The Four Views Of The Rapture

Introduction

The Bible teaches that the rapture will take place prior to the Tribulation period since it teaches that the church is delivered from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. (NASU)

This teaching that the rapture will take place prior to the Great Tribulation period is called by theologians and students of prophecy, the “pre-tribulation” view. Not all Christians adhered to this view as a result there are four different views of the rapture. I will present the arguments for each view and then demonstrate through the Scriptures that these other views are incorrect and that the “pre-tribulation” rapture view is the correct biblical view.

Now we must remember that like the term “Trinity,” the term “rapture” is not found in the original languages of Scripture but rather is taken from the Latin term rapio, “caught up” that is used to translate the Greek verb harpazo, “caught up,” which appears in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

Like the term “Trinity” the term “rapture” is used by theologians to describe a doctrine that is taught in the Bible. The “rapture” is a technical theological term for the resurrection of the church, which is imminent, invisible to the world, and terminates the church age dispensation. It will take place in the earth’s atmosphere when the Lord Jesus Christ will suddenly and forcefully remove the church from planet earth in order to deliver her from the Tribulation period (See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The rapture is taught in John 14:1-3, 1 Corinthians 1:7, 15:50-57, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 and Titus 2:13.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of {the} archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. (NASU)

“Will be caught up” is the verb harpazo, “to snatch or take something away forcefully in such a way that no resistance is offered, to grab or seize by force with the purpose of removing and/or controlling” The verb harpazo refers to the Lord
Jesus Christ taking His Church forcefully and suddenly out of the world by means of His divine omnipotence.

1 Thessalonians 4:18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. (NASU)

The rapture is the “blessed hope” of the church since it delivers her from the wrath that is to come upon a Christ rejecting world during the Tribulation period, which will be the worst period in all of human history and immediately follows the rapture.

Titus 2:13 Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus. (NASU)

The resurrection or rapture of the church was a mystery that was not known to Old Testament saints.

1 Corinthians 15:50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. (NASU)

The rapture is something we should be eagerly anticipating because we will receive our resurrection bodies at that time.

Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship exists from eternity past in the realm of the heavens, out from which also we ourselves at the present time are eagerly anticipating as Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ 21 who will cause our humiliating body to be outwardly transformed to be identical in essence with His glorious body because of the power that will enable Him to marshal all things created to Himself. (Author’s translation)

The rapture is “imminent” meaning that it could happen at any time.

Philippians 4:5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. (NASU)

Lastly, unlike the Second Advent of Jesus Christ, the rapture has no signs preceding it.

The four views of the rapture: (1) “Pre-tribulation”: The rapture will take place “before” the Tribulation. (2) “Partial”: Only those believers who are worthy will be taken off the earth at the rapture. (3) “Mid-tribulation”: The rapture will take place during the “midway” point of the Tribulation. (4) “Post-tribulation: The rapture will take place “after” the Tribulation.
Pre-Tribulation View

The first view of the rapture is the “pre-tribulation” view, which contends that the rapture of the church will take place prior to the Tribulation period and will deliver every church age believer from this awful period. The “pre-tribulation” view adheres to the literal method of interpreting the Bible unlike the “post-tribulation” view, which spiritualizes the literalness of the events in the Tribulation in an attempt to harmonize these events with other Scriptures in the light of this interpretation.

The “mid-tribulation” view will only apply the literal method of interpretation to the last half of Daniel’s Seventieth Week but spiritualize the events of the first half to permit the church to go through the first half. The “pre-tribulation” view makes a distinction between Israel and the church and sees them as two distinct entities in the plan of God. In fact, the essence of dispensationalism is the distinction between Israel and the Church. This arises out of the dispensationalist’s consistent utilization of normal or plain interpretation.

Dispensationalism recognizes distinctions in God’s program in history. The dispensationalist follows the principle of interpreting the Bible literally, and does not allegorize away the Bible, thus he is consistent in his interpretation. It recognizes that God’s message to man was not given in one single act but was unfolded in a long series of successive acts and through the minds and hands of many men of varying backgrounds.

A dispensation is a period of human history defined in terms of divine revelation. According to the Bible, history is a sequence of divine administrations. These consecutive eras reflect the unfolding of God’s plan for mankind. A dispensation is a period of history where God has designed a particular plan for man and man is tested as to whether or not he will be obedient to that particular plan.

