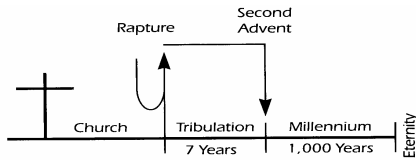


## Fifty Arguments for the Pretribulational Rapture



- A. Overview of the Pretribulational Position:
- B. Other Major Views of the Rapture:
- C. Scriptural Basis for Rapture.
- D. Scriptural Basis for Second Coming.
- E. Comparison between Rapture & Second Coming; two distinct events.
- F. 50 Arguments for Pretribulational Rapture offered by Dr. John F. Walvoord.

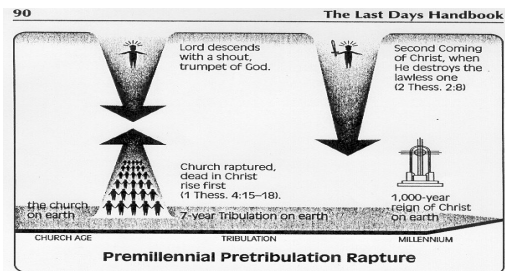
### A. An overview of the Pretribulational Rapture:

Consider Charles C. Ryrie's Definition of Pretribulationism:

Pretribulationism teaches that the Rapture of the church (both dead and living saints) will occur before the seven-year Tribulation period, that is, before the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel 9:24-27. It is necessary to say "before the seven-year Tribulation period" because some who hold to midtribulation Rapture state that the Rapture is pretribulational, because they understand the Tribulation to refer only to the last three and one-half years of the seven-year period.

Ryrie, *Basic Theology : A Popular Systemic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*. Chicago, Ill. : Moody Press, 1999, S. 562

## Pretribulational Rapture:

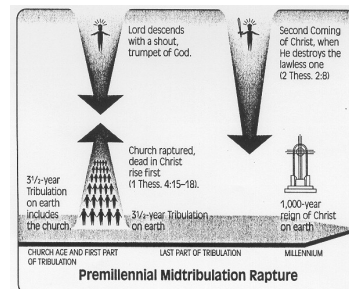


### B. Midtribulational Rapture View:

Midtribulationism teaches that the Rapture will occur at the midpoint of the seven year Great Tribulation; that is, the church will be on earth during the first three and one-half years but will be taken to heaven at that point, thus escaping the last half of the Tribulation.

~ Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 561.

## Midtribulational Rapture:

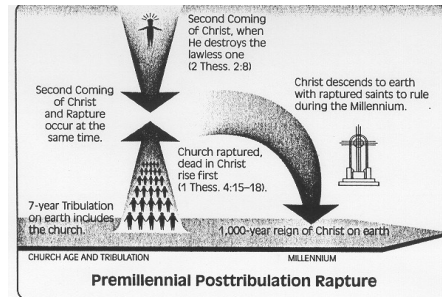


## B. Posttribulational Rapture View:

Posttribulationism understands that the church will continue on the earth during the entire period, but that there will be a Rapture as described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 at the end, followed immediately by the Second Coming.

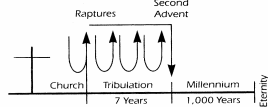
Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 561.

## Posttribulational Rapture:

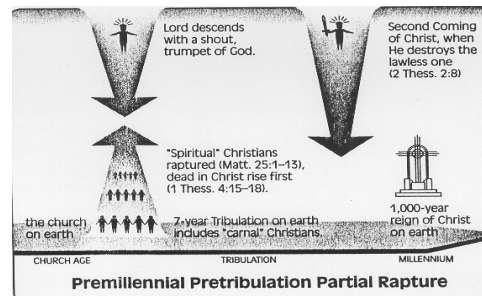


## B. Partial Rapture View:

Partial Rapture View understands that "spiritually mature" believers will be raptured before any aspect of the Great Tribulation begins. "Carnal" Christians will be included during the Great Tribulation; it sees the church as the body of Christ being divided for the first part of the tribulation between the spiritual saints in heaven and the carnal Christians on earth. This view sees the tribulation as a time of testing for lukewarm Christians and rewards for the faithful. Therefore, the Rapture is meritorious, imminent for some but not all believers.



