

5/11/23 Attacks and Defenses

Assignment:

[In Defense of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture](#) by Dr. David Reagan

Note: This is a long, well-prepared and presented article. If you're anything like me, this will all be too much to take in and remember. That's okay. We will use the material as our discussion points, which will help you familiarize yourself with some of the main attacks on a pre-tribulation rapture. Then I will have links to this and additional articles on my Rapture page for you to retrieve later if you are ever in a conversation with someone who wants to refute the pre-tribulation rapture based on the arguments covered in this article. To access them, go to our usual [DaybreakGathering.com](#) page and then scroll down to the [Rapture](#) link.

Questions:

**Reminders:**

- Please read and consider our discussion questions on your own prior to the Gathering on Thursday.
- Bring your Bible and a copy of these questions with you on Thursday night.
- During your group discussion time, don't stress if you can't get to every question below.

### **An Exercise in Character Assassination**

God uses flawed people, both in Biblical times and since then, not just because He likes flawed people, but because that's all He can find on an earth filled with sinners.

- 1) Name a few people in the Bible who God used despite their sinful actions.
- 2) Should a Christian's failings render all their good service and contributions void?
- 3) Why do some pre-tribulation critics feel the need to unfairly attack the people who helped to shape our current understanding of the Biblical doctrine of the rapture?
- 4) Have you run across people online or in person who are venomous in their attacks against the pre-tribulation rapture doctrine?

### **“Vision”**

- 1) Did Margaret MacDonald's “vision” actually promote the teaching of the pre-tribulation rapture?

- 2) Is the concept of the pre-tribulation rapture even included in Margaret MacDonald's "vision"? How does the fact that her "vision" was actually about the second coming change the way we should respond to anyone who would bring up her influence on the topic?

### **Doctrinal Development**

Dr. Reagan said, "The Pre-Tribulation concept of the Rapture did not suddenly appear on the scene in the 1830s. It had been developing slowly over a long period of time, with strands of it coming from various sources."

- 1) The concept of the doctrine of imminency was taught by many early church fathers. How does imminency, meaning Jesus can return at any moment, lend to a pre-tribulation viewpoint?
- 2) Is the second coming in the Book of Revelation an imminent event? Why or why not?
- 3) Darby used his experience as an attorney to systematize the timing of the rapture, but did he actually "invent" the doctrine?
- 4) Did others prior to John Darby consider the idea of a rapture separate from the second coming? Bonus points: Can you name any that were mentioned in the article?

### **Too New to Be True**

Based on the "too new to be true" theory of doctrines, the idea of salvation by grace through faith could've been declared "too new."

- 1) Knowing that the early church fathers were vehemently anti-Semitic and held to replacement theology (that the church had replaced Israel), can we safely base all our Biblical doctrines solely on their teachings?
- 2) Augustine's theory of amillennialism, which spiritualized God's prophetic Word, was adopted by the Catholic church, so anyone who came up with an interpretation that varied from that was burned at the stake. How did this threat by the church affect the vocalness of those with opposing prophetic viewpoints?
- 3) What happened with the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century that led to many doctrinal changes?
- 4) Read Daniel 12:8-9. Why would the doctrine of the rapture NOT be needed as a prominent teaching during the time prior to the 1800s?

For additional study:

[Amillennialism](#) vs. [Premillennialism](#) (Click the links for more detailed definitions at GotQuestions.org)

Amillennialism views the 1,000-year reign as spiritual and not literal, teaching that Jesus will not physically reign on earth for exactly 1,000 years.

Premillennialism is the position that Christ's second coming will happen before His millennial kingdom, and that the millennial kingdom is a literal 1000-year reign of Christ on earth.

Another quick article that addresses this topic of the newness of the rapture is: [Rapture New? Get a Clue!](#) by Nathan E. Jones, [Lamb & Lion Ministries](#)

### The Timing of the Rapture

"Its [the rapture's] timing is something that must be determined by inference or deduction." ~ Dr. Reagan

- 1) Does the fact that there are no verses that clearly express the timing of the rapture indicate that the rapture teaching isn't there?
- 2) What are a few verses that infer when the rapture will happen in relation to the time of the tribulation?
- 3) Since the Bible promises that we as believers are not appointed to wrath (1 Thessalonians 1:10 and 1 Thessalonians 5:9), what does that say about the timing of the rapture?

### Rapture vs. the Second Coming

The post-tribulation view combines the rapture with the second coming as one event.

<b>1 Thessalonians 4</b>	<b>Revelation 19</b>
Jesus <b>appears</b> in the heavens	Jesus <b>returns</b> to earth
Jesus appears <b>for</b> His Church	Jesus returns <b>with</b> His Church
Jesus appears as a Deliverer	Jesus returns as a Warrior
Jesus appears in Grace	Jesus returns in Wrath
Jesus appears as a Bridegroom	Jesus returns as a King

How can the two events, described in such drastically different ways above, be all one event? As we discussed in a previous Gathering, if the rapture and second coming were to happen at the same time, then we would face an obvious dilemma. Consider these facts:

- At the rapture all believers and the dead in Christ will be given glorified bodies (1 Corinthians 15:51).

- At the second coming all unbelievers will be killed (Revelation 19:21).
  - If these two happen at the same time, then all living believers would be given glorified bodies.
- 1) When combining these two events, who will have mortal, human bodies able to bear children and populate the earth during the millennial age?

### **Preaching the Gospel to All the World**

- 1) According to Revelation 14:6, who is responsible for preaching the Gospel all around the world?

### **2 Thessalonians 2:1-3**

Opponents of the pre-tribulation rapture use the verses in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 in their arguments. This passage in its entirety and Paul's earlier teaching to the Thessalonians clearly place the rapture before the second coming.

- 1) Look up 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3. In verse three, what does "it" refer to (what will not come)?
- 2) When this passage is quoted omitting verse 2, how does that change the context of these verses? What does that make "it" seem to be referring to?