

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RAPTURE

1. Why will the Rapture be a Pre-Tribulation event?

Granted, there have been many heated debates through the years as to whether the Rapture will be Pre, Mid, or Post-Tribulation. I believe the Rapture will occur prior to the Seven Year Tribulation for the following reasons:

1. The Rapture or catching away of the saints is a doctrine that is intended to inspire hope, holiness, and provide comfort to believers (I Thess. 4:16-18; Titus 2:12-13; I John 3:2-3). There is no hope or comfort associated with the unveiling of the antichrist at the beginning of the Tribulation (II Thess. 2:1-12). There is no comfort in the prospect of going through the most terrible time in earth's history according to Jesus (Matt. 24:21). I am looking for Jesus Christ to come, not the antichrist to be revealed! I am looking forward to being delivered from the wrath of God that will be systematically revealed from Heaven during the Tribulation Period. I will escape the horrors of the Tribulation to take my place around the throne of the Lamb in Heaven (Luke 21:36).

2. The general chronology of the book of Revelation suggests that the Rapture will occur prior to the Tribulation. Revelation 4 provides a picture of the Rapture. Revelation 5 provides a glimpse of what the raptured, glorified saints will be doing in Heaven during the Tribulation. Revelation chapters 6-19 reveal the characteristics of the Seven Year Tribulation. Interestingly enough, the word wrath occurs 13 times in the book of Revelation and is only found in chapters 6-19. 10 out of the 13 uses of the word wrath are attributed to the wrath of God. There is overwhelming evidence that the Seven Year Tribulation will be a time when the wrath of God is outpoured upon the unconverted inhabitants of the earth. I Thessalonians 1:10 and 5:9 specifically declare: **"And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come...For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."** Both the Mid and Post-Tribulation positions on the Rapture make Christians to be the subjects of God's wrath along with the unconverted which is contrary to Scripture.

3. The Rapture will occur prior to the Seven Year Tribulation in order for the saints of God to fulfill the promise of Christ to come and take them to the Father's house (John 14:1-3).

4. While the Tribulation is taking place on earth, the Judgment Seat of Christ will be taking place in Heaven (Luke 21:36; Matt. 5:12; 6:20; II Cor. 5:10). The Post Tribulation scheme would effectively eliminate the heavenly bema seat. The Judgment Seat of Christ is also associated with the unveiling of the bride (Rev. 3:4) to all the hosts of Heaven at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:5-10). The Post-Tribulation Rapture scheme doesn't make good sense to me. Are we to suppose that at the end of the Tribulation we will meet the Lord in the air for a few moments before returning with Him to the earth to reign with Him for a thousand years? The Judgment Seat of Christ and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb are clearly heavenly events. When will either take place in the Post-Tribulation scheme?

A great little book entitled *One Hundred Reasons for the Pre-Trib Rapture* by the late Milburn Cockrell is a sound and scriptural resource for further study.

2. What are the differences between the Rapture and the Revelation or Second Advent?

Premillennialists often refer to the Rapture as the first phase of Christ's second coming and the Revelation or Second Advent as the second phase of Christ's second coming separated by the Seven Year Tribulation. They are two distinct events on the prophetic calendar.

In the Rapture Christ comes FOR His saints in the air (I Thess. 4:17). In the Revelation or Second Advent Christ comes back to the earth WITH the saints that He had previously raptured (Zech. 14:5; Jude 14-15a; Rev. 19:14).

In the Rapture the saints are taken to HEAVEN just as Jesus promised in John 14:3. At the Revelation or Second Advent the saints accompany Christ to EARTH to reign with Him for a thousand years (Dan. 7:18, 22, 27). The raptured saints in Heaven will anticipate their return to earth with Christ to reign for 1000 years (Rev. 5:9 cf. 20:6).

The Rapture marks a DELIVERANCE for the saints of God prior to the Tribulation period, which signals the beginning of the great day of God's wrath (Rev. 3:10). In stark contrast the Revelation of Christ takes place at the end of the Tribulation period and is characterized by JUDGMENT upon the inhabitants of the earth (Rev. 19:15). In the Rapture the saints are delivered from the wrath to come, in the Revelation the unconverted have the wrath of God outpoured upon them.

