



Things To Come: Week 9

The Rapture of the Church

Audio & Notes at:

<http://www.htchurch.com/things-to-come>

Video at:

<http://www.htchurch.tv>

1. What is the Rapture of the Church?

The Rapture is the doctrine that before Jesus returns to the Earth, He will remove believers so that they will not experience the wrath of God. This will be the resurrection of those believers. At the Rapture, believers will receive their glorified body.

2. Where is the Rapture in the Bible?

2.1 The Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

5:1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

2.1.1. The Thessalonians were in confusion about the resurrection.

2.1.2. God has not appointed us to wrath.

2.2 The Rapture in 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

*51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—
52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

2.2.1. The rapture was a mystery.

2.2.2. The fact of our transformation.

2.3 The Rapture in Philippians 3

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

2.4 The Rapture in 1 John 3:2-3

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

3. When is the Rapture?

A first principle is that no man knows the day or the hour: *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. (Matt. 24:36, KJV)*

Rapture viewpoints are categorized in relation to events of the 70th week of Daniel.

3.1 The Pre-Tribulation Rapture

This viewpoint holds that the rapture happens before the last seven years. An important feature of the pre-tribulation system is that the rapture can occur at any moment. Why do people believe that the rapture is pretribulational? A pretrib rapture system:

- 3.1.1. Satisfies the requirement that the rapture happen at an unknown time.
- 3.1.2. Takes into account the fact that God will not pour out his wrath upon Christians.
- 3.1.3. Creates a strong separation between the way that God deals with the church and the way He deals with Israel. Pretrib says that the 70th Week belongs to Israel and not the Church, just like the first 69 weeks had to do with Israel.

3.2 Mid-Tribulation Rapture.

A second system is the mid-tribulation system. Midtrib says that the Rapture will occur in the middle of the 7 years, right in the middle of the 70th week.

Why do people hold to this belief? In 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul says the Day of Christ will not take place until the apostasy or the falling away takes place, and the Man of Sin is revealed. Problem: strict midtrib would violate Jesus' words about knowing the day.

3.3 The Post-Tribulation Rapture

A third view is the post-tribulation viewpoint. The posttrib view, as the name implies, says the Rapture happens at the end of the 70th week. Why do some believe this way? There are several major reasons.

3.3.1. Posttrib says there is no explicit indication that God removes us from the difficulties of the seven years. They would say that Daniel talks about the saints being persecuted, and that Jesus' words in Matthew 24 are for the Church, not just the Jews.

3.3.2. Posttrib also would say that the whole seven years is *not* the wrath of God.

3.3.3. Finally, post-tribulation says that the New Testament only teaches one gathering to Jesus and combines it all together so the coming of Jesus is one event, they say, not an event which has two phases separated by seven years.

