

# **The Pre-Mature, Pre-Trib Rapture**

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# THE PRE-MATURE, PRE-TRIB RAPTURE

By James Trimm

The doctrine of the Pre-Trib Rapture is a late Christian doctrine which is running rampant in Messianic Judaism. This late Christian doctrine did not even emerge in Christendom until the nineteenth century. This late Christian theology has somehow managed to find favor with many of the Messianic movement who claim to be restoring the ancient Jewish roots of the original followers of Yeshua. In this article it will be proven that the doctrine of the Pre-Trib rapture is:

1. A late invention of Christendom with NO Jewish roots whatsoever.
2. A doctrine which runs counter to the teachings of the scriptures themselves.
3. A doctrine of "peace and safety" which may destroy the faith of many in the end.

## TERMINOLOGY

Before beginning lets define some basic terms we will be using:

**RAPTURE** – This term has become very controversial. In the occult the term has been used for centuries to refer to occult levitation. The biblical origin of the term however, in 1Thes. 4:17 where we read the words "*caught up*," the Latin Vulgate uses the Latin word "*RAPTOS*" here. The "*rapture*" then, is the "*being caught up*" described in 1Thes. 4:17.

**NATZAL** – Hebrew word for "*deliverance*." This word has come to be used by many Pre-Trib Messianic Jews as an attempt at a Jewish/Messianic term for the pre-tribulation rapture.

**KH'TAF** – Aramaic word for "*caught up*" in the Aramaic text of 1Thes. 4:17.

**POST-TRIB** - The view that the KH'TAF (rapture) will is simply part of the second coming of Messiah and will therefore take place at the end of the tribulation and the beginning of the millennial Kingdom.

**PRE-TRIB** – This view maintains that the rapture is a separate event from the second coming of Messiah and that it will take place seven years earlier, immediately before the tribulation.

**MID-TRIB** – This view also maintains that the "*rapture*" is a separate event from the second coming of Messiah and that it will take place 3 ½ years earlier, halfway through the tribulation, at about the time of the "*abomination of desolation*" (the revealing of the Anti-Christ).

**PRIOR-RAPTURE** – This is any view which maintains that the rapture and the second coming of Messiah are separate events and that the rapture precedes the second coming of Messiah by some period of time.

**PARTIAL RAPTURE** – This view maintains that only part of the Body of Messiah will be "*raptured*."

**PASHAT** – The plain, simple, literal meaning of a text.

## WHERE'S THE PASHAT?

One serious problem with Christendom's pre-trib rapture teaching is that it has no basis in pashat. Although pre-tribbers often claim that their beliefs are based on the plain literal meaning of the scriptures, the reality is that such an approach does not produce a belief in a pre-trib rapture. Even Hal Lindsey, perhaps the world's best known advocate of a pre-trib rapture, admits that his belief in such is not based on the plain literal meaning of the scriptures. Lindsey admits that he cannot "*point to any single verse that clearly says the rapture will occur before... the tribulation.*" (The Rapture by Hal Lindsey p. 32). Instead Lindsey claims "*pretribulationism is based largely on arguments from inference and silence.*" (ibid p. 31).

If pretribulationism does not come from a pashat understanding of the scriptures then one must ask, where did it originate and why do so many believe it?

## DISPENSATIONALISM AND PRETRIBISM

During the 1820's and 1830's a Christian theologian named John Darby (founder of the Plymouth Brethren) developed a new systematic theology called Dispensationalism. Dispensationalism has since

become very popular in Christendom. Somehow this late Christian invention has gained the favor of many claiming to be returning to the Jewish roots of the original followers of Yeshua. It is a fact that Dispensationalism did not exist until the nineteenth century. It has no roots in Judaism whatsoever and did not even exist in Christianity until the 19th century.

