

GNITN
The Rapture The Blessed Hope or Blessed Nope
Week 3
Don't Fight - Study:
A Calm Walk Through Rapture Views

So Many Views

He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him. ([Prov 18:13](#), NKJV)

There are many views on when the Rapture will occur and we need to look at them before we rule them out. But it is important to note that the stance of this church and all churches and ministers in the Assemblies of God is that the Rapture will occur before the Tribulation which makes us pretribulationists. The question is this: what kind of glasses are you looking through? There are at least three major views on when the Rapture will occur. There is the pre trib view which holds that it will happen before the Great Tribulation. Then there are those who adhere to the view that it will occur at the midpoint of the Great Tribulation or the mid trib view. And then there are those who believe the Rapture will take place at the end of seven-year tribulation or the post trib view. Why are there so many views? Simply put, we interpret scripture differently. Whether it is because of our culture or ethnicity or a myriad of other lenses we use to determine what the Bible means we just come to different conclusions. However, a good rule of thumb is to not use outside sources that affirm our interpretations. We should let scripture interpret scripture. In many cases we rely on what other theologians or historians tell us what the Bible means and then make the Bible fit the view. Before we get to the many views I have a little bit of advice.

Avoid Just Arguing

Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. ([2 Tim 2:14](#), NIV)

We should say at the outset that we need to avoid arguing with others on their views of scripture. If all parties agree to debate with intellectual honesty and not get into a shouting match, then a discussion should go forward. Otherwise, there is the risk that rather than engaging in a fruitful exercise of biblical clarity such discussion deteriorates into heated arguing and loss of friendships. It is usually better to agree to disagree when things stop being cordial. And the topic of the Blessed Hope has always been controversial. Trust me when I tell you that.

The Different Views: Mid-Tribulation Rapture

Advocates of this theory state that the church will be raptured three and one half years after the beginning of the tribulation period or precisely at the time of the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel ([Daniel 9:27](#)) and Jesus ([Matt. 24:15](#)). Thus, they can't believe in an imminent Rapture. Once the Tribulation starts, the timeline is set. So Mid-tribulation rapturists try to deny the belief in an imminent return of Jesus. However, Norman B. Harrison [writes](#), "We see from the Scriptures that Jesus could not have returned in the lifetime of Peter; nor yet in the days of the apostles; nor yet before the reformation; nor yet before the missionary program is completed; nor yet before the apostasy has overtaken us; nor yet before the last days in which we seem to be living."

The Bible says otherwise. While Harrison attempted to disprove the doctrine of imminence, he actually made a good argument for an immanent Rapture. Scripture consistently teaches that the coming of Jesus could be at any time and to wait for it eagerly ([1 Thess. 1:9-10; 4:16-17; 5:5-9](#)).

And About That Timing

We won't know when the Rapture will occur and the Bible warns us about thinking we know:

³⁶ *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

⁴² *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.*

⁴³ *But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.*

⁴⁴ *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. ([Matt 24:36, 42-44](#), NIV)*

⁶ *And another time when he appeared to them, they asked him, "Lord, are you going to free Israel from Rome now and restore us as an independent nation?"*

⁷ *"The Father sets those dates," he replied, "and they are not for you to know. ([Acts 1:6-7](#), TLB)*

Jesus said we wouldn't know when it would happen not once, not twice but three times. When He says something once, we should take note and if He says it second time it should stand out, but if He goes out of His way to say it three times it probably because He knows we are prone to set dates and we shouldn't. And notice in Acts when they brought it up again after Jesus ascended. The angels scolded them for asking a question they should have already known the answer to.

The Different Views: Post-Tribulation Rapture

The second most common view, and perhaps the oldest is the post-tribulation rapture theory. This theory suggests that believers will be raptured at the end of the tribulation period only to return again immediately again when Jesus comes to pronounce judgment on the world. This basically has the Church being taken to meet Jesus in the air and then come right back with Him. As the teaching goes, once the Church goes up to Heaven, they are outside of time so the Wedding Supper of the Lamb and the judgment seat of Christ can happen without us missing a beat on earth. I know it sounds strange, but that is what they believe. The most common mistake made by supporters of this view is that they avoid a literal interpretation of Scripture and often spiritualize or interpret Scripture allegorically. Dennis William Rohan, says this, *"I would encourage you to read the book of Revelation, asking God to show you the spiritual interpretations, which are equally as valid as physical interpretations."* To interpret Scripture in such a way is dangerous to say the least.

