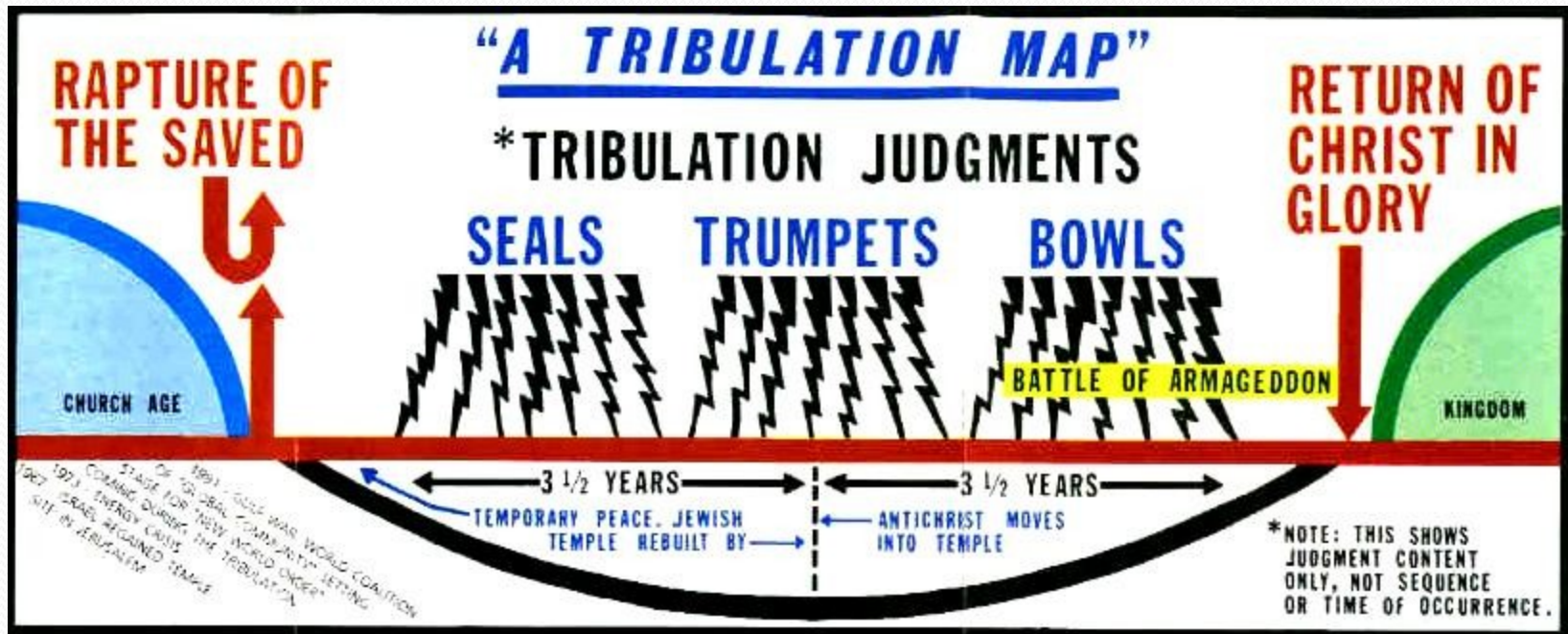


REASONS FOR THE PRE- TRIBULATION POSITION – PART III

Tri-City Baptist Church

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Pre-Tribulation Prophecy Chart



Reason #1

Tim LaHaye's *Left Behind* series

- The books have been very popular, with total sales surpassing 65 million copies. Seven titles in the adult series have reached #1 on the bestseller lists for *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *Publishers Weekly*.
- The *Left Behind* series generated more than 650 million dollars in sales since first published in 1995.
- These books present the pre-tribulation, pre-millennial position.

Reason #2

The Doctrine of Immanency

- Immanency means that other things *may* happen before the imminent event, but nothing else **must** take place before it happens (i.e. the building of the temple in Jerusalem).
- A.T. Robertson argues that the verses that translate Christ's coming as "quickly" should be translated "imminently."
- His coming at the Rapture is sign-less.