Like most 19th century theologians John Darby was an anti-nomian, he believed that the Law of Moses had passed away at the cross. Darby was disturbed however with certain problems created by that theology. Darby noticed that during the seven years of Daniel's final week the offerings are being made at the Temple. Since the Law of Moses was clearly being kept during this seven year tribulation, Darby concluded that the Law comes back into effect at the beginning of the tribulation. This train of thought caused Darby to segregate biblical and prophetic history into compartmentalized ages. Darby theorized an age of Law that ended at the cross and an age of grace or church age that began at the cross. Then at the seven year tribulation the age of Law kicks back in and the church age of grace ends. This created a problem for Darby's theory. How can the age of Law return if the Church is still here? Darby saw the age of Law as an age in which God dealt with Israel and the tribulation as a return to God dealing with Israel. So what happens to the Church? Surely the Church will not leave Grace and come under the Law of Moses. As a result Darby adopted the idea of a pre-trib rapture which had become popular among the Irvingites. This idea had the Church leave the earth at the beginning of the tribulation, leaving Israel behind to enter the tribulation and the age of law's return. Darby now had another problem. If the Church is raptured leaving Israel behind, then what about so-called "Jewish Christians." Do they get raptured with the Church, or stay behind with Israel. Darby proposed yet another solution: Church/Israel dichotomy. This theory taught that a Jew who becomes a believer in Messiah becomes part of the Church and is no longer part of Israel. As a result no one can be both a part of the Church and Israel. Jewish believers, according to this theory, stop being Jews and become part of the Church of God, which he taught contained people that are not Jews or gentiles. Thus the three pillars of Dispensationalism are:

- 1) The Law is not for today
- 2) The pre-trib rapture
- 3) Church Israel dichotomy

Now Messianic Jews cannot accept number one or number 3. Number two was only needed because of a belief in number 1. Number 2 does not work without number 3 which was created to solve problems created by number 2. As a result Messianic Judaism is incompatible with Dispensationalism. Two of the three pillars which must be present to support Dispensationalism are noncompatible with Messianic Judaism. Moreover the only remaining pillar cannot stand alone, it only exists to solve a problem created by number 1 and it cannot stand without number 3. When examined in light of the truths that Messianic Jews have, the whole structure of Dispensationalism comes crashing down. It is a late 19th century invention of Christendom with NO roots in first century Judaism at all.

## HOW MANY COMINGS OF MESSIAH?

Almost immediately it becomes apparent that prior-rapturists believe not in two comings of Messiah, but three comings of Messiah. Since the post-tribulation return of the Messiah has been clearly recognized as the "*Second coming of Messiah*" for centuries, the prior rapturists must either relate this coming "*the third coming of Messiah*" or, as most of them do, insist that their prior-rapture is not actually a "*coming of Messiah*." Prior-rapturists insist that their prior rapture is not a "*coming*" of the Messiah, but merely an "*appearance*" of the Messiah. If this is true then the scriptures should clearly bear this out. If the prior-rapturist theory is true then the scriptures should teach a pre-trib "*appearance*" of Messiah which is not a "*coming of the Messiah*" followed by a post trib "*coming of the Messiah*." We should not see the KH'TAF (rapture) referred to as a "*coming*" of the Lord in the scriptures. We should also not expect the post trib coming of the Messiah labeled as an "*appearance*." Now let's examine the scriptures:

I charge you therefore before Elohim, and the Adon Yeshua the Messiah, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom.  
(2Tim. 4:1)

Here it is clearly the end of the tribulation and the beginning of the Kingdom which occurs at the appearance of Messiah.

So Messiah was once offered to bear the sins of many; and to them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.  
(Heb. 9:28)

Here the text seems to discuss the post-trib coming of Messiah. If prior-rapturists are correct then this text should either read "*come the second time*" or "*appear a third time*."

Be patient therefore brothers, unto the coming of the Lord.  
(James 5:7a)

This text seems to tell us that our hope is to look for the "*coming of the Lord*" not an "*appearance of the Lord*."

For this we say to you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel,

and with the trump of Elohim: and the dead in Messiah shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up (raptured) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.  
(1Thes. 4:15-17)

This passage is the definitive rapture text. But look, this passage is describing a "*coming of the Lord*."

