

Pre-Tribulational Rapture, Overview

Defending Doctrinal Distinctives

What is the Rapture?

Rapture event described in 1 Thess. 4:13–18 and 1 Cor. 15:50–53

“Rapture” comes from the Latin translation of the Greek verb *harpadzo*, “to grab, seize, take away suddenly, or snatch”

The rapture is an event associated with Christ’s return in which Christ’s entire church, living and dead, is resurrected, glorified, and lifted up to meet Christ in the clouds and be with him thereafter.

When Will the Rapture Happen?

The tribulation period = seven-year period of final judgments on the world before Christ returns to the earth to reign

Three main views on the rapture's timing relative to the tribulation:

Pre-tribulational Rapture: the rapture takes place before the tribulation period

Mid-tribulational Rapture: the rapture takes place in the middle of the tribulation period (compare similar view, Pre-Wrath Rapture)

Post-Tribulational Rapture: the rapture takes place at the end of the tribulation period

No view is problem free, but the Pre-tribulational rapture view best harmonizes eschatological Scriptures

Your view of the rapture will affect your hope and courage but not your salvation

Three Key Arguments for a Pre-tribulational Rapture

1. Revelation 3:10 promises that the church will be spared from the tribulation period

Rapture = future reward for present perseverance

2. New Testament believers expect to escape God's wrath, and the whole tribulation period is God's wrath (1 Thess. 1:9–10; 5:1–11; Rev. 6:1–17; compare Ezek. 5:13–17)

Rapture = rescue from God's future wrath by Christ

3. John 14:1–3 requires a return to heaven after the rapture

Rapture = expression of Christ's love for his church

Bema Seat Judgment and Marriage Supper of the Lamb likewise need heaven time after the rapture (1 Cor. 3:10–15; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 19:7–10)

Three Supplemental Arguments for a Pre-Tribulational Rapture

1. The Thessalonians' eschatological distress makes best sense with a pre-tribulation rapture (1 Thess. 4:13–18; 2 Thess. 2:1–15)
2. The church is noticeably absent in the judgment descriptions of Revelation 6–18
3. The NT does not seek to prepare Christians for the tribulation period

Next Time:
Questions and Objections