Verses that Teach Immanence

- 1 Corinthians 1:7,
So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:
- Philippians 3:20,
For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:
- 1 Thessalonians 1:10,
And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.
- Titus 2:13,
Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

More Verses on Immanence

- Hebrews 9:28,
So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that **look for him shall he appear the second time** without sin unto salvation.
- 1 Peter 1:13,
Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and **hope to the end** for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
- Jude 1:21,
Keep yourselves in the love of God, **looking for the mercy** of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

The Imminent Coming of Christ

1. Passages that teach immanence are those passages that instruct believers to look, watch, and wait for His coming.
2. If either the appearance of the Antichrist, the Abomination of Desolation, or the unfolding of the Tribulation must occur before the Rapture, then a command to watch for Christ's coming would not be relevant.
3. Only the pre-tribulation position teaches a truly imminent Rapture since it is the only view not requiring anything to happen before the Rapture.
4. The pre-tribulation allows the believer to look for Christ and yet at the same time give full meaning to Second Coming passages and the signs that lead up to our Lord's return to the earth at the Revelation.

#3 REASON: The Early Church Fathers Taught Immanency

- The Early Church Fathers were pre-millennialists.
- The Early Church Fathers taught that Christ's coming was immanent.
- The mid-tribulation position and the post-tribulation position require certain signs and events (i.e. Daniel's 70th week, the unveiling of the Antichrist, the events of Revelation 4-19, etc.) to take place before the coming of Christ. These positions do not teach immanency.

The Church Father's View on the Rapture, Tribulation & Millennium

Larry Crutchfield summarizes, “The student of patristic literature quickly discovers that the position of the early church fathers on the Tribulation and its relation to the saints and Christ’s return is impossible to decipher and synthesize completely. Many of them, especially in the first century, make explicit statements which indicate a belief in the imminent return of Christ. **The doctrine of immanence is especially prominent in the writings of the apostolic fathers.**”

Clement of Rome, 1st century A.D.

“Of a truth, **soon and suddenly** shall His will be accomplished, as the Scripture also bears witness, saying, ‘**Speedily will He come**, and will not tarry,’ and ‘The Lord **shall suddenly come** to His temple, even the Holy One for whom we look.’”

“Behold, the Lord cometh, and His reward is before His face, to render to every man according to his work.”



Irenaeus (c. 125-202 A.D.)

“When in the end **the Church shall be suddenly caught up** from this, it is said, ‘There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be.’”

Ephraim of Syria (c. 306 -373)

A Pre-tribulation Poem

“Why therefore do we not reject every care of earthly actions and prepare for the meeting of the Lord Christ? All saints and the Elect of the Lord **are gathered together before the Tribulation which is about to come** and are taken to the Lord, in order that they may not see at any time the confusion which overwhelms the world because of our sins.”

REASON #4: The Pattern that God Delivers the Righteous before Judgment

- The Flood

Noah's righteous family was delivered first, then the wicked were universally judged.

Genesis 6:8,

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

The Judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah

Lot's Family was delivered first, then the cities were judged.

- Genesis 18:20, And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;
- Genesis 18:25, **That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?**
- Genesis 19:15, And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.
- Genesis 19:22, Haste thee, escape thither; **for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither.** Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.
- Genesis 19:29, And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

The Judgment of Israel in the Wilderness

- God did not destroy the faithful Israelites with unbelievers but preserved Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 14).
- Numbers 14:24, But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.
- Numbers 14:29, Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me,
- Numbers 14:30, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, **save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.**

The Destruction of Israel and the Temple in 586 B.C.

- Ezekiel 9 – the believers in Jerusalem were marked with a “T” on the forehead and delivered prior to the judgment of Jerusalem.
- Ezekiel 9:4, And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and **set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry** for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.
- Ezekiel 9:5, And to the others he said in mine hearing, **Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:**



The Pattern – The Principle

- God is not going to judge believers with unbelieving Israel during the Tribulation period.
- The focus of the 7-year Tribulation is the judgment of Israel.

Reason #5 – Judgment of Believers Before Unbelievers

- 1 Peter 4:17, For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?
- Believers Judged at the Bema Seat of Christ
2 Corinthians 5:10, For we must all (context is “all” believers) appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.
- Revelation 19:8, And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness(plural) of saints.