It becomes clear by examining the texts that prior-rapturists believe not in two comings of the Messiah but three. This theory is clearly at odds with the scriptures which teach only two comings of Messiah.

## THIEF IN THE NIGHT

One of the catchphrases used by prior-rapturists is the phrase "*thief in the night*." The prior-rapturists use this term to describe their prior rapture as a "*secret rapture*" in which the Church is secretly snatched away. This is however a complete misuse of the biblical term "*thief in the night*." The "*thief in the night*" parable is one of the many parables Yeshua told (Mt. 24:42-51) it is referred to in the scriptures on three additional places (1Thes. 5:2-10; 2Pt. 3:10; Rev. 3:3 & Rev. 16:15). A true analysis of the term "*thief in the night*" as it is used in the scriptures will reveal a post-trib rapture which is anything but a secret prior-rapture.

The first place to look is the parable itself. The thief in the night parable is given by Yeshua in Mt. 24:42-44:

Watch therefore: for you know not what hour your Lord does come. But know this, that if the good-man of he house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be you also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of Man comes.

There are a number of important elements to this parable. First it should be noted that the "*thief*" in this parable is clearly the Messiah. However in the parable of the Thief in the Night the Messiah is a thief who comes at an unexpected time. He is not pictured as "*stealing the church away*" If anything the assembly is the victim of his surprise visit, but not the thing being stolen. Secondly we note that the thief/Messiah comes at a time that the Assembly does not expect him. Finally it is significant that the thief comes at a time later than the Assembly expected and found the Assembly sleeping. Throughout the scriptures sleeping is a type of apostasy (see Is. 29:10 = Rom. 11:8). The Thief in the Night parable is part of a section of scripture beginning in Mt. 24:42 and ending in Mt. 25:13 in which Yeshua illustrates that the Messiah comes later than expected to a sleeping assembly which expected him earlier. Yeshua first states this theme in verse 42. Then in Mt. 24:43 Yeshua give the thief in the night parable.

Then in verse 44 Yeshua restates this theme. Then in Mt. 24:45-51 Yeshua gives the parable of the "*faithful and wise servant*." In this parable also the Messiah comes at a time later than the servant expected (verses 48 & 50) to find an apostate servant (verses 48-49). Finally Yeshua gives the illustration of the "*ten virgins*" (Mt. 25:1-12) in which the bridegroom comes later than the virgins expected. The virgins (at least some of them) are clearly believers for five of them have oil in their lamps. The bridegroom comes to find the virgins sleeping. Even though many of them had oil in their lamps, they thought the Messiah would come sooner than he did and as a result they fell into a sleep of apostasy. Rather than teaching a pre-trib rapture this section of scripture warns us that much of the assembly will expect the Messiah sooner than he comes (pre-trib), and when the Messiah comes later than the Assembly thought he was supposed to (post-trib) these believers fall into apostate sleep. The pretribbers have been falsely taught by many of the teachers of Christendom that the Bible teaches Messiah will rescue them from the tribulation before it comes. When this does not happen many of them will lose faith and think that the scriptures are a lie. They will fall into an apostate sleep. In Rev. 3:3 we read:

...If therefore you shall not watch, I will come on you as a thief, and you shall not know what hour I come upon you.

This passage clearly refers to the material in Mt. 24:42-44. Here Messiah is addressing the Assembly at Sardis (actual believers) and indicates that he will come at a time that the Assembly does not expect. The implication in the phrase "*If therefor you shall not keep watch...*" is that the Messiah will come later than expected to find sleeping/apostate believers.

