

The Rapture: part 3

How do we know that the Rapture will happen before the Tribulation, Pre-Trib?

Of those who actually believe in the truth of the Rapture, a number which seems to be growing ever smaller by the day, there are 3 basic beliefs as to when it will occur: Pre-Trib, with the Rapture happening just before or right at the beginning of the Tribulation, Post-Trib, happening at the end of the Tribulation, just as Jesus Christ is returning at Armageddon and Mid-Trib or Pre-Wrath, happening at the midpoint when Antichrist sets himself up, in the Temple, as god.

Post-Trib is impossible. If all of the believers are Raptured up to meet Jesus Christ as He is returning at Armageddon when He will destroy all unbelievers... if all of the believers then receive their glorified, eternal bodies and all of the unbelievers are killed... who is left? Who is left to repopulate the World during the Millennial Kingdom? There would be no natural humans left on Earth to be fruitful and fill the Earth during Jesus Christ's Millennial Reign. The believers would all be ruling and reigning with Him but there would be no one over whom to rule or reign! Also, it seems pretty silly that Jesus Christ would plan to raise us up to Himself, in the clouds and then for us to immediately make a U-turn to go back down with Him; Revelation tells us that we will accompany Him, from Heaven, while riding on white horses with Him.

Pre-Wrath (mid-trib) is also untenable because it denies the fact that God will have been pouring out His Wrath on the World from the beginning of the Tribulation; the Antichrist is the first thing we see in Rev. 6 with the opening of the first seal; he is the first rider on the white horse who goes out conquering and to conquer and is then followed by three other riders who bring even more death, destruction and wrath upon the World.

Those holding the 'pre-wrath' position attempt to get around that by claiming that what's happening during the first half of the Tribulation is Satan's wrath coming upon the World. They may get that from Rev 12:12: 'Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.' But that has nothing to do with God's Wrath being poured out and... that actually happens at the midpoint of the Tribulation, not at the beginning. Also, Jesus promised us, the True Church of the Last Days, in His letter to the Church of Philadelphia in Rev. 3: 'Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

¹¹Behold, I come quickly...'

Also, the Rapture cannot be Mid-Trib because that would then negate Jesus' and Paul's admonitions to 'Watch and eagerly await His coming because no one knows the day or the hour. Anyone paying attention could know **the exact day of the mid-point**; all they will have to do is count the years, months and days from the time when the 7 year peace agreement between Israel and her neighbors is signed which will have been confirmed by the Antichrist and it will be exactly 7 years from that day until Jesus returns at Armageddon.

However, what is becoming the most 'accepted' view throughout the 'church,' today, is A-millennialism, that there will be no Rapture at all, no Tribulation and no Millennial Kingdom where Jesus Christ will rule and reign, from Jerusalem, for 1000 years as we rule and reign with Him. This is the view that was adopted by the Catholic church, that all of prophecy had already been fulfilled or that it was all to be seen as allegory.

We know that the Rapture comes before the Tribulation due to so many Scriptural proofs:

Noah was taken up and away before God brought destruction on the whole World.

Lot was forcefully taken away by the two angels who told him that they could not do anything to Sodom while he and his family remained there; they had to be taken away, first. Then destruction could fall.

In Daniel's great prophecy of the 70 weeks, we see a total of 69 weeks of years until the coming and crucifixion of the Messiah. Then, we see the 70th week set apart, allowing for a gap of between the 69th and 70th weeks of years. But, at the beginning of the prophecy, he was told that all 70 weeks were to be about Israel and God's dealing with her. Just like the first 69 weeks, the 70th week was also to be about God's dealing with

Israel... it is to be all about Israel and only about Israel... it has nothing to do with the Church at all! Daniel, as well as every other Old Testament Prophet, was never informed about God's plan to create the Church, the Body and Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was one of the 'Mysteries' Paul taught.

God had planned, all along, to deal with Israel, as His special nation, until the time of Jesus' presentation as the long awaited King. His rejection and crucifixion would then cause a long gap of time for Him to create the True Church... then to remove the Church as the final culmination of our Eternal Salvation and then to restart His 'clock' in completing His dealing with Israel for a final 7 years, the final 'week' of Daniel... the Tribulation, followed by 1000 years of God's blessings being poured out on His special nation, Israel.

And, speaking of us as being the Bride of Christ... that is the greatest proof of our removal before God then completes His dealings with Israel as His unfaithful wife.

Jesus is clearly portrayed in Scripture as the Bridegroom while we, the True Church, are portrayed as His spotless Bride for whom He will return.

First, we are His spotless Bride because that is who He, Himself, has made us to be:

Paul wrote, 'For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a **chaste virgin to Christ.**' 2 Cor 11:2

'For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that **we might be made the righteousness of God** in Him.' 2 Cor 5:21

'Therefore if any man be in Christ, **he is a new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, **all things are become new.**' 2 Cor 5:17

'For by one offering he hath **perfected for ever** them that are sanctified.' Heb 10:14

'For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.' Rom 1:17 We are 'the Just;' we are those who have been justified and made holy and righteous forever.

We are His beloved, holy, righteous and spotless Bride.

Our necessary context is the ancient Jewish Wedding and how Jesus intended for us to understand our relationship to Him and His absolute love and loyalty toward us, each of us, individually. And, it is only the Pre-Tribulation Rapture which fits into this understanding.

Jesus' first miracle was at a wedding and He told the parables of the 10 virgins and of the wedding guest.

