Christ, Ephesians 5:25-26; until after the resurrection of Christ, Romans 4:25; Colossians 3:1-3, until after the ascension of Christ, Ephesians 1:19-20, and until after the descent of the Holy Spirit at the Feast of Pentecost, Acts 2.
 - g) Therefore, since the Church did not begin until after all of the above events, it is not referred to in the Old Testament Scriptures at all.
 - h) Principle: Since the Church did not have any part in the first 69 weeks of God’s program for Israel, it can have no part in the 70th week which is still God’s program for the nation Israel!
 - i) If one searches Matthew 24, Daniel 12, Luke 21, Mark 13, Jeremiah 30, and Revelation 7 he will find that the Tribulation is for Israel after the mystery program for the Church has been concluded!
- 4) Purpose of the 70th week.
- a) Revelation 3:10 states that those who “dwell upon the earth” are going to enter an hour of temptation.
 - b) These who “dwell upon the earth” are identified in Revelation 6:10, 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6, and 17:8 as being unbelievers who have rejected Christ as Savior and made earth their permanent home! The Greek word KATOIKEO means a

permanent earth dweller, or literally “to dwell according to the norms and standards” of earth. This is their moral classification rather than their geographical classification in the Greek.

- c) Note there is no reference to the Church in these passages, for the Church saints are not “earth dwellers,” they are dwellers of heaven, Ephesians 2:19,3:6; Romans 8:17 and Philippians 3:20 states, “for our citizenship is in heaven.” See also Colossians 1:5; I Peter 1:4.
- d) Another purpose for the 70th week is found in relation to Israel. Malachi 4:5-6, which promises Elijah’s coming to prepare the people of the King. In Luke 1:17 we see John the Baptizer coming to prepare for the First Advent of Christ and John came in the power of Elijah. John was not Elijah as he clearly stated.

However, if the Jews would have accepted his message then the Millennial Kingdom would have come at that time, Matthew 11:14. Both John and Elijah have ministries of preparing Israel for the coming of their King. No such ministry is needed for the Church!

Therefore, the purpose of the 70th week is to prepare Israel for their coming King, and the pouring out of God’s wrath upon the earth dwellers.

- 5) The unity of the 70th week.
 - a) The Tribulation is divided up into two sections; each section containing about 3 ½ years.
 - b) This is seen in Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:14-15; Revelation 13, and the nature of the week is ONE.
 - c) It is impossible to permit the existence of the Church in the week as a unit and it becomes equally impossible to adopt the position that the Church may be in the first half of it.

- d) The character of the week remains the same and there is no adjustment in it for the existence of the Church.
- 6) The Rapture of the Church.
- a) There is a distinction between the Church and Israel for the Church is made up of those who confess faith in Christ as their Savior, while Israel does not confess Him.
 - b) There are some in the Church who pretend to have salvation but in reality have never accepted Christ as their personal Savior. These will go into the Tribulation, Revelation 2:22.
 - c) Israel is composed of those who are born physically of Israel. Israel will go into the Tribulation for their unbelief, just as those gentile unbelievers who are in the Church Age
 - d) The true Church Age believers acknowledges Christ as their Savior, while the professing Church members do not. Churches are full of people claiming to be spiritually born again believers but they have not personally accepted Christ as their Savior. God sorts them out at the Rapture.
 - e) There is a distinction between the true Church and true spiritual Israel. Any Jew saved spiritually by belief in Christ, prior to Pentecost, is spiritual Israel. There is no spiritual Israel during the Church Age for they are incorporated into the Church. After the rapture spiritual Israel is mentioned again.
 - f) The true Church will not go into the Tribulation because it is the body of Christ. Christ is the head, Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18, the true Church is His bride, Ephesians 5:23, the object of His love, Ephesians 5:25. The Church belongs to Christ and He will not subject it to judgment, wrath, or indignation, as stated in I John 4:17; Romans 8:1. Christ has died for all men and those who believe in Him as personal Savior will not be judged for He was judged for us, I Peter 2:21-24; 2

Corinthians 5:21.

We stand positionally perfect in Christ although while on earth we experientially grow thru study and application.

- g) Israel is cleansed during the Tribulation . The Church is already cleansed by being “in Christ.” The Church will be with Him in heaven or else they would have to be on earth under Satan’s direct rulership which Christ would not allow! Christ will not allow His bride to be turned over the Satan. Revelation 13:17.
- 7) The Church was a mystery in the Old Testament.
- a) The mystery is that God is going to form the Jews and Gentiles into one body and call them Church, Ephesians 3:1-7; Romans 16:25-27; Colossians 1:26-27, which was revealed after Israel rejected.
 - b) After Israel rejected Christ as Messiah in Matthew 12:23-24, then He announced the coming Church in Matthew 16:18. The Church Age arrived on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. God brought out Paul to be an apostle to the Gentiles which demonstrated the final rejection of Israel and the beginning of the Church.
- 8) Distinctions between the Church and Israel.
- a) God’s purpose for Israel is mentioned in the Covenants of the Old Testament, but His purpose for the Church is mentioned by heavenly promises through the Gospels.
 - b) Israel is a physical seed of Abraham of which some become the spiritual seed through faith in Christ, but the Church is a spiritual seed only.
 - c) To become Israel one must be born physically a Jew, but to become Church one must be born spiritually.
 - d) The headship of Israel is Abraham, but the head of the Church is Christ.
 - e) Israel is one nationality, but the Church is from all

nations.