In 2Peter 3:10 we read:

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

The "*day*" referred to here is the 1,000 year day of the millennial Kingdom (2Pt. 3:8; Ps. 90:4; Rev. 20:2, 7). This 1,000 year "*day*"

begins with the second coming of Messiah (Rev. 19:11-20:2) and ends with the destruction of the earth by fire (Rev. 20:7-21:1). Here the "*Lord will come like a thief*" (2Pt. 3:10) definitely refers to the second coming of the Messiah at the end of the tribulation and the beginning of the 1,000 years. This is anything but a stealthy silent secret rapture thief. This is a noisy thief who will cause the heavens to pass away with a "*roar.*"

In Rev. 16:15 we read:

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

This passage occurs in context of the events of the 1,000 year day mentioned above. Moreover the passage also reflects a thief that comes later than expected to find an apostate Assembly.

Finally in 1Thes. 5:2-10 we read:

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction comes upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But you, brethers, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For Elohim hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Adon Yeshua the Messiah, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

Now in reading this passage we should recall the Thief in the Night parable that is clearly being referred to here. Here we learn that the sleeping apostates will be duped by a "*peace and safety*" doctrine

(verse 3) however "*sudden destruction comes upon them...and they shall not escape*" (verse 3). Here those that expect the Messiah to come later than he does believe in a "*peace and safety*" teaching and fall into apostasy when the Messiah does not come as soon as they expect but instead "*sudden destruction comes upon them*" something they apparently expected to "*escape*." At this point they seem to fall into a sleep of apostasy. A great falling away comes when pretribblers are disappointed when they enter the tribulation instead of escaping it in a pre-trib rapture. But wait! Look at 1Thes 5:1! This whole section of scripture refers to the timing of the "*rapture*" event of 1Thes. 4:16-18. In fact, the chapter change from 1Thes. 4:18 to 5:1 occurs in the middle of a paragraph!

The reference to the thief in the night parable in 1Thes. 4:16-5:10 is also important for another reason. This reference gives us some context for the "*rapture*" event of 1Thes. 4:16-17. The thief in the night parable of Mt. 24:43 takes place in a large segment of Matthew (Mt. 24:29-25:46) which clearly discusses the post-trib (Mt. 24:29) second coming of Messiah. The thief of Mt. 24:42-44 comes at a time that is like "*the days of Noah... before the flood*" (Mt. 24:37-41 with Mt, 24:42-51). Luke also discusses this time that is like the days of Noah (Mt. 24:37-41 = Lk. 26-36). Luke goes on to say that those "*taken*" in Mt.24:37-41 = Lk. 17:26-36 will be consumed by birds of prey (see Lk. 17:37 = Mt. 24:28). These men consumed by birds of prey are those who come against Israel and are destroyed at the second coming (Rev. 19:11-21 esp. 19:17-18, 21). The timing of the "*thief*" event is therefore that of the second coming of Messiah in Rev. 19:11-21. Since the timing of "*thief*" event of 1Thes. 5:2-10 is that of the "*rapture*" event of 1Thes. 4:16-18 (1Thes. 5:1 states clearly that 1Thes. 5:2-10 refers to the timing of 1Thes. 4:16-18) then the "*rapture*" of 1Thes. 4:16-18 is simply a part of the post-trib coming of the Messiah.

### **IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIBULATION OF THOSE DAYS (Mt. 24:29)**

In order to get a good picture of just what the KH'TAF (rapture) event of 1Thes. 4:16-17 is we must let scripture interpret scripture. This is a concept in Jewish hermeneutics called G'ZARAH SHEVAH (equivalence of expressions). This is the second of the seven rules of

Hillel. The first scripture that we should compare 1Thes. 4:16-17 with is 1Cor. 15:52.

Now 1Thes. 4:13-17 reads:

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Yeshua died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Yeshua will Elohim bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of Elohim: and the dead in Messiah shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Lets compare this passage with 1Cor. 15:50-55:

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Elohim; neither does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Certainly these two passages obviously speak of the same event. The question is what kind of context does 1Cor. 15:50-55 give to the "rapture" of 1Thes. 4:13-17?

1. The event of 1Cor. 15:50-55 facilitates the inheritance of the Kingdom.
2. 1Cor. 15:54b quotes Is. 25:8
3. 1Cor. 15:55 quotes Hosea 13:14

Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14 clearly speak of the beginning of the Kingdom. Taken together it would seem that 1Cor. 15:50-55 places 1Thes. 4:13-17 in the context of the beginning of the 1,000 year Kingdom.