Distinctions Between Israel and the Church

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Spirituality: Faith Rest Drill | Spirituality: Filling of the Spirit  
Limited spiritual gifts | Every believer has a spiritual gift  
Levitical Priesthood | Universal Royal Priesthood  
Mosaic Law | Mystery Doctrine  
Earthly Promises | Heavenly Citizenship  
New Racial Species | New Spiritual Species  
Many prophecies pertaining to Second Advent of Christ | One Prophecy-Church waiting for rapture  
Visible Heroes | Invisible Heroes  
Extraordinary believer | Ordinary believer  
Incomplete Canon of Scripture | Completed Canon of Scripture  
Visible signs preceding Second Advent | No visible signs preceding rapture of the church

1 Thessalonians 1:10 and 5:9

Now, 1 Thessalonians 1:10 explicitly teaches that the church age believer is delivered from this wrath, thus it follows that the church will be raptured “before” the Tribulation.

1 Thessalonians 1:1 Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. 2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, 4 knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you; 5 for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. 6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. 9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. (NASU)

1 Thessalonians 5:9 clearly exempts the church from the wrath of God.
1 Thessalonians 5:1 Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 3 While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness 6 so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. 7 For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ 10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. (NASU)

Revelation 3:10

Revelation 3:10 also explicitly teaches that the church will not go through the Tribulation.

Revelation 3:10 Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. (NASU)

“Because you have kept the word of my perseverance” refers to the believer in Jesus Christ in the sense that he or she has trusted in His person and work on the cross and who now sits at the right hand of the Father interceding for the believer.

“The word of My perseverance” refers to the testimony of Scripture regarding the truth of Christ as the suffering, resurrected, and so also, the victorious Savior who endured the shame of rejection and the cross and who endures today as the resurrected and ascended Lord now sitting at God’s right hand (Heb. 1:3 with 12:1-3).

The statement “I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth” is a promise from the Lord Jesus Christ to all church age believers that because they have trusted in Him as Savior, He will deliver them from the Tribulation period.

J. Hampton Keathley III has this insightful comment regarding this promise, he writes, “I will also keep you from the hour of testing’ ‘Testing’ is the Greek peirasmos, ‘a trial, temptation, or testing.’ The context must determine the exact meaning of the word. Here the context shows us the reference is to a very specific
meaning, that of world-wide testing or tribulation. ‘Hour’ is metaphorical for a shortened period. Because of the clause that follows, this clearly refers to more than the general trials or testings or temptations which people today may encounter. The hour is defined in three ways: (1) It is ‘the’ hour of trial. The presence of the Greek article specifies this as a very specific time of testing. (2) It is to come upon the whole world. The term translated ‘world’ is oikoumene, meaning ‘the inhabited earth,’ but modifying it is the adjective, holos, ‘whole, complete.’ The testing is worldwide. (3) Finally, it is designed to test a certain category of people defined as ‘those who dwell upon the earth.’ The verb ‘dwell’ is katoikeo from kata, ‘down’ and oikeo, ‘dwell, live.” Katoikeo, means “to live, dwell, reside, settle (down),” or it can mean ‘inhabit.’ The construction of the Greek (a substantival present articular participle) describes the inhabitants as those who are characterized as earth dwellers. As used in Revelation, ‘those who dwell upon the earth’ is basically a technical term for unbelievers because they are earthdwellers, i.e., people bound only to this life and what it can give (6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:8; Isa. 24:17f). In contrast to believers who are to think and live as sojourners or aliens, the earthdweller is quite at home on earth. ‘The hour of trial,’ sometimes referred to as ‘the Tribulation,’ refers to the time of wrath or judgment described in chapters 6-19. This is the same as Daniel’s Seventieth Week (Dan. 9:27) and the time of Jacob’s trouble described by Jeremiah as unprecedented in its judgment (Jer. 30:7). The promise: First, note that this is not a reward to the faithful. This will come in verses 11-12. Instead, this is a promise to the church as a whole. This is clear from 3:13 which broadens this as a promise to the churches at large. All believers are to listen to these messages and their warning, exhortations, and promises and act accordingly. As in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, this is to bring comfort to the church. Second, the promise is ‘I will keep you from the hour…’ i.e., from the Tribulation. This is very specific and carefully described in the Greek to emphasize and clearly teach the pre-tribulation rapture of the church. The Greek words for ‘keep out’ are tereo and ek meaning ‘out of.’ There are four other ways this could have been stated if John wanted to imply that church age believers would be in the Tribulation, but none of them were used: (1) tereo en = To keep in. This would be a promise of preservation in the Tribulation. (2) tereo dia = to keep through. This would be a promise to keep us through the Tribulation. (3) aireo ek = to take out, or sozo ek = to save out. This could mean that believers would go into the Tribulation and then be taken out of the Tribulation. (4) aireo apo = to take from. This would mean that believers would go into the Tribulation and then be taken out of the Tribulation. Rather than any of the above, John chose to use tereo ek, which means ‘to keep out.’ This is a promise that believers will never get into the Tribulation. But how? Paul describes this for us 1 Thessalonians 4:13f. We can chart it like this: Some have tried to argue that
this construction means just the opposite of the above interpretation. Gundry, for instance, in his book, the Church and the Tribulation, believes it argues for a post-tribulational emergence of the saints. He writes, ‘As it is, \( ek \) lays all the emphasis on emergence, in this verse on the final, victorious outcome of the keeping-guarding.’ Although this is generally true with \( ek \), if \( ek \) is related to a non-motion verb like \( tereo \) the idea of motion out of something is negated by the static nature of the verb. The fact then, that a motion verb like \( sozo \) is used here with \( ek \) shows the fallacy of Gundry’s argument. However, even if a verb of motion were used, it would not prove Gundry’s argument. A good illustration is 2 Corinthians 1:10 which has \( rhuomai \ \( ek \), ‘delivered us from death.’ Certainly Paul did not mean that God had delivered them out of death through resurrection, but that He had kept them from death. Another illustration of this use of \( ek \) with a verb of motion is James 5:20, ‘save him from (the peril) of death,’ \( sozo \) plus \( ek \). As James 5:20 and 2 Corinthians 1:10 means saved from the peril of death, i.e., from dying. So likewise 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and Rev. 3:10 means delivered from the peril of wrath, the time of testing, the Tribulation. (Studies in Revelation-Christ’s Victory Over The Forces Of Darkness, pages 74-76; Biblical Studies Press; www.bible.org; 1997)