The Rapture marks the REVEALING the Antichrist and the beginning of the increased and unrestrained activity of Satan (I Thess. 2:1-12). The Revelation of Christ marks the DEMISE of the Antichrist and the false prophet (Rev. 19:20). When Christ takes the saints of God to Heaven in the Rapture, Satan will increase his activities on the earth knowing he has but a short time. In stark contrast, at the Revelation of Christ Satan will be bound for 1000 years (Rev. 20:2-3)

In the Rapture Christ is accompanied ONLY by Michael the archangel (I Thess. 4:17). In stark contrast, at the Revelation of Christ He is accompanied by the ARMIES of the blood-washed saints of God (Rev. 19:14) as well as a MULTITUDE of mighty angels coming for vengeance against all Gospel-rejecters (II Thess. 1:7-8).

In the Rapture there are no geographical changes that take place on the earth. Christ appears in the air to take His saints back to the Father's house. However, when Christ comes back with the saints He will plant His feet upon the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:11-12), which will cause it to split in two causing the creation of a great valley (Zech. 14:4).

3. What is the difference between the last trump mentioned in I Corinthians 15:51-52 and I Thessalonians 4:16 with the final trumpet in Revelation 8:2, 6 and 11:14-15?

The trump of I Corinthians 15:51-52 and I Thessalonians 4:16 is a trump of deliverance and victory. It signals the end of the believer's struggle with sin, Satan, and the world. It is a trumpet that signals the glorification of the believer's body. This trump will be used to assemble all the saints of God into the presence of Christ in their glorified bodies for the first time. While this trump speaks deliverance and victory for the believer, it signals the beginning of the Tribulation period for the inhabitants of the earth..

The trump of reveille sounded in the Rapture to summon believers to Heaven

should not be confused with the last trumpet in a series of seven recorded in the Book of Revelation. The trumpets in Revelation are completely different as they are used to signal the judgments and wrath of God that are to take place on the earth during the Tribulation. Contained within the seven trumpets are the seven seals and seven vials of God's wrath which will be outpoured upon the unconverted inhabitants of the earth. Therefore the trump of First Corinthians and First Thessalonians is very different, and distinguished from the last trumpet in Revelation. One is a trump signaling deliverance in the Rapture and is only sounded for the saved. The other is the last in a series of seven trumpets signaling judgment for the lost.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SEVEN YEAR TRIBULATION PERIOD

1. Is there a distinction made between the daily tribulations that believers face and the Tribulation Period that Jesus spoke of?

Yes, there are major differences between daily tribulations that believers in every age can expect to face, and the Tribulation Period which is a definite seven year period of time. God's children are to expect tribulations, trials, afflictions in this life (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Rom 12:22; I Thess. 3:2-4). Post Trib proponents would have you believe that all of the foregoing Scriptures prove that believers will be forced to go through the Tribulation Period. However, Paul explained to the Thessalonians believers that they were going through a time of tribulation which he equated with afflictions in the context.

In stark contrast is the Tribulation Period which is a future time of unparalleled suffering unlike anything that the earth and its inhabitants have ever experienced (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21). Moreover, Jesus explained that the great tribulation (the second 3.5 years) will occur immediately after the abomination of desolation that was prophesied by Daniel (Matt. 24:15). Both Daniel and Jesus considered the Tribulation Period to be a definite period of time of great trouble and wrath that would be fulfilled in the future.

Since trials, tribulations, and persecutions are something that the saints of God have encountered in every age, the great tribulation that Jesus was referring to in Matthew 24 must be something entirely different. The things that will occur during the seven year Tribulation Period have never happened before. It will be a time marked by the reign of antichrist. It will be a time of unparalleled suffering as the inhabitants of the earth will experience the wrath of God revealed from Heaven. The Tribulation Period will also end with the battle of Armageddon, the worst of all wars in military history. There is no way you can equate the daily tribulations of God's children with the Tribulation Period that is yet in the future.

