

Book of Revelation, part 41

The Case for a Pretribulation Rapture

- I. Rejection of a Pretribulation Rapture began in the early church.
 1. Some at Corinth while believing in Christ's resurrection they denying its implications to their own future resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12-19).
 2. Hymenaeus and Philetus taught the resurrection had already passed (2 Tim. 2:17-19).
- II. Faulty assumptions from the contemporary opposition to a Pretribulation Rapture.
 1. *"The term 'Rapture' does not appear in Scripture, particularly in the KJV, and is therefore extra-biblical."*
 - 1) The term in Scripture translated "caught up" is ἀρπάζω (*harpazō*). The meaning in Kone Greek is *to seize, snatch, obtain like by robbery* (cf. Matt. 11:12; 12:29; 13:19; Jn. 6:15; 10:12, 28-29 Acts 8:39; 23:10 2 Cor.12:2, 4; Jude 1:23; Rev. 12:5).
 - 2) The English word rapture has the etymological meaning *"to seize and carry away by force."* (Etymonline).
 - 3) The term rapture simply provides a concise designation for the event described in Scripture as the church being "caught up by force."
 2. *"There is only one people of God."*
 - 1) Believer of all time have the same salvation.
 - i. New Testament saints have better and different promises (Heb. 7:19, 22; 11:16, 40; 12:24).
 - ii. New Testament saints promised heavens (Phil. 3:20-21), not promised land as were the O.T. saints.
 - iii. During the Old Testament people of God were almost exclusively Jews (Duet. 7:6).
 - iv. During the New Testament the people of God are primarily Gentiles (Acts 15:14).
 - 2) Believers in the Old Testament did not have the Holy Spirit indwelling (Jn. 14:16-17).
 3. *"The Second Coming and the Rapture are the same event."*
 - 1) Air vs. Mount Olives (1 Thes. 4:17; Zech. 14:4).
 - 2) Eagerly anticipate vs. watch like for a thief (Phil 3:20; Matt. 24:42-43).

4. “*God’s wrath is presently being manifested.*”
 - 1) Only a quality of wrath has been seen (Rom. 1:18).
 - 2) The full wrath of God is still to come (Zeph. 1:7, 14-15; Rev. 6:17).
 - 3) The church is saved from the wrath (1 Thes. 1:10; 5:9; Rom. 5:9)
5. “*The doctrine of the Rapture originated with John Nelson Darby and is not found in writings of the church fathers.*”

While nineteenth-century theologians such as John Nelson Darby, James H. Brooks, and C. I. Scofield played a significant role in popularizing the doctrine, they did not invent it. This is a straw-man argument. Written church history was controlled by the Roman Catholic Church and its antecedent from about 300 A.D. through the Middle Ages. No wonder the church record, other than Scripture, does not reflect the doctrine. The Pretribulation Rapture originates from the writings of the Apostle Paul, who recorded the doctrine borne along by the Holy Spirit to record Scripture (e.g., 1 Thes. 4:13–18 et al). Therefore, the ultimate authority for the doctrine rests not in later theological systems but in the apostolic testimony of Scripture itself.

Dispensationalists such as Darby, Brooks, and Scofield recognized that the Rapture and the Second Coming occur at different times. Yet in their writings they frequently used the term *Second Coming* as a comprehensive designation for both events, implicitly distinguishing a first phase—the Rapture—and a second phase—the Second Coming proper. While this terminology blurred the formal distinction, they nevertheless understood the two as separate eschatological events.

There are also significant logical difficulties in the view that the church passes through the Tribulation. The catastrophic judgments predicted for that period must either be spiritualized or significantly mitigated, since Scripture describes an unparalleled destruction and judgment not intended for the church (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21). Furthermore, such a scenario effectively collapses the Rapture into the Second Coming, implying that after believers meet Christ in the air, they immediately reverse course and return to earth with Him. This interpretation strains the natural reading of the relevant passages and fails to account for the distinctions presented in Scripture.