**God’s Purposes for the Tribulation**

The purposes of the Tribulation do not include the church, thus favoring a “pre-tribulation” rapture of the church. The first great purpose of the tribulation is to prepare the nation Israel for her Messiah (Deut. 4:30; Jer. 30:7; Ezek. 20:37; Dan. 12:1; Zech. 13:8-9).

The book of Revelation teaches that the Tribulation period is a time when God deals with His covenant people Israel (Rev. 7:4-6; 12:1-2; 17). God’s purpose for Israel in the Tribulation is “crisis evangelism” or in other words, to lead them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. These Jews who turn to Jesus Christ as Savior will enter into the blessings of the Christ’s millennial kingdom and experience the fulfillment of all Israel’s covenants.

The second great purpose of the tribulation is to pour out judgment on unbelieving man and nations.

**Revelation 3:11** Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. (NASU)

**Joel 3:2** I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there on behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations and they have divided up My land. (NASU)
Since the church is composed of individuals who have believed in Jesus Christ as Savior, it follows that the church will not go through the Tribulation and God’s wrath since Christ experienced God’s wrath for the church. It is impossible for the church age believer to face God’s wrath during the Tribulation period since this would in effect cause Christ to have to face God’s wrath again since the church age believer is united to Christ as members of His body and His future bride.

The Bible teaches that the Tribulation portion of the day of the Lord is characterized by wrath, i.e. God’s righteous indignation or legitimate anger towards sin (Zeph. 1:15, 18; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Rev. 6:16-17; 11:18; 14:10, 19; 15:1, 7; 16:1, 19). The tribulation period will witness the wrath of Satan in his animosity against Israel (Rev. 12:12-17) and of Satan’s man, the Beast, also known as Antichrist, in his animosity against the saints (Rev. 13:7) but even Satan’s wrath does “not” come close to the intensity of God’s wrath.

The Scriptures plainly teach that the wrath poured out during the Great Tribulation period originates with God and is therefore a time of God’s wrath upon a Christ rejecting a world that is deceived by the devil (See Isaiah 34:1-2; Joel 1:15; Obadiah 15; Revelation 15:1, 7; 16:1; Revelation 19:11-21).