Now 1Thes 4:13-18 and 1Cor. 15:50-55 are generally regarded as the "*rapture*" verses. In fact the word "*rapture*" comes from the Latin Vulgate word for "*caught up*" in 1Thes. 4:16-17. Let us compare these with the generally accepted "*second coming*" verses.

Some of the generally accepted "*second coming*" passages are: Dan. 7:13-14; Mt. 24:29-31; Mk. 13:24-27; Rev. 11:15 and 20:4-6. In these passages we can immediately identify four elements:

1. Messiah will supernaturally appear in the sky. (Dan. 7:13-14; Mt. 24:30; Mk. 13:26)
2. There will be a supernatural gathering together to him in the sky. (Mt. 24:29-31; Mk. 13:24-27)
3. A last (seventh of seven) trumpet is blown by one of the seven angels which stand before Elohim. (Rev. 8:2; 11:15; Mt. 24:31; Is. 27:13)
4. A (first) resurrection of the just (Rev. 20:4-6)

Now let's compare these four elements with the "*rapture*" passages of 1Thes. 4:13-18 and 1Cor. 15:50-55:

1. Messiah will supernaturally appear in the sky. (1Thes. 4:16-17)
2. There will be a supernatural gathering together to him in the sky. (1Thes. 4:17)

3. A last (seventh of seven) trumpet is blown by one of the archangels (1Thes. 4:16; 1Cor. 15:52)
4. A (first) resurrection of the just (1Thes. 4:16; 1Cor. 15:52)

By comparing these four elements we find that the "*rapture*" of 1Thes. 4:13-18 & 1Cor. 15:50-55 is identical to the second coming of the Messiah in : Dan. 7:13-14; Mt. 24:29-31; Mk. 13:24-27; Rev. 11:15 and 20:4-6. This conclusion has been reached by many commentators. For example Halley's Bible handbook says regarding 1Thes. 4:13-18:

It [the event in 1Thes. 4:16-17] is mentioned or referred to several times in almost every New Testament book. The chapters in which it is explained most fully are Matthew 24, 25; Luke 21; 1Thesalonians 4, 5; 2Pt. 3. (Halley's Bible Handbook p. 626 on 1Thes. 4:13-18) (See also Halley's comments on Mt. 24:31 on p. 447)

Also in his book MESSIAH: A Rabbinic and Scriptural Viewpoint, Messianic Jewish writer Burt Yellin writes regarding 1Thes. 4:16:

In 1Thessalonians 4:16, Paul tells us of the return of the Messiah: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet (shofar) of God; and the dead in Messiah will rise first..." When read together with Revelation 11:15-17 we find that this resurrection will Take place on the seventh trumpet blast. (p. 99)

If we were to take the "*rapture*" passages of 1Thes. 4:13-18 & 1Cor. 15:50-55 to be a separate event from the "*second coming*" passages of Dan. 7:13-14; Mt. 24:29-31; Mk. 13:24-27; Rev. 11:15 and 20:4-6 as the prior-rapturists do then we have some major chronology problems. Such a chronology would have the trumpet blast of Rev. 11:15 & Mt. 24:31 being blown after the "*last trumpet*" of 1Thes, 4:16 & 1Cor. 15:52). Such a chronology would also have the general resurrection of the just in 1Thes. 4:16 & 1Cor. 15:52 taking place before the "*first resurrection*" of Rev. 20:4-6). The KH'TAF (rapture) is clearly the

event which Mt. 24:29 states occurs "*immediately after the tribulation of those days...*"

## THE PASHAT

Hal Lindsey, one of the chief apologists for the pre-trib rapture states:

The truth of the matter is that neither a post-, mid-, or pre-Tribulantonist can point to any single verse that clearly says the Rapture will occur before, in the middle of, or after the Tribulation.