## Partial Rapture View:



## C. Scriptural Basis for Pretribulational Rapture:

John 14:1-3	I Timothy 6:14
Romans 8:19	II Timothy 4:1
I Corinthians 1:7-8	Titus 4:1
I Corinthians 15:51-53	Titus 2:13
I Corinthians 16:22	Hebrews 9:28
Philippians 3:20-21	James 5:7-9
Colossians 3:4	1 Peter 1:7, 13
I Thessalonians 1:10	1 John 2:28-3:2
I Thessalonians 2:19	Jude 21
I Thessalonians 4:13-18	Revelations 2:25
I Thessalonians 5:9	Revelation 3:10
I Thessalonians 5:23	
II Thessalonians 2:1	

## D. Scriptural Basis for Second Coming:

Daniel 2:44-45	Acts 1:9-11
Daniel 7:914	Acts 3:19-21
Daniel 12:1-3	I Thessalonians 3:13
Zechariah 14:1-15	II Thessalonians 1:6-10
Matthew 13:41	II Peter 3:1-14
Matthew 24:15-31	Jude 14-15
Mark 13:14-27	Revelation 1:7
Mark 14:62	Revelation 19:11-20:6
Luke 21:25-28	Revelation 22:7, 12, 20

**E. Compare: Consider the evidence why the Rapture is distinct from the Second Coming of Jesus Christ:**

**THE RAPTURE:**

- 1) Christ comes for His own (John 14:3; I Thess. 14:17; II Thess. 2:1).
- 2) He comes in the air (I Thess. 4:17).
- 3) He claims His bride (I Thess. 4:16-17)
- 4) Removal of believers (I Thess. 4:17).
- 5) Only His own see Him (I Thess. 4:13-18)
- 6) Tribulation begins (II Thess. 1:6-9).
- 7) Saved are delivered from wrath (I Thess. 1:10; 5-9).
- 8) No signs precede rapture (I Thess. 5:1-3).
- 9) Focus: Lord and church (I Thess. 4:13-18).
- 10) World is deceived (II Thess. 2:3-12).

**E. Consider the evidence why the Rapture is distinct from the Second Coming of Jesus Christ:**

**THE SECOND COMING:**

- 1) Christ comes with His own (I Thess. 3:13; Jude 14; Rev. 19:14).
- 2) He comes to the earth (Zech. 14:4; Acts 1:11).
- 3) He comes with His bride (Rev. 19:6-14).
- 4) Manifestation of Christ (Mal. 4:2).
- 5) Every eye shall see Him (Rev. 1:7).
- 6) Millennial kingdom begins (Rev. 20:1-7).
- 7) Unsaved experience the wrath of God (Rev. 6:12-17).
- 8) Signs precede second coming (Luke 21:11,15).
- 9) Focus: Israel and kingdom (Matthew 24:14).
- 10) Satan is bound (Rev. 20:1-2).

**Fifty Arguments for the Pretribulational Rapture View:**

Adapted from John F. Walvoord's classic work, *The Rapture Question: Revised and Enlarged* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957, 1979), 269-274.

**Outline:**

- I. Historical Argument
- II. Hermeneutics
- III. Nature of the Tribulation
- IV. Nature of the Church
- V. Doctrine of Imminency
- VI. The Work of the Holy Spirit
- VII. Necessity of an Interval Between the Rapture and the Second Coming
- VIII. Contrasts Between the Rapture and the Second Coming.

**Historical Argument:**

- # 1. While Posttribulationism appeared as early as 2 Thessalonians 2, many in the early church believed in the imminency of the Lord's return, which is an essential doctrine of pretribulationism.

**Historical Argument:**

- # 2. The detailed development of pretribulational truth during the past few centuries does not prove that the doctrine is new or novel. Its development is similar to that of major doctrines in the history of the church.

(see *Pseudo-Ephraem* (c. 374-627) document supporting pretribulational rapture view)

### Hermeneutical Argument:

- # 3. Pretribulationism is the only view that consistently follows a plain, normal, literal-grammatical-historical-literary interpretation of all Old and New Testament passages on the Great Tribulation.

### Hermeneutical Argument:

- # 4. Pretribulationism distinguishes clearly between Israel and their respective programs.

### Nature of the Tribulation Argument:

- # 5. Pretribulationism maintains the scriptural distinction between the Great Tribulation and tribulation in general that precedes it.

### Nature of the Tribulation Argument:

- # 6. The Great Tribulation is properly interpreted by pretribulationists as a time of preparation for Israel's restoration (Deut. 4:29-30; Jer. 30:4-11).

It is not the purpose of the Tribulation to prepare the church for glory.

### Nature of the Tribulation Argument:

- # 7. None of the Old Testament passages on the Tribulation mention the church (Deut. 4:29-30; Jer. 30:4-1; Dan. 8:24-27; 12:1-2).

### Nature of the Tribulation Argument:

- # 8. None of the New Testament passages on the Tribulation mention the church (Matt. 13:30, 39-42, 48-50; 24:15-31; 1 Thess. 1:9-10; 5:4-9; 2 Thess. 2:1-1; Rev. 4-18).