The Scriptures plainly reveal that Daniel’s Seventieth week, also known as the Great Tribulation period is distinctly the time when God’s wrath and judgment fall upon the earth. This is not wrath from men, nor from Satan, except as God may use these agencies as instruments for the execution of His will, thus the wrath during Daniel’s Seventieth week is tribulation from God. This period differs from all preceding tribulation, not only in intensity but also in the kind of tribulation, since it comes from God Himself.

**Revelation 6-18**

In support of the “pre-tribulation” view is Revelation 6-18. These chapters describe the events that will take place during Daniel’s Seventieth Week and the church is conspicuously not mentioned once in these chapters, thus implying that the church will not go through this period because it has already been removed from the earth at the rapture.

The fact that the church is never mentioned in Revelation 6-18, which deals exclusively with events of the Tribulation period is an indication that the church will not go through the Tribulation.

**New Testament Epistles**
Also, in support of the “pre-tribulation” view of the rapture is that the New Testament epistles are silent on the church going through the Tribulation, which would leave the church unprepared if they were to go through the Tribulation.

Revelation 12

Revelation 12 teaches that the object of Satan’s attack during the Tribulation period is Israel, which is significant since the church is the body of Christ and why not attack the church!

The Indwelling of the Spirit

Also supporting the “pre-tribulation” view is the fact that the Holy Spirit permanently indwells each and every church age believer and 2 Thessalonians 2:7 teaches that the Antichrist cannot appear until the Spirit who indwells the church is taken away from the earth.

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. (NASU)

The expressions “the man of lawlessness” and “the son of destruction” is a reference to Antichrist.

Paul’s statement that the Antichrist “opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship” means that he ranks himself superior to all the supreme beings worshiped by the various religions of the world, which will be a fulfillment of Daniel 11:36.

Paul’s statement in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 that Antichrist will “take his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as God” is a reference to the statement in Daniel 9:27, “on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate.”

2 Thessalonians 2:5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9
that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. (NASU)

“He who now restrains” refers to the Holy Spirit since He is the only one who has the power to restrain evil.

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit permanently indwells the church age believer’s body anointing.

John 14:16 I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. (NASU)

Romans 8:9 However, all of you, without exception are, absolutely not, as an eternal spiritual truth, existing in the state of being in bondage to the flesh but rather in subjection to the authority of the Spirit, if in fact-and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument the Spirit, who is God does dwell in all of you. Of course, He does. However, if, and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument anyone does not possess at all the Spirit proceeding from Christ, then this one, as an eternal spiritual truth, by no means belongs to Him. (Author’s translation)

1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (NASU)

1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (NASU)

A comparison of these passages with 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 teaches that Antichrist cannot be revealed until the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way and for the Holy Spirit to be taken out of the way, every church age believer would have to be removed as well since the Spirit permanently indwells every church age believer.

Immanency of the Rapture

The “immanency” of the rapture further supports the “pre-tribulation” view since 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2 teaches that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night meaning that it will take place unexpectedly.
1 Thessalonians 5:1 Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. (NASU)

The only way the day of the Lord could break unexpectedly upon the world is to have it begin immediately after the rapture of the church, which is imminent.

The term “imminent” means that the rapture could happen at any time.

Supporting the “imminent” return of Christ for His bride is that the Lord Jesus in John 14:1-3 first speaks of the rapture and does not mention any intervening events between preparing a place for His disciples in His Father’s house and receiving them to Himself.

John 14:1 Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, {there} you may be also. (NASU)

Notice the Lord says that He will “receive us to Himself.” Compare it with this passage in 2 Thessalonians 2:1, which deals extensively with the rapture.

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him. (NASU)

There are several Scriptures, which teach the church to expect Christ to come back at any moment.

Romans 13:12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. (NASU)

James 5:7 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. 8 You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. 9 Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. (NASU)

Philippians 4:5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. (NASU)

Hebrews 10:25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. (NASU)

Revelation 22:7 And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book. (NASU)

Revelation 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. (NASU)

The purpose of such immanency is that the church may be in a constant state of expectancy, always looking for and waiting for the coming of her Lord from
heaven. Not only is the hope of His return a source of comfort and encouragement to the believer, but also it is a very definite incentive for service and for holy living. This is what John is saying in 1 John 3:2-3.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is 3 and everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (NASU)

The doctrine of the “imminent” return of Christ at the rapture of the church is also supported by the fact that there are no signs preceding the rapture whereas there are many signs prior to the Second Advent of Christ, which terminates the Tribulation period.

