

Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The TREE OF LIFE is a weekly teaching summary.

Tree of Life 09/06/98

The Doctrine of The Rapture..

Tree of Life for 09-06-98

This week we have been noting the Doctrine of the Rapture. The Rapture being the resurrection of the church of Christ. The word rapture is used in the technical sense for the resurrection of the royal family of God when the Lord Jesus Christ comes in the clouds of the air to take His children home from the evil time to come, 1Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1Corinthians 15:51-52. This doctrine is widely disputed by false religions. There are basically two schools of theology when it comes to the rapture:

- 1) The Pre-Tribulational view (which we believe is the correct view) states that Jesus Christ takes His church (i.e., all those who believe in Him as God and their personal Savior) before the wicked time of Tribulation arrives on earth.**
- 2) The Post-Tribulational view states that the church will go through the Tribulation and be raptured at the end of the seven years thereafter to return and reign with Christ in the Millennial reign.**

Under the post-Tribulational view we also find these beliefs; the Amillennial theology and the postmillennial theology, . They believe that the church's job is to clean up the world and usher in the Millennial reign. This belief is also known as reconstructionism or is titled dominion theology who's

endeavor it is to clean up the world and to usher in the Millennial reign.

The Rapture is the event which resurrects the royal family of God from the earth. The church age is the time in human history when the royal family is being formed on earth, Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:16; 4:4-5; Colossians 1:18,24; 2:19. Only when the royal family is completed does the rapture occur, 1Thessalonians 4:16-18; 1Corinthians 15:51- 58. Then comes the Big Genuflex, then the Judgment Seat of Christ for believers. The rapture then, is technically the second phase within the first resurrection. The first resurrection consists of:

- 1) The Alpha Company, i.e., the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ when His plan is completed at the end of the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union.**
- 2) The Bravo Company, i.e., the resurrection of the church upon it's completion, at the end of the church age, before the Tribulational period.**
- 3) The Charlie Company, i.e., the resurrection of Old Testament saints and this occurs only when the age of Israel is completed, at the end of the Tribulational period.**
- 4) The Delta Company, i.e., the resurrection of the Millennial saints and Tribulational martyrs when the Millennial reign is completed.**

The Church and Israel must be clearly distinguished from one another. The church and Israel are two distinct groups with whom God has a divine plan and one has to be taken away while the other is dealt with. They are two separate groups with two sets of different rules and these rules are not to be transferred from one age over to the other! The age of Israel was interrupted upon their blatant and lengthy rejection of God's word and their rejection of their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, the Church Age was interjected after Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father in the heavens. The Church will run until the rapture, at which point the age of Israel will again resume to complete the seven years owned to them. This is the Tribulational period after which the second coming of Christ occurs. The age of Israel has already received 483 years and

seven more are owed to them, Genesis 29:26-27; Daniel 9:24. After the tribulation is when Christ returns to the earth with His church to reign for 1,000 years of perfect environment. And of course after the Millennial reign, Satan is released from bondage for one last battle known as the Gog/Magog War. He loses this battle and his sentence of Matthew 25:41 is executed. He is cast into the eternal lake of fire forever and the new earth and eternal state commences in its fullness.

The rapture of the church is a part of our Lord's victory on the cross. The church being raptured or rather, resurrected from the earth is also termed the doctrine of translation as taught in John 14:1-3; 1Corinthians 15:51-52; 2Thessalonians 2:1; Philippians 3:20-21; 1Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2Corinthians 5:1-9; 1Corinthians 1:8. The Old Testament writers knew nothing of the rapture of the church since they knew nothing of the church age. Remember, the church was a mystery instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, John chapters 14 through 17. The Old Testament holds many references to the second coming of Christ but none of the rapture. The church did not commence its existence until after the death of Jesus Christ, Ephesians 5:25-26... until after the resurrection of Christ, Romans 4:25; Colossians 3:1-3... and until after the ascension of Christ, Ephesians 1:19-20. So how then could Daniel's prophecy refer to the church? It does not!

In Titus 2:13 the rapture is called the blessed hope. It is our happy expectation and our confidence. It is that which we should eagerly look forward to. Therefore, let us note some Biblical principles which establish the position of a pre-Tribulational rapture of the church:

A) The great tribulation is punishment for a Christ-rejecting world and the nation of Israel, who rejected her Messiah, Revelation 6:12-17.

B) The nature of the church and the promises (Hebrews 13:5) of Christ forbid the church from going through the great tribulation, Colossians 1:22.

C) According to the Bible there must be an interval of time between the rapture and the second coming. This is when the Judgment Seat of Christ takes place and believers either

receive rewards or lose rewards, 1Corinthians 3:11-15; 2Corinthians 5:10. Never is sin an issue since all sins have been paid for once and for all at the cross of Jesus Christ, Hebrews 10:10-11.

D) The scriptures which deal with the great tribulation have particular reference to the Jew not to the church, Matthew 24:1-3; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:23-26.

E) The tribulation is mentioned as a horrible time of darkness, evil, and sin, where none have faith, Isaiah 60:2; Jeremiah 13:16; Luke 18:8. So, how can this refer to the church of which there is one faith?

F) Satan persecutes the woman in the tribulation period, a reference to Israel. The church is not to come under condemnation, Revelation 12:1-4; Romans 5:9; 8:1; 1Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; 1Corinthians 15:55-57; 1Thessalonians 4:13-18.