(The Rapture by Hal Lindsey p. 32)

Now, we agree that it is true that Lindsey cannot "*point to any single verse that clearly says the rapture will occur before... the Tribulation.*" However, Lindsey is clearly wrong to state that we cannot "*point to any single verse that clearly says the rapture will occur... after the Tribulation.*" This article has already shown that the scriptures clearly teach a post-trib KH'TAF (rapture). The following are single verses that clearly say the Rapture will occur after the Tribulation:

For it was not David who ascended into heaven ,But he himself says: YHWH said to my Adon Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

( Acts 2:34-35 (quoting Ps. 110:1))

(see also Heb. 1:13; Mt. 22:44; Mk. 12:36)

This passage clearly states that the Messiah will remain at the right hand of the father until his enemies are made his footstool in the 1,000 year Kingdom. This passage clearly teaches the rapture will not occur until after the tribulation, at the beginning of 1,000 year Kingdom.

And that He may send Yeshua the Messiah appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things which Elohim spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from ancient times.

(Acts 3:20-21)

(see also Rev. 10:7 & 11:15)

This passage also teaches that Messiah will remain in heaven until the Kingdom comes.

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, and by our gathering together unto him, That you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Messiah is at hand. 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 opposes and exalts himself above all that is called Elohim, or that is worshipped; so that he as Elohim sits in the temple of Elohim, showing himself that he is Elohim.

This passage clearly teaches that the rapture CANNOT occur until AFTER the revealing of the Anti-Christ midway through the seven year "*Tribulation*" (see Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14 & Dan. 9:27).

## COMMONLY MISUNDERSTOOD PASSAGES

Unable to find support for their pre-trib rapture theory in the PASHAT (literal meaning) of any Scripture passages, Pre-Tribbers have resorted to REMEZ (implied) and DRASH (allegorical) interpretations. As Lindsey admits in his book THE RAPTURE saying that it "*is in some measure true*" "*...that pretribism is based largely on arguments from inference and silence.*" (p. 31).

## THE WRATH TO COME ARGUMENT

Using this argument pre-tribbers use texts which they say imply the church will not enter the tribulation, which they say hints at a pretrib rapture. The Pretribber will argue that the Tribulation is "*God's wrath*" and that the church will not suffer "*God's wrath*" (Rom. 5:9; 1Thes. 1:10; 5:9-10; Jn. 5:24). By using this argument pretribbers ignore the fact that the Anti-Christ, one of the major figures of the Tribulation, is

the devil's wrath (Rev. 12:12; 13:2). They also ignore the fact that the Messiah may deliver us from this wrath by destroying the AntiChrist at his second coming. Moreover they ignore the fact that by context, the wrath Messiah saves us from is in that we are "*justified by his blood*" (Rom. 5:9) and so we "*shall be saved*" (Rom. 5:9) clearly the wrath here is the Lake of Fire not the Tribulation. (Jn. 5:24 uses the word "*condemnation*" but the same argument applies.)

### **THE LUKE 21:36 ARGUMENT**

This argument was first used by prior-rapturisms 15 year old inventor, who misquoted the verse in her discussion with Darby. This verse says "*...pray always, that you may be accounted worth to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*" To begin with this verse only says to pray and does not promise a result. Secondly the passages simply says "*escape*" not "*raptured*", this could simply refer to survival. The most important flaw in this Pre-Trib argument is what is meant by "*all these things.*" This phrase seems to refer to those things listed in Luke 21:34 which would cause one to be off guard at the second coming (Lk. 21:34-36) and not the Tribulation at all. Finally, we must ask pretribbers what is meant by "*accounted worthy*"? If these are the church then those in the church are "*accounted worthy*" of their salvation. This runs counter to the Scriptures which clearly teach that we do not earn our salvation, but that we receive it as an act of grace that we are not worthy of.

### **THE REVELATION 3:10 ARGUMENT**

Pretribbers will also point to Rev. 3:10:

I also will keep you from the hour of temptation Which shall come upon all the world, To try them that dwell upon the earth.

