



STEVE MAGILL

Our Present Age

ISSUE 1 2021

the final "this generation" that Jesus spoke of

The RAPTURE

OUR CURRENT PANDEMIC has caused a resurgence in the number of people voicing hope in the popular view of the rapture; unfortunately, this is a false hope. There are only four Scripture passages that explicitly refer to the rapture. None of them support the popular pretribulation view as so many wish for. None support an imminent rapture. Here's what Scripture teaches in these four passages.

MATTHEW 24:29-31

These verses reveal that Jesus returns to the earth "immediately after the tribulation." He is referring to the great tribulation which takes place when the one called the Antichrist is in power and in the temple. The Antichrist is here known as the "abomination of desolation" who sets himself up in the holy place (temple) (Matthew 24:15).

After Christ returns, he then sends his angels with a great sound of a trumpet to gather (rapture) his people (31).

These verses are clear that:

1. Jesus returns immediately after the holocaust by the Antichrist.
2. The holocaust of God's people takes place after the Antichrist is in power.
3. After the holocaust of Jews and Christians, Jesus returns.
4. After Jesus returns, the rapture takes place.

Jesus does not teach a rapture before the Antichrist and the great tribulation. He does spend a lot of time warning

of the great tribulation that is coming (15-28) and for us to endure these times even to death (13).

2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-5

The Apostle Paul agrees with Jesus' timeline. He writes that the day Christ returns will take place after God's people have abandoned their faith (3), and the "man of sin is revealed" (the Antichrist) sitting himself in the temple claiming to be God (3,4).

These verses are clear that BEFORE Christ returns, and the rapture takes place (1):

1. God's people will be in apostasy.
2. The Antichrist will appear.
3. The Antichrist will sit in the temple as "God."

The Apostle Paul does not make mention of any rapture before the Antichrist appears.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

Answering concerns concerning those who are already dead in Christ, the Apostle Paul writes that when Jesus returns (16) the dead in Christ will rise first and then those who are alive on earth will be caught up together with them in the clouds (16,17). Note that when Christ returns, he will descend to earth "with the voice of the archangel" and "with the trump of God" (16).

These verses are clear that:

1. The rapture of the dead and living takes place at the same time, at Christ's return.

2. The trumpet of God will blow when he returns.
3. Our comfort during the difficult days ahead, is in looking forward to his coming and living with him forever (17, 18).

The Apostle is clear that Christ returns when the trumpet blows.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:51, 52

In each of the above passages, except for 2 Thessalonians 2, we are taught that a trumpet blows when Christ returns. Here in these verses, we are told that the trumpet that blows is the “last trumpet” (52). How many last trumpets are there? Of course, there is only one “last” trumpet. This is the same trumpet we find in Revelation 11:15 known as the “seventh trumpet” blown by the angel, which also precedes the return of Christ and the rapture. The seventh trumpet is the “last trumpet” that releases the final events ending the current earth as we know it.

When this “last trumpet” sounds, the dead in Christ will rise to meet Christ and those still alive on earth will be changed (52).

These verses are clear that:

1. The trumpet preceding Christ’s return and the rapture is the “last trumpet.”
2. When the last trumpet sounds, the dead will rise to meet Christ and those alive will be raptured.

The Apostle is clear that Christ does not return to gather his people until after the “last trumpet” is blown.

IN SUMMARY

These are the only four Scripture passages which explicitly refer to the rapture. None of them support the popular pretribulation view nor the imminent removal of God’s people before the arrival of the Antichrist and the great tribulation. They do show:

1. God’s people will be in apostasy, a great falling away from the faith prior to the arrival of the Antichrist.

2. The Antichrist then arrives and sets himself up in the temple as God.
3. The Antichrist unleashes a great holocaust of Jews and Christians (the great tribulation).
4. An angel blows the last trumpet.
5. Jesus returns.
6. The gathering/rapture of the dead and living takes place.
7. Since the rapture does not take place until after the church is in apostasy and the Antichrist has arrived, there can be no looking for an imminent, any moment return of Christ or the rapture.

Any understanding of the rapture not found in these explicit verses are either implied or inferred in the verses used to support the false pretribulation view. Implied/inferred refers to adding interpretation to verses that do not specifically give the interpretation. The clear sense of these four Scriptures conclude that we will be here when the Antichrist arrives, will experience his holocaust, but will escape God’s wrath.

GOD’S WRATH

God’s wrath is that final judgment when the seventh trumpet is blown (Revelation 11:15) releasing the seven vials of God’s wrath upon the earth (15:1; 16:1). This is the day Zephaniah described as a day of wrath, distress, anguish, and ruin (Zephaniah 1:15) when everything will be swept away like chaff (2:2) and will make a sudden end to all who are left on the earth (1:18). This day of God’s wrath is the end to our present age as we know it.

Those believing we escape God’s wrath believe the great tribulation is part of His wrath, when it is not. The great tribulation/persecution described in Revelation 6, Matthew 24:21 and Revelation 12:17 all reveal, not God’s wrath, but the anger of the Antichrist against God’s people. It is true we escape God’s wrath, but not the great tribulation.

God’s wrath is also not the wrath of Christ. Preceding the trumpet judgements in Revelation 6:16, 17, it is revealed that those on the earth understand that Christ’s wrath was about to be released upon the earth, and they cried out in fear to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us, and

hide us from the face of him that sits on the throne, and from *the wrath of the Lamb*: for the great day of his wrath [Christ] is come; and who shall be able to stand.” We are then told that the seventh seal was opened to release the trumpet judgements (8:1-2). The trumpet judgments are Christ’s judgments on the Antichrist and those who follow him. As in the days of the prophets, when God released His judgement through His prophets, so does Christ release his judgments through his two witnesses when the trumpets are blown (11:3-12).