**Distinctions Between the Church and Israel**

Those who don’t believe in a “pre-tribulation” rapture of the church also fail to see the distinctions between the Second Advent of Christ and the rapture and thus attribute passages dealing with the latter to the former.

The rapture delivers the church while the Second Advent delivers Israel. It is seen only by the church and is therefore invisible while the Second Advent is the visible manifestation of Christ on the earth. The Lord meets the church in the earth’s atmosphere at the rapture, whereas the Lord physically lands on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem at the Second Advent.

Signs do not precede the rapture whereas visible signs precede the Second Advent. The Lord claims His Bride at the rapture but He returns with her at the Second Advent. The rapture completes God’s program for the church while the Second Advent is related to God’s program for Israel. The rapture is a mystery, not known to Old Testament saints whereas the Second Advent is prophesied throughout the Old Testament canon. The rapture leaves creation unchanged whereas the Second Advent entails a change in creation.

The rapture does not fulfill God’s covenants to Israel whereas the Second Advent marks the beginning of their fulfillment. The rapture precedes the Tribulation whereas the Second Advent follows it.

**Interval of Time Between Rapture and Second Advent**

Further support of the “pre-tribulation” view is that this position recognizes that there is an interval of time between the rapture and the Second Advent of Christ.

There will be three major events following the Rapture for the church in heaven: (1) Bema Seat Evaluation: Involving all believers (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom.
14:10). (2) Overcomer believers are presented to the Father by the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 3:5). (3) Marriage of the Lamb: Involving all believers (Rev. 19:7).

Also, the events of Daniel’s Seventieth Week have to take place between the rapture and the Second Advent of Christ.

The “pre-tribulation” view unlike the “mid-tribulation” and “post-tribulation” views do not take this into consideration.

If all believers are raptured at the Second Advent of Christ, then there are no believers with non-glorified bodies to enter the millennial kingdom, which causes a major problem for the “post-tribulation” view, which contends that the rapture will take place at the end of the Tribulation period.

Conclusion

As we can see from our study of the “pre-tribulation” view, that this view is the correct biblical view because it interprets the bible literally and does not allegorize or spiritualize Scripture and thus respects the authority of Scripture.

Secondly, this view is the biblical view because it recognizes the distinctions between Israel and the church and the rapture and the Second Advent. It also is correct since it supports the immanency of the rapture, which is designed to motivate the Christian to grow to spiritual maturity.

Finally, it magnifies the faithfulness of the Lord to the church in that it corresponds with the Lord’s explicit promise to deliver His bride from the Tribulation.
**Mid-Tribulation View**

The “mid-tribulation” position contends that Christ will remove the church from the earth during the midway point of the Tribulation. In this view, the rapture is said to occur in connection with the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the catching up of the two witnesses in Revelation 11. However, the seventh and final trumpet judgment recorded in Revelation 11:15-19 comes at the end of the Tribulation period and results in the Second Advent of Christ.

The seven trumpets mentioned in Revelation chapters 8 and 9 and 11:15-19 are all related to the nation of Israel during Daniel’s Seventieth Week and have no connection whatsoever to the church.

The first four trumpet judgments are separated from the last three in that the latter are specifically called “woe” judgments. Revelation 8:6-7 records the first of the seven trumpet judgments and is directed at the earth and results in a third of the inhabitants of planet earth are killed.

The first trumpet results in hail and fire being cast to the earth mingled with blood, which results in a third of the earth being burned up meaning trees and the grass are burned up as well as various crops like wheat, barley, rice, and corn.

Revelation 8:8-9 records the second of the seven trumpet judgments and is directed at the sea and results in a third of the sea becoming blood and a third of aquatic life dying and a third of the ships being destroyed.

Revelation 8:10-11 records the third trumpet judgment, which involves a large star called “Wormwood” falling upon rivers and springs of water making them bitter.

Revelation 8:12-13 records the fourth of the seven trumpet judgments that is directed at the sun, moon and stars of the stellar universe, which results in a third of them being darkened so that the day would not shine for a third of it and the night in the same way.

Revelation 9:1-12 records the fifth trumpet judgment, which is the first woe, and results in the release from prison of fallen angels who look like locusts and are energized by Satan and are not permitted to kill men but only to torment them.

Revelation 9:13-21 records the sixth of the seven trumpet judgments, which is the second woe.

Revelation 11:15-19 records the seventh and final trumpet judgment, which is the third woe and results in the Second Advent of Christ.