To begin with the word "*keep*" here does not mean "*rapture*" and could simply refer to survival with Elohim's help. More importantly the context of the passage is not prophetic but written to the "*assembly at Philadelphia*" (Rev. 3:7) or those believers that lived in Philadelphia

in John's time. Revelation is divided into three sections (Rev. 3:10) things which John saw (Rev. 1) things which are (Rev. 2-3) and things which shall be hereafter (Rev. 4:1). Rev. 3:10 therefore applies to the time of John and not the future tribulation in the last days.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY?**

This argument was first used by prior-rapturism's 15 year old inventor. This argument uses eisogesis (reading ideas into a text) rather than exogesis (reading ideas out of a text). In this case Prior-rapturists read "*Holy Spirit*" into the "he" in 2Thes. 2:7. By this reading the Anti-Christ is revealed (2Thes. 2:8) and the Tribulation begins after the church (and therefore the Holy Spirit within them) are removed by a pre-trib rapture. Prior-rapturism's inventor first proposed this idea after having a weird vision in which it was "*revealed*" to her that "*then shall the wicked be revealed*" immediately follows "*...two shall be in one bed, the one taken and the other left...*" (Lk. 17:34f; Mt. 24:40-41). Prior-rapturism's inventor taught a partial prior-rapture in which those "*taken*" were identified as "*those who were filled with the Spirit.*" She falsely identified "*taken*" in Lk. 17:34-35 & Mt. 24:40-41 with "*taken*" in 2Thes. 2:7. Those "*taken*" in Lk. 17:34-35 & Mt. 24:40-41 are not "*those filled with the Spirit*" but are compared to those "*taken*" by the flood in the days of Noah (Mt. 24:39). Their bodies will be fed to birds of prey (Lk. 17:37) at the second coming of Messiah (Rev. 19:17-18, 21). In fact the Shem Tob Hebrew Matthew adds in Mt. 24:41:

    this is because the angels at the end of the world will remove the stumbling blocks from the world and will separate the good from the evil.

Although restraint of some kind is removed in 2Thes. 2:7 the Holy Spirit is not.

## **THE REV. 4:1 ARGUMENT**

Being unable to prove their argument by a literal understanding of the Scriptures, prior rapturists turn to arguments based purely on allegory.

In this argument prior rapturists say that John represents the Church and that he is getting "*raptured*" just before Rev. describes the Tribulation. There is absolutely no support for this argument from the text.

### **THE ENOCH ARGUMENT**

This argument is also pure allegory. This argument says that Enoch was translated before the flood. The Prior-rapturists say Enoch = the Church and the flood = the Tribulation. Actually in the scriptures (and even the Book of Enoch) the flood represents the day of judgement and the days before the flood (the "*days of Noah*") represent the tribulation. Moreover, Elijah was also translated AFTER surviving a Tribulation period (2Kn. 2:9-11; 1Kn. 17f) 3 ½ years of which are often paralleled in the scriptures to the second half of the 7 year "*Tribulation*."

### **JEWISH CUSTOMS**

Certain Messianic Jewish scholars have sought to find evidence for a pre-trib rapture allegorically from Jewish customs. One of these involves Rosh HaShanna and Yom Kippur, another the Jewish wedding. These are weak attempts at finding allegory to prove something that has no support from any PASHAT (literal) interpretation of any passage and which has no roots in Judaism to begin with but was invented in Christendom in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **RAPTURE OR REGATHERING?**

To understand the truth about the KH'TAF (rapture) it is important to understand just what this event is. Christendom generally teaches that the Rapture is a rapture of the Church, but the real truth is that the KH'TAF (rapture) is the supernatural regathering of Israel upon the return of Messiah. A serious examination of the scriptures makes this clear.