- f) Israel's dispensation begins with Abraham to Christ, breaks for the Church Age, and then picks up the last seven years during the Tribulation.
- g) Israel is nationally guilty for the death of Christ and will be saved nationally by Christ's return but the Church is saved by accepting Christ now.
- h) God the Father was the Father to the nation of Israel, while each Church Age believer is directly related to Him through Christ.
- i) Jesus Christ is Messiah, Immanuel, King to Israel, but He is Savior, Lord, Bridegroom and Head to the Church.
- j) The Holy Spirit filled Israel's saved ones temporarily for special jobs, but indwells the Church permanently.
- k) Israel was under the Mosaic Law; the Church is under grace.
- l) Goodbye to Israel is seen in the Olivet discourse, but hello to the Church is seen in the Upper Room Discourse.
- m) Christ will return to Israel at the Second Advent in power and glory at the end of the seven year Tribulation, but He will return to receive the Church to Himself at the Rapture without the world seeing Him.
- n) Israel is the servant of God, the Church are co-reigners with Him.

These clear contrasts show distinction between Israel and the Church which make it impossible to identify the two in one program, which it is necessary to do if the Church goes through the 70th week.

3. Distinctions between the Rapture and the Second Advent.

A. The Rapture involves the removal of all believers from the earth and leaves

unbelievers to stay for the Tribulation. The Second Advent takes all unbelievers from the earth and leaves the believers to go into the Millennium.

- B. The Rapture could occur at any moment and is not preceded by signs of the times, while the Second Advent of Christ is.
- 1) There are no signs for the Rapture, John 14:2-3; Acts 1:1, I Corinthians 15:51-52; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 3:4; I Thessalonians 1:10; I Timothy 6:14; James 5:8; I Peter 3:3-4 and we are warned to be alert for the Rapture could occur any time in I Thessalonians 5:6; Titus 2:13; Revelation 3:3. We are told to watch for the Lord Himself, not signs.
 - 2) Since the Rapture is imminent there are no signs for its happening.
 - 3) In 2 Thessalonians 2 we see Christians that were afraid that the Rapture had already happened and left them behind. They were suffering at the hands of Rome so they concluded they were in the Tribulation! Paul straightened them out on this issue.
 - a) Paul shows them in verse 3 there had to be a departure from Christianity first before the Rapture occurred. This has happened hundreds of times already in history.
 - b) Paul also mentions that the man of sin, Revelation 13, has to make his appearance on earth.
 - c) Paul argues in verse 7 that the lawless antichrist system was already working upon the earth; the man of sin will not appear until after the Rapture.
 - d) The Holy Spirit, the restrainer, is keeping antichrist held down until God removes the believers from earth. I Thessalonians 4:13-17 shows those "IN CHRIST" will be raptured before the man of sin is turned loose on the earth.
- C. At the Rapture the believers are caught up in the air, I Thessalonians 4:13-17 to meet Christ, but at the Second Advent He returns physically to earth to conquer and rule.
- D. At the Rapture Christ takes His bride; at the Second Advent He returns with

her.

- E. The rapture results in the removal of the Church and the beginning of the Tribulation; the Second Advent brings the coming Millennium.
- F. The Rapture is imminent but the Second Advent is preceded by signs.
- G. The Rapture brings comfort, the Second Advent brings judgment.
- H. The Rapture is not told in the Old Testament, but the Second Advent is told in both the Old and New Testaments.
- I. At the Rapture believers receive rewards; at the Second Advent Israel and Gentiles receive rewards.
- J. The Rapture does not change creation; the Second Advent does.
- K. At the Rapture Israel's covenants are unfilled, but at the Second Advent they are fulfilled.
- L. At the Rapture evil is not judged; at the Second Advent it is judged.
- M. The Rapture takes place before the day of wrath; the Second Advent follows it.
- N. The Rapture is phrased by "The Lord is at hand," Philippians 4:5, while the Second Advent for Israel is phrased with "the Kingdom is at hand," Matthew 24:14.
- O. If one reads the Epistles of the New Testament he would find that there is no reference to preparing the believers for the Tribulation. Surely if the Church were to go through the Great Tribulation there would be some help for us. I Peter 2:19-26; 4:12; James 1:2-4, 10-11; 2 Thessalonians 1:4-10; 2 Timothy 3:10-14, 4:5 gives help for aid in Church Age suffering but mentions no Tribulation in them.