Revelation 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.” 16 And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying, “We give You thanks, O Lord God, the
Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. 18 And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.” 19 And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

(NASU)

Chronologically, the seven bowl judgments follow the seven trumpet judgments that are recorded in Revelation 8:1-9:21 and 11:15-19 and the seven trumpet judgments follow the seven seal judgments that are in Revelation 6:1-17 and 8:1-5. So the seven seal judgments begin God’s judgment program during Daniel’s Seventieth Week.

Revelation 6:1-2 records the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven breaking the first of the seven seal judgments, which results in the appearance of the Antichrist on the stage of history as a peace maker and who is depicted as riding on a white horse. The rise to prominence of the Antichrist as a man of peace is the result of the breaking of the first seal judgment recorded in Revelation 6:1-2.

Revelation 6:1 Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, “Come.” 2 I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. (NASU)

The rider in this passage is not the Lord Jesus Christ since this occurs too early in Daniel’s Seventieth Week since at this time Christ is in heaven rewarding His bride while at the same time pouring out wrath from the throne mentioned in Revelation 4:2. Christ’s coming on a white horse is at the end and is the culmination of the Tribulation.

Also, Revelation 6:16 records the Lamb as still in heaven. Furthermore, the white horse rider is not Christ since the other three horses are instruments of judgment with each rider an instrument of evil and judgment on the world. The Lord Jesus Christ is also the one who opens the seals allowing the riders to go forth and would not be one of the riders. He also puts an end to the Tribulation judgments. Here, in Revelation 6:1-2, the judgments of the entire Tribulation have yet to take place. Lastly, the crown this first rider is wearing is the stephanos crown, a single crown and a victor’s crown, not the diadem crown of a sovereign.

Revelation 19, the white horse rider wears many crowns, and they are the diadem crowns or in other words, the crowns of sovereignty. That the rider sat on a
white horse is significant since white is a symbol of peace, thus the symbolism is that Antichrist will come as a peacemaker.

Daniel 9:27 teaches that the Antichrist will establish a peace treaty with the leadership of Israel, which begins Daniel’s Seventieth Week. One of Antichrist’s first accomplishments will be to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict with a peace treaty with Israel according to Daniel 9:26-27, which begins Daniel’s 70th week, the unprecedented time of Jacob’s distress (Jer. 30:7).

Daniel 9:27 *And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.* (NASU)

The statement “he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week” refers to Antichrist making a 7 year covenant with Israel, which actually begins Daniel’s 70th week (See 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4).

The expression “firm covenant” means that Antichrist will not renew an existing treaty but will establish an original one that contains strong and firm guarantees with the Israeli leadership ensuring Israel’s security.

“The many” does “not” mean that Antichrist will make this covenant “with all” since the definite article in the Hebrew text that precedes the adjective *rav* (יה), converts the adjective into a noun and means, “the leaders” which is a reference to the military and political leadership of the nation of Israel at that time.

Therefore, Daniel 9:27 teaches that Daniel’s Seventieth Week comes after the rapture but does “not” begin with the rapture. So, while the rapture will precede Daniel’s Seventieth Week (Great Tribulation period), it does “not” begin it but rather the signing of the peace treaty between Antichrist and the leadership in Israel will begin it.

Daniel 9:27a indicates that he will pretend to be Israel’s benefactor and make a treaty with her but will turn against her in the mid way point of Daniel’s Seventieth Week and will persecute Israel and occupy Jerusalem for three and a half years, breaking of the first seal judgment recorded in Revelation 6:1-2.

Revelation 6:1 *Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, “Come.” 2 I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.* (NASU)

Notice in Revelation 6:1-2 that the rider’s weapon is a bow, yet no arrows are mentioned. The bow is a symbol of distant victory and since no arrows are mentioned it seems to indicate that he gains his victory by bloodless tactics. That
all this is true is indicated further by the fact that peace isn’t taken from the earth until the second seal.

Antichrist will have a hidden agenda since his purpose is not world peace, but rather world domination since Revelation 6 goes on to say that he goes out conquering and to conquer. This covenant between Antichrist and Israel is a peace treaty, which will guarantee Israel’s safety in the land and suggests that Israel will be in her land but will seek support that she had previously. The agreement between Israel and Antichrist stipulates that he will rush to the aid of Israel in the event of an enemy attack (Dan. 9:27; cf., 11:38-39).