Unbelievers are Judged at the White Throne Judgment

- Revelation 20:11, And I saw a **great white throne**, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: **and the dead were judged** out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; **and death (body) and hell (soul) delivered up the dead which were in them:** and they were judged every man according to their works. ¹⁴ **And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.** This is the second death. ¹⁵ And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

The Judgment of the Nations (Tribulation survivors) at the Revelation of Christ

- This judgment is based on one's faith demonstrated by one's works in helping national Israel during the Tribulation.
- Matthew 25:34, Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
- Matthew 25:41, Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

The Template of the Book of Revelation

- Revelation 1:19 (past, present, future)

Chapter 1 – past

Chapters 2-3 present church age

Chapter 4:1 – John taken to heaven parallels some aspects of rapture

Chapter 4 – the throne and crowns

Chapters 4-19 – the Tribulation

Chapter 19 – the Revelation

Chapter 20 – the Millennium

Chapter 20 – the White Throne Judgment at end of millennium

Chapters 21-22 – the eternal age

REASON #6: THE RAPTURE EXPLAINS SUDDEN APOSTACY

1. The removal of the Restrainer. The Holy Spirit is the indweller of all believers in the Church Age. The removal of salt and light will allow evil to run rampant (II Thessalonians 2:3-7).
2. The ultimate lawlessness of the Antichrist empowered by Satan himself.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

- Since the most likely interpretation of the "restrainer of evil" in 2 Thessalonians 2 refers to the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit Who is at work through the Body of Christ during the current Church Age, then this view supports Pretribulationism. Since "the lawless one" (i.e., the Beast or anti-Christ) cannot be revealed until the restrainer is taken away, it follows that the Tribulation cannot occur until the church is removed.

REASON #7 - Ambassadors are Removed before War

- 2 Corinthians 5:20,

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

The Announcement of Peace and Safety

- I Thessalonians 5:3 tells the Thessalonian church that the Day of the Lord will come after the announcement of “peace and safety.” This false security will lull many into a state of lethargy in relation to the Day of the Lord so that this day comes as a thief.
- The church must be raptured before that period can begin.

REASON #8: The Explicit Teaching that the Church will not go through the Tribulation

1. God promised to keep the church from, out of (“ek” not “dia”) the “hour of trial,” the Tribulation (Revelation 3:10).
2. Both halves of the Tribulation are characterized by God’s wrath. Daniel considered the entire “70th week” as a day of wrath.
3. I Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13-18 (rapture then “day of the Lord.”)
4. I Thessalonians 5:9, **For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.**
5. The context of the “day of the Lord” is the Tribulation. Acts 2:20, **The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:**

The church is not mentioned in the Tribulation passages in Revelation

1. The word “church” (es) is used 19 times in the first three chapters.
2. It is not found once during the entire Tribulation (chapters 4-19).
3. The church reoccurs after the Revelation (second coming to this earth) and during the new heaven and new earth (22:16).
4. The vantage point of the Tribulation for John was from heaven, not the earth.
5. Revelation 18:20, instructs the saints in heaven, who are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, to rejoice over the judgment of Babylon.

REASON #9 The Sheep that Go into the Millennium and the Judges

- This requires people saved during the Tribulation who are alive at the revelation of Christ.
- This group of people are not given immortal, glorified bodies.
- The 144,000 saved of the Jewish people, the great multitude of Gentiles saved.
- Without Tribulation Saints there is no one for the church to rule and judge for a 1000 years (Revelation 20).
- Luke 19:17, And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.
- 1 Corinthians 6:2, Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

John MacArthur's quote

- “Now the post-tribulation position says this--watch--that at the end of the seven years there is a quick rapture and a quick return--you go through the tribulation and then "up and back." There is a big problem with that and it is this: if all the regenerate people go up and come back, then how come when Christ comes back the first thing He does is separate the sheep from the goats--who are the sheep? See? Who are the sheep? They can't be Christians because there aren't any left--they all got raptured. But if you move the rapture to the beginning of the seven years, then you have a seven year period in which people will be saved that will constitute the sheep at the end of the tribulation--understand?
- So if you jam it all at the end--I see that as the major problem of the post-tribulational view--where do you get the sheep for the sheep and goat judgment, because if Christ takes all of us up and comes right back, then there aren't any sheep left--it's not going to be a problem to say, "You sheep come over and go into my kingdom, and you goats here..."--there aren't any sheep left, they have already been raptured and glorified and all set. That's the first problem.”