There were three types of people at the wedding: the groom, the bride and the guests and there are three aspects to the wedding: the wedding contract, the wedding ceremony and the wedding feast.

The Groom is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son for whom His Father chose and elected a Bride. The Bride is the True Church: every born again child of God from the time of the Church. The guests are all those saved outside of the Church: Old Testament Saints and Tribulation Saints.

An ancient Jewish marriage began with a young man's desire to marry a young virgin or with the young man's father's choice, arranged with the young woman's father.

A marriage contract was then written up which showed the young man's willingness to care for his new bride and the price he was willing to pay to the bride's father for the privilege of marrying his daughter: the bride-price; it was usually a high amount which conveyed the value of the bride to the groom.

The Lord Jesus Christ left His Father's house, Heaven, to go to the Brides home, Earth, bringing the marriage contract with Him, the New Covenant whereby He would personally cause His Bride to become a holy, righteous and chaste virgin. He paid the highest price possible, for her, with His own life and with the contract written in His own Blood. At the 'Last Supper,' Jesus said, 'This is My Body which is given for you (paid for you) and this is My Blood shed for you.' Jesus died as the price paid for His Bride.

If the contract was agreeable to the bride's father, the young man would pour a glass of wine. If the young woman accepted the proposal and drank the wine, sealing the contract, the two would thenceforth be betrothed; their engagement was then a legally binding contract. There would follow a period of time

between the betrothal and the wedding, usually one to two years... a gap of time during which they would be apart and would not see each other.

Next, the groom would give special gifts to the bride to show his appreciation of her and to help her to remember him during the long, separated time of betrothal; Jesus gave us His special gifts from His Holy Spirit. The most valuable special gift He gave to us is that He sealed us in Himself by the gift of His Holy Spirit: 'In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will... ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴Which is the earnest (the down-payment) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.' Eph 1:11

Next, the bride would enter a Mikveh... a ceremonial cleansing bath; our baptism harkens back to the same; it is a ceremonial representation of our having been completely cleansed and made white by God's Grace through our faith in the shed Blood of Jesus Christ, the down payment of our completed Salvation being the indwelling Holy Spirit; we have been baptized by God's Holy Spirit into the one Body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

During the long betrothal period, the groom would go back to his father's house to prepare a special bridal chamber; it had to be a beautiful place to bring his bride, built to the father's specifications, where they would be ensconced, alone together, for the 7 days of the bridal week.

Finally, when the time arrived, a time known only to the groom's father, the groom would go back to the bride's home to call forth his bride.

Jesus said, 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. ⁴And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.' John 14:1

'But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. ³³Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.' Mark 13:32

Jesus was speaking to His disciples, Jewish men who would have understood perfectly to what Jesus referred.

While the groom was away preparing a place for his bride, she would be considered consecrated, set apart, kept only for her future husband. Since she would not know the exact time when her groom would come for her, it was important that she be always ready to leave at a moment's notice. Typically, he would come for her in the middle of the night so that he would be coming like a thief in the night to steal her away, adding to the thrill and excitement. She would have to have her lamp lit and filled with oil and her belongings always ready. Her sisters and bridesmaids would also have lamps lit and be ready to join in the late night celebrations.

As the groom drew near the bride's home, he would shout and blow a shofar (ram's horn trumpet) so that she had a little warning in order to gather all that she would be taking for her new life, into that special, new, wedding chamber. The bridegroom and his friends would come to the bride's house to take the bride and her bridesmaids.

'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ' 1 Thes 4:16

'Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. ²And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ³They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: ⁴But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. ⁶And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. ⁷Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. ⁸And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. ⁹But the wise answered, saying, Not

so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. ¹¹ Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. ¹² But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. ¹³ Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.' Matt 25:1

'What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' 1 Cor 6:19

The bride and groom would then spend 7 days, and nights, together in the bridal chamber; they would consummate their union and begin to be fully acquainted; they wouldn't have spent time dating or ever having been alone together. Outside, all of the friends and guests would be celebrating together during those 7 days. Finally the groom would bring out his bride and introduce her to the larger community which would be followed by a great wedding feast.

After the feast, together, they would go to the place where they would live in their own new home.

Jesus Christ will come for us at any moment. He will take us back to the special place He has prepared for us in His Father's home where we will spend the bridal week, of seven years, consummating our union, however that will be, and becoming intimately acquainted.

'But,' you ask, 'how could we ever have any time alone with Him, when there will be so many of us?' Are we able to have alone time with Him now? Of course we are! How much more, then, will we be together, having Him to ourselves, with no distractions and Him having us to Himself, He in us and we in Him, forever.

He is God, Almighty! He can do anything! Even as now, He is able to be alone with every one of us, in complete privacy, all at the same time.

Imagine a wealthy prince. He has been waiting for 2000 years to finally receive his bride, to have and to hold, to love and to cherish, to shower with fabulous, unimaginable gifts and abilities... that is what He is waiting for and what awaits us, forever, and even far more so.

Then, when the bridal week is completed, we will have the public wedding ceremony and the wonderful wedding feast... we, His beloved Bride, and all of the guests: O.T. Saints and Tribulation Saints and all of the angels rejoicing together: 'And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. ⁸ And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.' Rev 19:6

And then... finally... it will be time for the King, with His Bride and all the Saints, to take back His Kingdom from His enemies: ' And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. ¹² His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. ¹³ And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

And so... the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of His Bride is the only understanding which aligns with the Word of God.

heartsoflove.org