G) The church is not of this world, John 17:14; Philippians 3:20; 2Timothy 2:3-4. The church is a spiritual extension of Jesus Christ, with promises that are heavenly related, Ephesians 1:3; 2:6.

H) Christ is now preparing a home for His body (the church; His bride) and has promised to return to take His bride back with Him, John 14:3; 1Thessalonians 4:13-17. How could Christ, as the husband, allow His bride to go through the torture of the Tribulation period? It doesn't make sense in the realm of common knowledge nor is such a concept theologically sound.

I) The church has been promised deliverance from the wrath to come, Romans 5:9; 1Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; Revelation 3:10.

J) The believer is told to watch! If believer's are destined to go through the great tribulation they be advised to watch for the signs of the prophecies of Jacob's trouble (Israel's tribulation)? Romans 8:23; 1Corinthians 1:7; Galatians 5:5; Titus 2:11-13.

K) God has always protected His people in unique fashions in the face of judgment.

L) The instructions in the apostle Paul's epistles for the church age never included any preparation or warning that the church will encounter the great tribulation, 2Thessalonians 2:3-10.

M) If the church goes through the tribulation then the Jews as well as the Gentiles of the Tribulational period would become part of the church. Revelation 7:4-8 tells us that the groups focused on during the tribulation are the tribes of Israel.

N) The church at Thessalonica would not be concerned with any disadvantage of the dead in Christ if those who were alive had to go through the great tribulation, 1Thessalonians 1:4.

O) The message of the church is the message of the gospel of grace and peace, which was secured at the cross by Jesus, the Christ, Ephesians 2:8-10. Why would God pour out His wrath on His Son and then turn around and again pour it out on His Son's bride?

P) The iniquity of the anti-Christ cannot be released until the restrainer (God the Holy Spirit) is removed from the earth with the church at the rapture, 2Thessalonians 2:3-8. It is after the rapture of the church that the lawless one will be revealed.

Q) If the church was on earth during the great tribulation why would those who come through the great tribulation pray for the destruction of those in authority, Revelation 6:10? The church is commanded to pray for those in authority, 1Timothy 2:2.

R) Christ's return for His church is unconditional and He returns to heaven afterward, John 14:1-3.

S) Christ returns for His bride in the air and does not touch upon the earth at the rapture, 1Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 24.

T) The Judgment Seat of Christ takes place after the rapture, 1Corinthians 3:11-15; 2Corinthians 5:10.

U) Time is needed for the Judgment Seat of Christ and the marriage of the Lamb and His bride to be dressed in white (the church's divinely good deeds rewarded), Revelation 19:7-8.

V) The rapture is a mystery and a secret, the second coming is a world display of power, 1Corinthians 15:51-52.

W) The rapture comes at a time of false peace and safety, the second coming comes at a time of disaster, 1Thessalonians 5:2-3.

X) After the rapture (Revelation 4) the day of the Lord begins with the opening of the first seal, Revelation 5.

Y) The church is never mentioned from Revelation chapters 4

through 19 since she has been removed and the tribulation deals with the Jews.

Z) The 144,000 Jews from the 12 tribes; the two prophets (probably Elijah and Moses) and the angel who pays witness to the gospel occur during the tribulation with no mention of the church, Revelation 11:3

The church is never mentioned as fulfilling her great commission during the tribulation. Titus 2:11-13 informs us that we are to watch for our blessed hope, the coming of Christ in the clouds of the air (1Corinthians 15:51-52) to take His church (bride) out from the wrath to come. If the church were to be left on earth during the Tribulational period, of what hope would there be?! There would be nothing to anticipate! The rapture is a comfort whereas the tribulation is not! Revelation chapter 13 makes it very clear that all who are in the 70th week of Israel (the Tribulational period) are brought into subjection to the beast and through him to Satan who gives the beast power, Revelation 13:1-9. But of course the subject of dispensations must be understood in order for the believer to grow spiritually. It must be clearly understood on the believer's part that if the church were left in this period of wrath she would be subjected to Satan and Christ would either lose His place as head of the body (the church) or His union with the church would be subjected to Satan's authority. Both suppositions are preposterous and blasphemous!

If there were no rapture to come we would be looking for the regathering of Israel as our sign, Ezekial chapters 36 through 38, and other prophecies to be fulfilled. But, the church is not to look for these signs, Israel is to look for these signs, 1Thessalonians 1:10. True some of these things are taking place, but that only points closer to our blessed hope. The church is told to live one day at a time in light of the imminency of the rapture, i.e., the fact that it could occur at any time! We are not waiting for prophecies to be fulfilled as is Israel, Revelation chapters 6 through 19. The church age though it did begin with a prophetic even, the baptism of the Spirit, will end with the rapture of the church. There are no

prophecies in between which we are commanded to watch for. We are commanded to be patience, apply doctrine, execute God's plan, and wait, [Philippians 3:20-21](#); [Titus 2:11-13](#); [James 5:7-8](#).

Every single day the rapture draws closer and we cannot have patience without a stabilized mentality. And a stabilized mentality is developed through consistently learning, believing, and executing the word of God, the very mind of Christ! Every day Jesus Christ should be the center of our lives, time should be put aside daily to learn God's plan via His word. The Bible is His instruction manual for the spiritual life. We are to live life as does a mature believer, one day at a time, [Romans 14:4-6](#), in the confident expectation of the rapture of the church, [Titus 2:13](#)!

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