### Nature of the Tribulation Argument:

- # 9. In contrast to midtribulationism, the pretribulationist view provided an adequate explanation for the beginning of the Great Tribulation in Revelation 6.

Midtribulationism is refuted by the plain teaching of Scripture that the Great Tribulation begins long before the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11.

### Nature of the Tribulation Argument:

- # 10. The proper distinction is maintained between the prophetic trumpets of Scripture by pretribulationism. There is no proper ground for the pivotal argument of midtribulationism that the seventh trumpet of Revelation is the last trumpet in that there is no established connection between the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11, the last trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15:52, and the trumpet of Matthew 24:31.

### Nature of the Tribulation Argument:

- # 11. The unity of Daniel's seventieth week is maintained by pretribulationists. By contrast, posttribulationism and midtribulationism destroy the unity of Daniel's seventieth and confuse Israel's program with that of the church.

### Nature of the Church Argument:

- # 12. The translation of the church is never mentioned in any passage dealing with the second coming of Christ after the Tribulation.

### Nature of the Church Argument:

- # 13. The church is not appointed to wrath (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:9-10; 5:9). The church therefore cannot enter "the great day of their wrath" (Rev. 6:17).

### Nature of the Church Argument:

- # 14. The church will not be overtaken by the day of the Lord (1 Thess. 5:1-9), which includes the Tribulation.

### Nature of the Church Argument:

# 15. The possibility of a believer escaping the Tribulation is mentioned in Luke 21:36.

### Nature of the Church Argument:

# 16. The church of Philadelphia was promised deliverance from ‘the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth’ (Rev. 3:10).

### Nature of the Church Argument:

# 17. It is characteristic of divine dealing to deliver believers before a divine judgment is inflicted on the world as illustrated in the deliverance of Noah, Lot, Rahab, etc. (2 Peter 2:5-9).

### Nature of the Church Argument:

# 18. At the time of the translation of the church, all believers go to the Father’s house in heaven (John 14:3) and do not immediately return to the earth after meeting Christ in the air as posttribulationists teach.

### Nature of the Church Argument:

# 19. Pretribulationism does not divide the body of Christ at the Rapture on a works principle. The teaching of a partial rapture is based on the false doctrine that the translation of the church is a reward for good works. It is rather a climactic aspect of salvation by grace.

### Nature of the Church Argument:

# 20. The Scriptures clearly teach that all, not part, of the church will be raptured at the coming of Christ for the church (1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1Thess. 4:17).

### Nature of the Church Argument:

- # 21. As opposed to a view of a partial rapture, pretribulationism is founded on the definite teaching of Scripture that the death of Christ frees from all condemnation.

### Nature of the Church Argument:

- # 22. The godly remnant of the Tribulation are pictured as Israelites, not members of the church as maintained by the posttribulationists.

### Nature of the Church Argument:

- # 23. The pretribulationist view, as opposed to posttribulationism, does not confuse general terms like *elect* and *saints*, which apply to the saved of all ages, with specific terms like church and those *in Christ*, which refer to believers of this age only.

### Doctrine of Imminency:

- # 24. The pretribulationist interpretation teaches that the coming of Christ is actually imminent.

### Doctrine of Imminency:

- # 25. The exhortation to be comforted by the coming of the Lord (1 Thess. 4:18) is very significant in the pretribulationist view and is especially contradicted by most posttribulationists.

### Doctrine of Imminency:

- # 26. The exhortation to look for “the glorious appearing” of Christ to His own (Titus 2:13) loses its significance if the Tribulation must intervene first. Believers in that case should look for signs.

### Doctrine of Imminency:

- # 27. The exhortation to purify ourselves in view of the Lord's return has most significance if His coming is imminent (1 John 3:2-3).

### Doctrine of Imminency:

- # 28. The church is uniformly exhorted to look for the coming of the Lord, while believers in the Tribulation are directed to look for signs.

### The Work of the Holy Spirit:

- # 29. The Holy Spirit as the restrainer of evil cannot be taken out of the world unless the church, which the Spirit indwells, is translated at the same time. The Tribulation cannot begin until this restraint is lifted.

### The Work of the Holy Spirit:

- # 30. The Holy Spirit as the restrainer must be taken out of the world before "the lawless one," who dominates the tribulation period, can be revealed (2 Thess. 2:6-8).

### The Work of the Holy Spirit:

- # 30. The Holy Spirit as the restrainer must be taken out of the world before "the lawless one," who dominates the tribulation period, can be revealed (2 Thess. 2:6-8).