Which Trumpet Is Which

Mr. McKeever argues that the word "last" is significant in [1 Cor. 15:52](#). He points out that this last trumpet is synonymous with the last trumpet in [Rev. 11:15](#). He states that because there are no other trumpets recorded in Scripture after this one, this must refer to the rapture at the end of the tribulation. Also, since [1 Thess. 4:16](#) makes mention of a shout accompanying the trumpet, he feels it is significant to find loud voices (or shouts) at the seventh trumpet in [Rev. 11:15](#). In that verse there is shouting, but it is by the saints already in Heaven. This is during the Tribulation and not at the end so a literal interpretation of the book can't be true. His trumpet argument also is a stretch since he assumes that the word last means the actual last one. While this may appear to be a valid argument, a closer look will indicate that this line of reasoning is

faulty. First of all, the word "last" may signify that which concludes a program but is not necessarily the last that will ever exist. Secondly, the trumpet that summons the church is called the trump of God, while the seventh trump is an angel's trumpet. Also, we notice that the trumpet in *1 Thessalonians* issues in blessing in life, in glory, while the trumpet in Revelation issues in judgment upon the enemies of God.

How Many Resurrections?

Another one of the major arguments in support of a post-tribulation rapture deals with resurrection. Mr. McKeever summarizes this argument as such:

"1 Thessalonians 4:16 makes reference to a resurrection of the dead in Jesus. Revelation 20:1-6 speaks of the first resurrection. There could not be a resurrection at the beginning of the tribulation, or this one in Revelation 20 could not be the first."

A similar argument by Mr. Ladd is as follows:

"Revelation 20 is the only passage which describes the resurrection of martyrs. This passage locates the resurrection both of saints and martyrs at the "revelation" of Jesus and not at the "rapture."

Again, this appears to be a valid argument. However, it would be wise to examine other portions of Scripture which deal with the resurrection. *1 Corinthians 15* deals extensively with the doctrine of the resurrection. In *verse 23* we see the phrase "But every man in his own order." It is assumed by some that this means that the first resurrection is composed of different groups: church saints, Old Testament saints, and tribulation saints. This passage seems to indicate a natural progression of resurrection. Jesus is said to be the "firstfruits" of them that slept. This phase of the resurrection program was accomplished at the time of Jesus' resurrection on the third day and marks the beginning of this whole resurrection program.

What's In A Word?

But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. ([1 Cor 15:23](#), NKJV)

A second group is introduced by the word "afterward." This word (*epeita*) signifies a lapse of time of undesignated duration. This would allow for a lapse of time between Jesus' resurrection and the resurrection of believers. Even though there are different times of resurrection, they are still a part of the first resurrection program and are "orders" in that program. Therefore, the resurrection of tribulation saints at the time of the Second Advent does not prove that all who are resurrected unto life are raised at this time. It most likely refers to all who become Christians until His second coming. Trying to make it support any other view is also an assumption based on what you want it be.

Then There Is The Pre-Trib View

I'm not going to elaborate on this since I've talked about it so much before. It is the only view that doesn't know the day or the hour of the Rapture. It is the only view that doesn't require it take some scriptures literally and others figuratively to make it work. And it is the only view that matches all the Scriptures on Jesus coming back for His Bride without bending the words to work. And it is the only view that makes people live holier lives so they can be like Jesus when He raptures them. That is because it is imminent which means they have to be ready for His return at any moment. After examining the major premises of the post-tribulation view and the mid-tribulation view, we must conclude that these views, while having some merit, have some

holes in them. The pre-tribulation view is the only view that can be accepted based on a literal interpretation of Scripture. But if you're holding to the pre-tribulation view, don't let it turn into a debate badge - let it become a daily comfort and a daily motivation. Jesus isn't dangling fear over His Bride; He's calling us to watchfulness, hope, and steady faithfulness. We don't have to live anxious about timelines - we get to live anchored in a Person. And that's the heart of it: He's coming for His own, and He keeps His promises. So live ready, not rattled. Stay close, stay clean, stay encouraged. Whether it's today or years from now, the blessed hope is still blessed - because our King is faithful, and our future is secure in Him.