2. Will anyone be saved during the Tribulation Period?

Since the Lord's church and all other believers will be raptured just prior to the start of the Tribulation Period, some have wondered how anyone will be saved if there are no witnesses left to preach the Gospel. God will miraculously raise up two witnesses who will preach the Gospel the first 3.5 years of the Tribulation until they are martyred (Rev. 11:3-12). There will also be 144,000 Jewish males who will preach the Gospel until they are martyred (Rev. 7). There will also be converts who trust Christ during the

Tribulation who will no doubt witness to others by sharing the Gospel of the grace of God. A majority of them will be martyred because they will refuse to take the mark of the beast. However, their stand for truth and courage to follow Christ will be used by God as a testimony to His saving power. People will be saved during the Tribulation Period just like people are saved at any other time, by trusting in the finished work of Christ. At the end of the Tribulation Period all those who rejected the Gospel will be punished according to II Thessalonians 1:7-9: **“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”**

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SECOND ADVENT AND THE MILLENNIUM

1. When will the Second Advent of Christ happen and where will it take place?

The Second Advent of Jesus Christ refers to the time when Jesus Christ will literally come back to the earth a second time. The First Advent was marked by His incarnation, perfect earthly life, miracles, teachings, betrayal, death, burial and resurrection. While Jesus was ascending up into Heaven the angels announced to those witnesses at the scene: **“...Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day’s journey”** (Acts 1:11-12). Just as the First Advent was a literal event that fulfilled several prophecies, the Second Advent of Jesus Christ to the earth will definitely happen just as the Scriptures promise and prophesy.

The Scriptures are very clear as to when the Second Advent of Christ will happen. Matthew 24:29-30 states: **“IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIBULATION of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and THEN shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and THEN shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”** Christ will come again from Heaven to the earth immediately after the Seven Year Tribulation Period. His Second Advent will be marked by astonishing signs in the heavens as well as great power and glory. The elect nation of Israel will behold Him as the Messiah and the Lamb of God (Rev. 1:7). The Spirit of God will be poured out upon them and they will be converted (Zech. 12:10).

Both Advents of Christ have to do with the earth and its inhabitants. Jesus literally came from Heaven to earth the first time to save His people, He will come again to reign with His people. Both Advents are clearly set forth as literal events that will take place on the earth in Luke 1:31-33: **“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”** Jerusalem was the place of David’s throne and

Israel's capital city. According to Scripture, when Christ comes again to the earth elect Israel will be restored and Jesus Christ will rule upon David's throne in Jerusalem (Matt. 25:31, 34; Isa. 24:23; Jer. 3:17; 23:5). There is absolutely no indication from the Scriptures that the throne of David was ever translated from earth to Heaven as the amillennialists falsely claim. The Scriptures make it very clear that Christ will not inherit the throne of His glory until after the Tribulation Period when He comes again to reign upon the earth. In fact, the promise of Acts 1:11-12 seems to indicate that Jesus will literally return to the Mount of Olives which would also fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah 14:4-9. The context of the prophecy in Zechariah emphatically declares that the King is coming from Heaven with the glorified saints to reign upon the earth.

2. Will the Millennium be a literal 1000 year period of time when Christ will reign as king upon the earth?

In Revelation chapter 20 the inspired Word of God records "a thousand years" 6 times in the first 7 verses. I have read this chapter over and over and have never once came away with the idea that the phrase "a thousand years" is not a definitive, literal period of time. The amillennialist would have you believe that we cannot take this 1000 years to be literal. However, everything else in Revelation chapter 20 is literal. Satan is literal (20:2). The martyrs who will reign with Christ are literal (20:4). The resurrection of the just (20:5-6) is literal. The Lake of Fire that the devil will be cast into is literal (20:10). The Great White Throne of Judgment and Jesus Christ who will sit upon it are both literal (20:11-15). The resurrection of the unjust dead and their consignment to the Lake of Fire is literal. Therefore, I conclude that the thousand year reign of Christ must of necessity be a literal, definitive event as set forth in the Holy Scriptures!

Amillennialists would have you believe that the reign of Christ is merely an internal, spiritual condition conferred upon the elect at the point of regeneration. There is no doubt that Christ dwells and reigns within the heart's of all His people in a spiritual sense in light of John 3:3-6 and Colossians 1:13-14. However, this spiritual kingdom in no way nullifies or cancels out the literal reign of Christ upon the earth with His people for a thousand years. The reign of Christ upon the earth as king will be a time of universal spirituality, dominion, righteousness, peace, justice, and prosperity. For the first time in earth's history there will be a literal Theocracy where Christ will rule and reign as King. Jerusalem will be a place of peace and safety. All the kings of the earth will pay homage and worship King Jesus. The earth has never known such a time, but all those grand and glorious promises will definitely be literally fulfilled during the Millennial reign of our Lord (Psalms 22:27-28; 66:4; 67:2-4; 72:6-11; 17-20; 138:4-5; Isaiah 2:3-4; 11:9; Jer. 33:14-16; Dan. 7:21-22. 27; Matt. 5:5; Rev. 5:9-10).