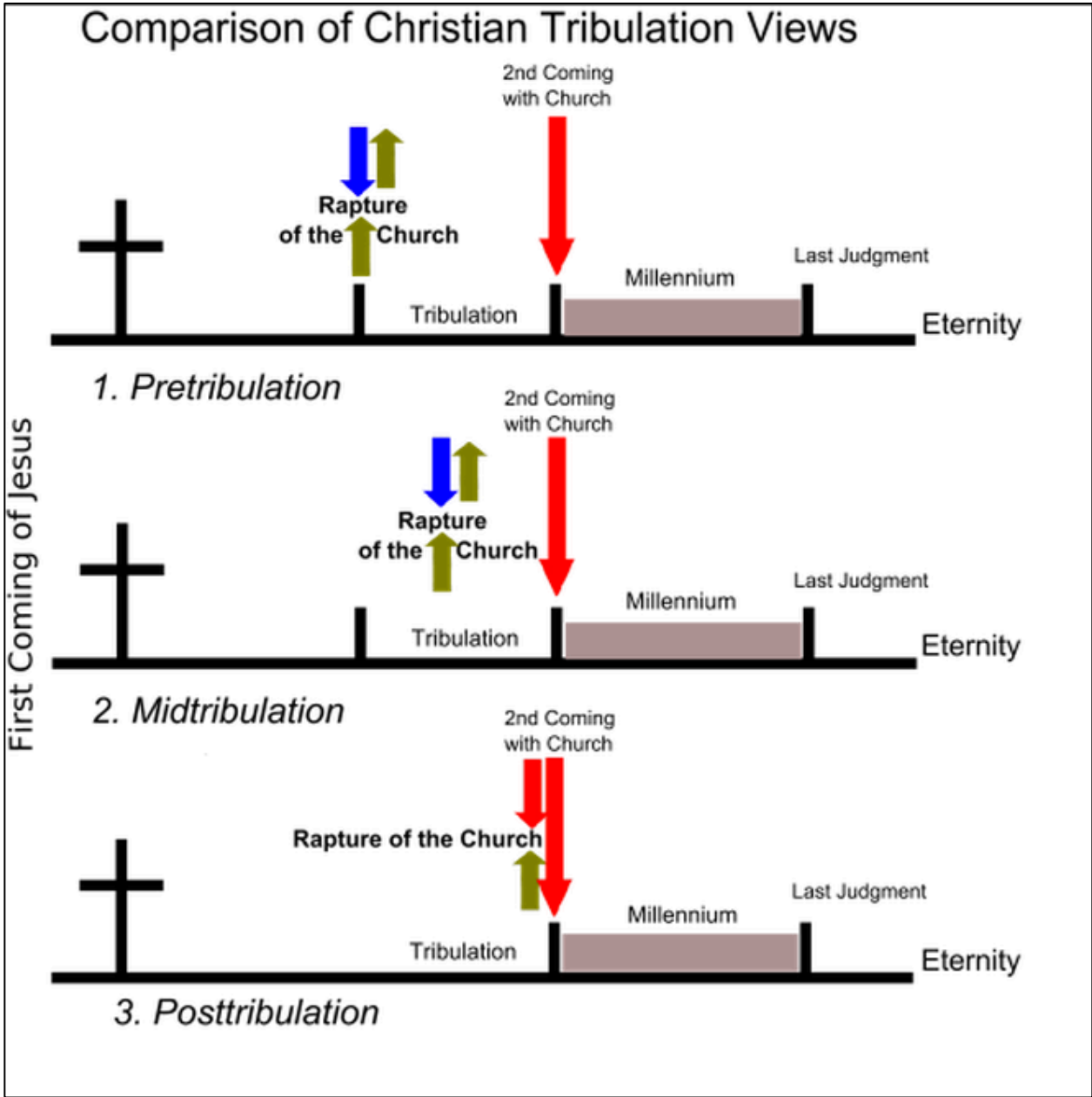


Chart by Lamorak, used by permission under Creative Commons License.

3.4 The Pre-Wrath Rapture

Pre-wrath is similar to posttrib but says, just as pretrib does, that posttrib cannot be correct because if Jesus were to come at the last day of the 7 years, we would know the day of his return. That is a problem for posttrib, but pre-wrath tries to solve that problem.

Pre-wrath says that the rapture happens at an unknown time after the Antichrist is revealed. Pre-wrath tries to harmonize all of the features of the other systems. It says that the wrath of God does not happen until after the Antichrist begins his reign, and that we cannot expect the rapture to happen until we see in the heavens the cosmic signs of the sun turned to darkness and the moon turn to blood, which people commonly place at the sixth seal. This ends the Great Tribulation by removing its victims, and it begins the Day of the Lord, which is the day of God's wrath.

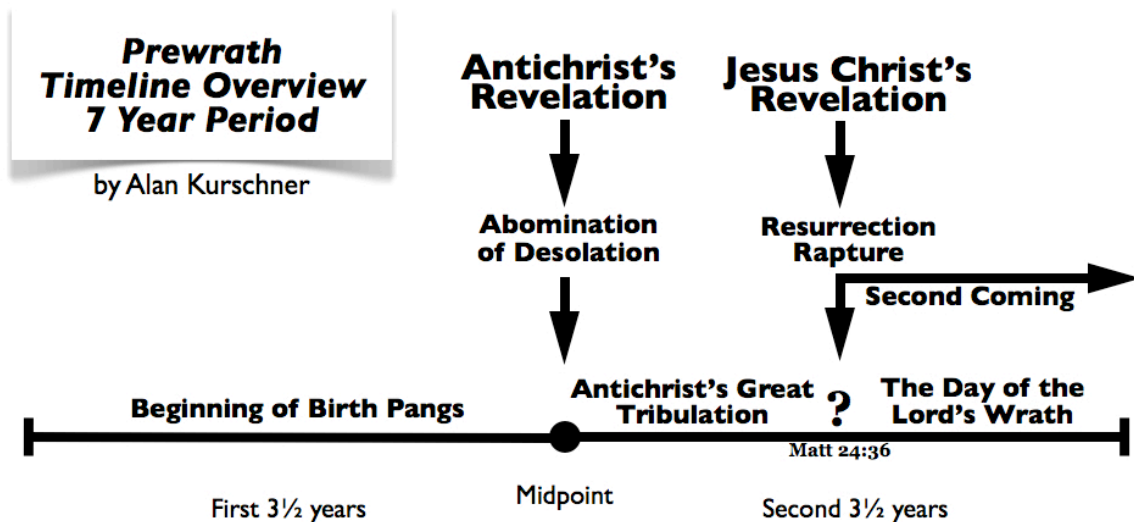


Chart by Alan Kurschner, used by permission under Creative Commons license.

3.5 What is Harvest Time's position?

Harvest Time is an Assemblies of God church, and the Assemblies of God officially holds to the pre-tribulation rapture view. The Assemblies believes that the time of God's wrath and the Day of the Lord is the entire seven years, and therefore the Church will not be here for pretty much everything we read about in the book of Revelation.

All quotes NKJV except as noted. New King James Version® Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.