An Interval Needed between Comings

- Several items in the New Testament are best harmonized by the Pre-Tribulation, time-gap of at least seven years between comings. Note two examples best explained by an interval: First, an interval is needed in order for all Church Age saints to appear before the judgment seat of Christ in heaven (2 Cor. 5:10). Revelation 19:7-10 speaks of just such a judgment occurring in heaven in preparation for Christ's Return to earth. Second, an interval allows for the translation of all believers on earth (Pre-Tribulation Rapture) at a point in time to occur and yet have time for millions of new believers during the Tribulation who are in non-resurrection bodies at the Second Coming to provide the initial population base for the Millennium (Isa. 65:20-25), and a basis for the sheep and goat judgment at the Second Advent (Matt. 25:31-46).

Contrasts between Comings

- The Rapture is characterized in the New Testament as a "translation or resurrection coming" (1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:15-17) in which the Lord comes *for* His church, taking her to His Father's House (John 14:3). On the other hand, Christ's Second Advent *with* His saints (the church=Rev. 19) descends from heaven and arrives on earth to stay and set up His Messianic kingdom (Zech. 14:4-5; Matt. 24:27-31). All of the differences between the two events are harmonized naturally by the Pre-Trib position, while all other views are not able to comfortably account for such differences.

REASON #10: The Marriage of the Bride

- **Revelation 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.**
- **Revelation 19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.**
- The Church is the bride of Christ.
- The Marriage of the Lamb takes place in heaven.
- The Marriage Supper of the Lamb takes place on earth.
- The Pre-Tribulation position allows for both to take place.

REASON #11 – The Pattern of the Jewish Marriage

1. Betrothal period – a seal given. Ephesians 1:13, In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, **ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,**
2. Groom goes and builds a house for bride (John 14:1-4).
3. Bride Groom and his friends return with him to bring her to the home he as built for her. There is then the marriage ceremony (Revelation 19).
4. Then there is the lengthy Marriage Supper (Revelation 20).
5. The Honeymoon (Revelation 21-22).

Only the pre-tribulation position accounts for all of the prophetic details

- The caught up of I Thessalonians
- The marriage of the lamb in heaven
- The return of saints with Christ at Revelation
- The glorified saints ruling with Christ in millennium
- Millard Erickson states “We note here that there are no biblical passages with which pre-millennialism cannot cope, or which it cannot adequately explain.”

FOUNDATIONAL issues related to the Pre-Tribulation Position are:

- (1) *consistent* literal interpretation
- (2) Premillennialism
- (3) futurism
- (4) a distinction between Israel and the church.

These are not mere suppositions, but rather are important biblical doctrines upon which the doctrine of the Rapture is built.

REASON #12: THE PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

- Dr. Renald Showers has clearly summarized practical implications of Pretribulationism for a forthcoming book about the Rapture. "The fact that the glorified, holy Son of God could step through the door of heaven at any-moment is intended by God to be the most pressing, incessant motivation for holy living and aggressive ministry (including missions, evangelism and Bible teaching) and the greatest cure for lethargy and apathy. It should make a major difference in every Christian's values, actions, priorities and goals."

The Purifying Hope of the Rapture

- 1 John 3:3, And every man that hath this hope in him **purifieth himself**, even as he is pure.
- Illustration of the Harlot's temptation in Proverbs 7:19, **"For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey:"**
- Titus 2:12-13
- We wait in constant expectation for Christ's return.
- If not waiting for his return – lose the crown of righteousness (II Timothy 4:8)

The Comfort of His Coming

- I Thessalonians 4:18, Wherefore **comfort one another** with these words.
- I Corinthians 15:58, Therefore, my beloved brethren, **be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord**, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Titus 2:11-13

- Titus 2:11, For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared (**PAST**) to all men,
- Titus 2:12, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present (**PRESENT**) world;
- Titus 2:13, Looking (**FUTURE**) for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;



Invitation

- Have you been saved from your sins?
- Are you living for God today?
- Are you looking forward to Christ's return?