### The Work of the Holy Spirit:

- # 31. If the expression "*except there come a falling away first*" (KJV) is translated literally, "*except the departure come first,*" it would plainly show the necessity of the Rapture taking place before the beginning of the Tribulation.



The Necessity of an Interval Between the Rapture and the Second Coming:

- # 32. According to 2 Corinthians 5:10, all believers of this age must appear before the judgment seat of Christ in heaven, an event never mentioned in the detailed accounts connected with the second coming of Christ to the earth.

The Necessity of an Interval Between the Rapture and the Second Coming:

- # 33. If the twenty-four elders of Revelation 4:1-5:14 are representative of the church expositors believe, it would necessitate the rapture and reward of the church before the Tribulation.

The Necessity of an Interval Between the Rapture and the Second Coming:

- # 34. The coming of Christ for His bride must take place before the Second Coming to the earth for the wedding feast (Rev. 19:7-11).

The Necessity of an Interval Between the Rapture and the Second Coming:

- # 35. Tribulation saints are not translated at the second coming of Christ but carry on ordinary occupations such as farming and building houses, and they will bear children (Isa. 65:20-25). This would be impossible if all saints were translated at the Second Coming to the earth, as posttribulationists teach.

The Necessity of an Interval Between the Rapture and the Second Coming:

- # 36. The judgment of the Gentiles following the Second Coming (Matt. 25:31-46) indicates that both saved and unsaved are still in their natural bodies. This would be impossible if the translation had taken place at the Second Coming.

The Necessity of an Interval Between the Rapture and the Second Coming:

- # 37. If the translation took place in connection with the Second Coming to the earth, there would be no need of separating the sheep from the goats at a subsequent judgment, but the separation would have taken place in the very act of the translation of the believers before Christ actually sets up His throne on earth (Matt. 25:31).

The Necessity of an Interval Between the Rapture and the Second Coming:

- # 38. The judgment of Israel (Ezek. 20:34-38), which occurs subsequent to the Second Coming, indicates the necessity of re-gathering Israel. The separation of the saved from the unsaved in this judgment obviously takes place sometime after the Second Coming and would be unnecessary if the saved had previously been separated from the unsaved by translation.

**Contrasts Between the Rapture and Second Coming:**

- # 39. At the time of the Rapture the saints meet Christ in the air, while at the Second Coming Christ returns to the Mount of Olives to meet the saints on earth.

**Contrasts Between the Rapture and Second Coming:**

- # 40. At the time of the Rapture the Mount of Olives is unchanged, while at the Second Coming it divides and a valley is formed to the east of Jerusalem (Zech. 14:4-5).

**Contrasts Between the Rapture and Second Coming:**

- # 41. At the Rapture living saints are translated, while no saints are translated in connection with the Second Coming of Christ to the earth.

**Contrasts Between the Rapture and Second Coming:**

- # 42. At the Rapture the saints go to heaven, while at the Second Coming to the earth the saints remain on the earth without translation.

**Contrasts Between the Rapture and Second Coming:**

- # 43. At the time of the Rapture the world is unjudged and continues in sin, while at the Second Coming the world is judged and righteousness is established in the earth.

**Contrasts Between the Rapture and Second Coming:**

# 44. The translation of the church is pictured as a deliverance before the day of wrath, the Second Coming is followed by the deliverance of those who have believed in Christ during the Tribulation.

**Contrasts Between the Rapture and Second Coming:**

# 45. The Rapture is described as imminent, while the Second Coming is preceded by definite signs.

**Contrasts Between the Rapture and Second Coming:**

# 46. The translation of living believers is a truth revealed only in the New Testament, while the Second Coming with its attendant events is a prominent doctrine of both Testaments.

**Contrasts Between the Rapture and Second Coming:**

# 47. The Rapture concerns only the saved, while the Second Coming deals with both saved and unsaved.

**Contrasts Between the Rapture and Second Coming:**

# 48. At the Rapture Satan is not bound, while at the Second Coming Satan is bound and cast into the abyss.

**Contrasts Between the Rapture and Second Coming:**

# 49. No unfulfilled prophecy stands between the church and the Rapture, while many signs must be fulfilled before the Second Coming.

### **Conclusion:**

The Blessed hope of the return of the Lord for His Church is a precious aspect of faith and expectation. While learned and devout saints have not always agreed as to the content of this hope, the present discussion has attempted to justify this important aspect of truth. May the promise of our Lord 'I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am' (John 14:3) bring comfort and hope to us in a modern world as it was intended to do for the disciples in the upper room on that dark night before the Crucifixion. 'The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!'... He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon'' (Rev. 22:17, 20).

~ John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question*, 276.