I love the comment of John Walvoord in his book *The Millennial Kingdom*:

"By no theological alchemy should these and countless other references to earth as the sphere of Christ's millennial reign be spiritualized to become the equivalent of heaven, the eternal state, or the church as amillennarians have done. A righteous reign of Christ on earth is

of course precisely what one would have expected from previous study of the Abrahamic covenant with its promises to the earth, the Davidic covenant relative to the Son of David reigning on the throne forever, and the many promises pertaining to Israel's regathering and re-establishment in their ancient land. The theocratic kingdom, therefore, of which the prophets spoke is an earthly kingdom which can find its fulfillment only in a literal reign of Christ upon the earth." (pp. 298-299)

3. Who are the subjects of the Millennial kingdom when Christ reigns upon the earth?

The most obvious subjects of the Millennial reign of Christ upon earth will be those Old and New Testament saints who come back with Jesus from Heaven in their glorified bodies (Zech 14:5; Jude 14-15; Rev. 5:9-10; 19:13). These are all partakers of either the rapture or the resurrection of the just (I Thess. 4:16-18). This group would also include those who were converted and martyred during the Tribulation. Some of these glorified saints are part of the Lamb's bride that will be revealed to the glorified guests present at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:6-9). Others are Old Testament saints saved before the church age. Some are Protestants who never identified with the church that Jesus built during His earthly ministry. The Judgment Seat of Christ will determine their responsibilities and rewards during the Millennial reign according to the Parables of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30) and of the Pounds (Luke 19:12-27).

The second group of subjects of Christ's Millennial reign will be the elect among the nation of Israel who will be converted when Christ comes again (Rom. 11:2, 23-29). God will regenerate the elect Israelites by the power of the Holy Spirit and they will look to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior (Zech. 12:9-10; 13:1; Luke 13:35; Rev. 1:7). The terms of the New Covenant will come to fruition during the Millennium (Jer. 31:31-37). Israel will be restored to the land promised to her in the Abrahamic Covenant as an everlasting possession (Gen. 17:4-8). Elect Israel will play a prominent role in the Millennial kingdom as Jerusalem will be the place where King Jesus will sit upon the throne promised Him in the Davidic Covenant (Isa. 32:1; Jer. 3:17-18; 23:5-6). The Millennial kingdom is a testament to God's faithfulness in keeping the promises made in His covenants with Israel.

The third group of subjects of Christ's Millennial reign will be the saved survivors of the Tribulation Period. These saints are identified as sheep at the Judgment of the Nations and will enter into the kingdom with their natural bodies (Matt. 25:31-40). At the beginning of the Millennium all the wicked will be purged from the earth (Psalm 37:22, 28-29; Prov. 2:21-22; 10:30; Matt. 13:40-43; 25:41, 46). For the first time since before the fall of Adam, the earth will be inhabited by God's children and ruled exclusively by the King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ.

The fourth group of subjects under Christ's Millennial reign will be those who are born to the saved survivors of the Tribulation Period who enter into the kingdom with their natural bodies. The children of these folks will be born with the old, corrupt, fleshly nature of sin. A great number of them will experience the saving grace of God (Psalm

67:1-3; 72:11-14). Yet, there will also be those who never come to repentance and faith in Christ populating the earth. However, since Satan will be bound, and Christ and the saints will be reigning, the unsaved will not be permitted to practice wickedness. In Christ's Theocracy they will outwardly bow to the King and follow His commands. They will submit to His righteous government. However, at the end of the thousand years when Satan is loosed for a little season he will deceive the lost inhabitants of the earth and lead them in rebellion against Christ in one last attempt to overthrow God. This will fully and finally demonstrate the incurable evil of the unregenerate and totally depraved heart of the natural man. In spite of a thousand years of millennial glory, the absence of the influence of Satan, and a government of absolute righteousness, the heart of the unsaved remains as cold as a stone. When Satan is loosed the carnal enmity of the natural man against God and His government will again be manifested in the battle of God and Magog. At this time Satan and all the unsaved inhabitants of the earth will meet their final doom as expressed in Revelation 20:7-10). Thus, the Millennium ends in much the same way as it began, all of the wicked will be banished to hell to await their fate at the Great White Throne Judgment.