As mentioned above, God’s wrath is poured out through the vial judgments and is that final judgment when the seventh trumpet is blown releasing the seven vials (11:15; 15:1; 16:1).

Scripture reveals we will:

1. Experience the great tribulation brought by the Antichrist (7 Seals).
2. Be instrumental in releasing the judgments coming from Christ (7 Trumpets).
3. Escape God’s wrath, the final judgements poured out upon the earth by God (7 Vials).
4. Unlike the “Left Behind” movies, Christ’s coming, the rapture, and the releasing of God’s wrath all take place within one sixty-minute hour, the hour of God’s judgment (3:10; 14:7).

WHERE THE PRETRIBULATION RAPTURE VIEW CAME FROM

The popular view of the rapture as described in such books as the *Late Great Planet Earth* and advanced through the *Left Behind* series of books and movies, as well as with most popular prophetic teachers, is a relatively new doctrine developed by the Plymouth Brethren in the 17th Century and promoted in the 1830s by John Nelson Darby. It became popularized in the early 20th century through the wide circulation of the *Scofield Reference Bible* which first appeared in 1909 and revised in 1917. It should be noted that according to Daniel 12:9 it is not possible to understand the events of the last days until we have entered the time for the fulfillment of those events. The views on the final judgment would not have begun to be understood until after Israel became a nation and regained Jerusalem as its capital. That means commentaries, authors, and teachers prior to 1948

would have been in error or completely wrong, including this new view about the rapture.

The popularity of the pretribulation view today can be credited to the teachings of John Walvoord, President of Dallas Theological Seminary from 1952-1968, who supported the teachings of Darby. The biggest explosion of this view came when Dallas Theological Seminary graduate, Hal Lindsey, published the book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*. This book became a worldwide best seller and established the pretrib view in the minds of pastors and seminaries everywhere to become the gold standard for understanding the last days. The main outline of this book continues to be used by the popular teachers today with little variance, thereby continuing to advance this false doctrine. Instead of searching Scripture for understanding Biblical truths, authors and teachers were sought after.

If we are to understand Scripture, we need to look to Scripture, not authors, and read Scripture as we do other books, following one thought to the next, one transition to the next, following the rules of grammar.

GOSPEL WILL BE PREACHED & THEN THE END COMES

After teaching on the last days in Matthew 24, Jesus taught that the good news of God’s coming kingdom would be preached until Christ returns and God’s wrath is poured out. The preaching will stop only when God’s people are removed, moments before God’s vial wrath is poured out.

Nothing will stop the preaching of the gospel. The mission, ministry, work that all Christians are called to is to be a witness through preaching the gospel to all creation (Matthew 28:19; Luke 14:23; Mark 16:15; Colossians 1:23). When the great tribulation takes place, the majority of Christians will be witnesses through martyrdom. After the great tribulation, the remnant of God’s people (the two witnesses) will witness in the power of Moses and Elijah, having awakened to the fullness of the Holy Spirit within them (Revelation 11:3-6).

The purpose of witnessing to others through the preaching of the gospel, is to warn of the judgment that is coming, and to encourage them to repent and prepare to enter God’s kingdom. Since the majority needing to

hear the gospel are not going to buy gospel DVD's, CD's, listen to gospel radio, turn on TV, or go to the local denomination, the best place to reach the majority is as it was in the days of the disciples: in the public square, the marketplace, and one-on-one.

The problem today is that as the darkness grows darker, God's light through His people grows dimmer. Those claiming the name of Christ prefer to cloister in their buildings they call "church" instead of going out into the fields to be the church.

Our days are dark. Pray that laborers would wake to their responsibility to be a witness and gather the harvest (Luke 10:2).

Time is short.

Take heed to the mission you've been called to.

September 2021

POPULAR TEACHERS WHO TEACH THE FALSE PRE-TRIBULATION VIEW

The following teachers do a great disservice teaching we will be taken out before the Antichrist arrives and the great tribulation takes place. Many holding onto this view will be completely unprepared for the persecution and loss of life that will be experienced during this time.

Pastors and teachers should be preparing people for the time of persecution that is inevitable, help them to be strong and not give up. Knowledge of an impending storm is the first defense of preparing and enduring the storm. Knowledge of the coming persecution is the first defense of preparing and enduring whatever we may face.

I like these words written by Corrie Ten Boom in a letter to the churches in 1974:

"When I was a little girl, I said, I went to my father and said, "Daddy, I am afraid that I will never be strong enough to be a martyr for Jesus Christ."

"Tell me," said Father,

"When you take a train trip to Amsterdam, when do I give you the money for the ticket?"

"Three weeks before?" "No Daddy, you give me the money for the ticket just before we get on the train."

"That's is right," my father said,"and so it is with God's strength."

"Our Father in heaven knows when you need the strength to be a martyr for Jesus Christ."

"He will supply all you need just in time."

PRETRIB TEACHERS

Allistair Begg

Tony Evans

Billy Graham

Franklin Graham

John Hagee

Mark Hitchcock

Jack Van Impe

Grant Jeffries

David Jeremiah

Tim LaHaye

Zola Levitt

Hal Lindsey

Anne Graham Lotz

Irwin Lutzer

Chuck Misler

David Reagan