The Tanak foretells of a time when YHWH will regather Israel "*from the four corners of the earth*" (Is. 11:12) and "*from the farthest parts under heaven*" (Dt. 30:4). The Torah says that Messiah will "*bring*" them out of these other lands (Dt. 30:4). The word for "*bring*" here in

the Hebrew actually means a forceful action. The Jerusalem Targum interprets this passage (Dt. 30:4) to mean that YHWH will "*gather you together by the hand of Elijah... and from thence will He bring you by the hand of the King Messiah.*" According to Rashi's commentary this means that they will be dragged through the air by the hand of Messiah to the land. Is this event the KH'TAF (rapture)?

The first evidence that the "*bring*" in Dt. 30:4 is the KH'TAF (rapture) is found in the wording of Mt. 24:31 = Mk. 13:27 which identify those being "*gathered*" as "*the Elect.*" The term "*the Elect*" in the scriptures is a euphemism for Israel (Dt. 7:6; 10:15; 14:2; Is. 41:8-9; 42:1; 43:2f; 45:4; 65:9-22; Ps. 135:4; 1Pt. 2:9 = Is. 43:20f & Dt. 10:15). In 1Thes 4:17 Paul uses the term "*we*" but this is a term that elsewhere uses to refer to himself and his fellow Jews (Acts 17:1-4).

Further evidence to identify the KH'TAF event with the regathering of Israel is that of the trumpet. A trumpet is blown at the KH'TAF (rapture) in 1Thes. 4:16-17 and 1Cor. 15:50-55 as well as in Mt. 24:31 and Rev. 11:15. According to the Tanak a trumpet is also blown at the regathering of Israel (Is. 27:12-13).

Additional evidence which identifies the KH'TAF with the regathering of Israel is that of the resurrection. The KH'TAF is accompanied by a resurrection (1Thes. 4:16-17 & 1Cor. 15:50-55). The regathering of Israel also includes a resurrection (Ezkl. 37:1-14; Is. 25:1-12; Hosea 13:9-14:9). In fact, 1Cor. 15:54-55 actually quotes Is. 25:8 & Hosea 13:14. The use of Is. 25:8 & Hosea 13:14 in 1Cor. 15:54-55 is also important because of its finality. How can pretribblers believe death comes to an end at the beginning of the Tribulation?

There is yet more evidence that the KH'TAF is the regathering of Israel. Those "*raptured*" in 1Cor. 15:53 become immortal, but in the 1,000 year Kingdom there will also be mortals (Is. 65:20) If the Church is raptured in 1Cor. 15:53 and becomes immortal, then who are the mortals of Is. 65:20?

Final proof that the KH'TAF (rapture) is actually the regathering of Israel at the return of the Messiah is to be found in the text of Mt. 24:31 = Mk. 13:27 which actually quote the phrases "*from the four corners of the earth*" (Is. 11:12) and "*from the farthest parts under*

*heaven"* (Dt. 30:4) right out of the Tanak passages which describe the regathering of Israel.

### **WHAT REALLY HAPPENS**

Immediately after the tribulation (Mt. 24:29; Mk. 13:24) the Messiah will appear in the sky (Dan. 7:13-14; Mt. 24:29-31; Mk. 13:24-27; 1Thes. 4:16-17) there will be a final trumpet (Rev. 8:2; 11:15; Mt. 24:31; Is. 27:13; 1Thes. 4:16-17; 1Cor. 15:52) and there will be a resurrection (1Cor. 15:50-55; 1Thes. 4:16; Rev. 20:4-6; Is. 25:8; Hosea. 13:14; Ezkl. 37:1-14) and a gathering together to Messiah in the sky (Mt. 24:29-31; Mk. 13:24-27; 2Thes. 2:1; 1Thes. 4:17). This is followed by the Messiah coming with many of His set-apart ones (Jude 1:14-15 = 1Enoch 1:9; 1Thes. 3:13; Rev. 19:11-16; Zech. 14:4-5). After this, the 1,000 year Kingdom is established (Rev. 20:1-3, 7). This KH'TAF will be the regathering of Israel to the Land of Israel at the return of Messiah and not a pretrib rapture of the Church.

James Trimm



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