The Lord Jesus Christ’s prophecy in His Olivet Discourse of the appearance of false Christ’s during the first three and a half years of Daniel’s Seventieth Week recorded in Matthew 24:5-6, parallels the first seal judgment recorded in Revelation 6:1-2.

**Matthew 24:4** And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.” (NASU)

Therefore, the rapture does not occur in connection with the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the catching up of the two witnesses in Revelation 11 since the seventh trumpet completes God’s judgment program at the end of the Tribulation.

Also, the first seal judgment, which precedes the seven trumpet judgments predicts the emergence of Antichrist and 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 says he cannot appear until the removal of the Spirit, which would result in the removal of the church since the church is permanently indwelt by the Spirit.

So the seventh trumpet judgment takes place at the end of the Tribulation period and thus cannot be used as support for the “mid-tribulation” position. Connected to this, the “mid-tribulation” view also contends that the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15 and the last trump of 1 Corinthians 15:52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16 are identical.

Some expositors have tried to associate the “trumpet of God” in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and the “last trumpet” in 1 Corinthians 15:52 with the last or seventh trumpet of the Tribulation and with the trumpet of Matthew 24:31. By doing this, they attempt to put the rapture either in the Tribulation or at its end, when the Lord returns to earth.

**1 Thessalonians 4:16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (NASU)

**1 Corinthians 15:51** Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last
trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. (NASU)

In both of these passages, this trumpet is followed by the resurrection of the church, i.e. the rapture. There are obvious differences that exist between the “trumpet of God” in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and the “last trumpet” in 1 Corinthians 15:52 and the last or seventh trumpet of the Tribulation in Revelation 8:7f. and with the “great trumpet” of Matthew 24:31.

The trumpet in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and 1 Corinthians 15:22 should not be equated with Joel 2:1 or with Revelation 8:7f since there are many differences between them. In 1 Corinthians 15:22 the trumpeter is not stated whereas the trumpet in Matthew 24:31 and the trumpets of Revelation 8 are blown by angels. In 1 Thessalonians 4:16 the trumpeter is Christ whereas the trumpet in Joel is a human being, an Israelite.

The purpose of the “great trumpet” in Matthew 24:31 is to have the elect angels gather the living elect on the earth whereas the purpose of 1 Corinthians 15:52 is to gather the living church age believers. With the blowing of the trumpet in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Christ Himself and not the elect angels gathers living church age believers to Himself whereas in Revelation purpose of the blowing of the trumpet by angels to execute judgment during the last three and a half years of Daniel’s Seventieth Week.

The purpose of the trumpet in Joel 2:1 to assemble Israel and warn them against danger. The trumpet in Joel is an alarm to the nation of Israel that signals that the day of the Lord has begun. In Joel 2, the armies of Israel and her people are being warned of an impending attack.

The result of the blowing of the “great trumpet” in Matthew 24:31 results in entrance into the kingdom or millennial kingdom of Christ whereas the result of the blowing of the trumpet in 1 Corinthians 15:52 is the resurrection of church age believers.

The result of the blowing of the trumpet of God in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is also the resurrection of church age believers whereas the result of the blowing of the trumpets by elect angels in Revelation 8 is the execution of judgments during the last three and a half years of Daniel’s Seventieth Week.

The result of the blowing of the trumpet in Joel 2 is war and an invasion from an enemy.

Therefore, because of these obvious differences between these trumpets, the trumpets of Revelation 8 and the “great trumpet” in Matthew 24:31 and the trumpet of Joel 2:1 do not take place at the same time as the trumpets mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

The “last trumpet” of 1 Corinthians 15:52 is thought by some expositors of the Bible to be associated with the trumpet judgments that appear in Revelation 8.
Consequently, they place the rapture at the end of the Tribulation period, i.e. Daniel’s Seventieth Week. However, a comparison of the differences between the various trumpets mentioned in Revelation 8, Joel 2:1, Matthew 24:31, 1 Corinthians 15:52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16, indicates quite clearly that the “last trumpet” in 1 Corinthians 15:52 is the very voice of the Lord Jesus Christ calling out the church in resurrection.

The “last trumpet” of 1 Corinthians 15:52 and the “trumpet of God” in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 both result in the resurrection of the church and the purpose of both are to gather the church to Christ and they are not blown by elect angels. Whereas, the trumpet judgments of Revelation 8 and the “great trumpet” in Matthew 24:31 are blown by elect angels and the result of the former is the execution of judgments during the Tribulation whereas the result of the latter is entrance into Christ’s millennial kingdom.

