

Biblical Doctrine of The Rapture of the Church Part 2: When is the Rapture?

Students of the Bible have different opinions regarding exactly when the rapture will occur. These opinions revolve around the issue of whether or not the church will be present on earth during any part of the period of judgments known as the tribulation. It also depends on understanding Israel's place in the tribulation. The different views follow three distinct time frames and interpretations about the church during the tribulation, which are summarized in the following:

Post-tribulation Rapture

- At the end of the seven years of tribulation the church is removed from the earth and then returns with Christ to set up his millennial kingdom.
- The church will endure all of the seven years of tribulation and great tribulation.
- Post-tribulationists believe the “elect” of Mt 24:29-31 refers to the church and that believers will have tribulation Mt 24:9, 21, 29; Mk 13:9, 24, which all are verses that clearly refer to Israel.

Mid-tribulation Rapture

- At the end of three-and-one-half years, at the midpoint of the tribulation, the church is removed from the earth.
- The church will go through the tribulation, but not “the great tribulation” of the last three-and-one-half years of the tribulation.
- Mid-trib advocates believe that the church will go through the less severe part of the tribulation but protected from the more severe part based on Rev 3:10 and 1 Thess 4:17 neither of which give clear evidence.

Pretribulation Rapture

- Before the seven years of tribulation begins, the church will be taken from earth
- The church will not go through any part of the tribulation or great tribulation
- Biblical evidence - 1 Thess 1:9-10; 5:9-11 suggest a pre-trib rapture; in Rev 4:1 to 18:24 where the church is omitted suggests a pre-trib rapture. The biblical evidence favors the pre-tribulation view of the rapture, and especially the imminent return of Christ as presented in Mt 24:36; Mk 13:32; Lk 21:34-36.

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