Commenting on the meaning of the “last trumpet” in 1 Corinthians 15:52, J. Hampton Keathley III, writes, “But what does the Apostle mean by “the Last Trump”? Because of the adjective “last,” some seek to associate this with the seventh or last trumpet of Revelation 8 and thus place the rapture at the end of the Tribulation. But as the above comparison shows, this is a distinct signal, evidently the very voice of the Lord Himself for the church. It is not blown by angels and is not for the world. John Eadie, a well-known scholar who wrote at the end of the 1800s wrote: The phrase, ‘the last trump’ (1 Cor. XV, 52), is supposed … to imply previous trumpets, at the last of which the Judge descends, while others identify it with the seventh trumpet of the Apocalypse; but these notions, the second especially, are exceedingly precarious— the phrase, ‘the last trump,’ being apparently a popular one, and meaning the trumpet in connection with the End. John Eadie, A Commentary on the Greek Text of the First Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians (Reprint by James and Klock Christian Publishing Co., Minneapolis, 1977), p. 165) Of course the issue is the end of what? Since this is written to believers of the church age who are waiting for His imminent return, the end is that of the church age, not of the end of the age of Israel, or of all things. In the Old Testament, the blowing of the trumpet was used to accompany the Theophanies, the manifestations of God, as in Exodus 19:16. There it signaled the approach of the Lord at the giving of the Law. For the church this is the end and involves the Christophany, the manifestation of Christ, but at the same time, it will form the beginning of the end in that afterwards (how soon is not revealed), the Tribulation will begin which will be culminated just seven years later by the manifestation of Christ’s parousia, His presence openly revealed to the world as He descends with His church as described above. (1 Thessalonians: An Exegetical and Devotional Commentary, page 91; Biblical Studies Press, 1998)
Therefore, the “mid-tribulation” view that the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15 and the last trump of 1 Corinthians 15:52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16 are identical is erroneous. Also, the “mid-tribulation” view holds that the rapture is described in Revelation 11.

Revelation 11:1 Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, “Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. 2 Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months. 3 And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. 6 These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. 7 When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. 11 But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, ‘Come up here.’ Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them. 13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14 The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.” (NASU)

The “mid-tribulation” view holds that the rapture is described in Revelation 11 by contending that the “two-witnesses” are symbolic of a “larger company of witnesses” that they represent two groups, the dead and the living at the rapture. They interpret the cloud as representing the Lord’s presence and that the great voice is the shout of 1 Thessalonians 4:16. This interpretation is totally devoid of exegesis and is an argument from analogy.
The two witnesses are spoken of in Revelation 11 as individuals and not as symbolic representatives of the church. These two witnesses are called “two olive trees,” which means that they are associated with Israel since in the Old Testament the olive tree represented Israel, which would refute the “mid-tribulation” view that the two witnesses are symbolic of the church (See Hosea 14:6; Romans 11:17, 24).

The problem with the “mid-tribulation” position is that it denies the distinction between Israel and the church in the sense that it places the church in the first half of the seventieth week, which was decreed for Daniel’s people the Jews according to Daniel 9:24. The church is nowhere mentioned in the prophecy of Daniel’s Seventy Weeks and in particular the Seventieth Week. In fact, this prophecy deals explicitly with Israel and never mentions the church which would be inappropriate since the church is the body of Christ.

**Daniel 9:24** Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. (NASU)

The phrase “your people” indicates that the prophecy deals specifically with the history of the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem and not with world history or church history.

The “mid-tribulation” position also denies the doctrine of the immanency of the rapture in that they apply to the church all the signs that were designed to warn Israel of Christ’s Second Advent. It also denies the doctrine that the church age is a “mystery” dispensation meaning it was not known to Old Testament prophets in that it has the church age overlap with God’s program for Israel detailed in Daniel’s Seventy Weeks.

**Ephesians 3:8-9** To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things. (NASU)

The “mid-tribulation” view argues that God promises the church tribulation and therefore can expect to experience the first half of the Tribulation period. However, the term “tribulation” can be used in a “technical” way referring to a specific period in the future and a “non-technical” way meaning it is not used with reference to a specific period of time in the future.

The term “tribulation” is used in relation to the church in a “non-technical” way in John 16:33, Romans 5:3, 8:35, 12:12, 1 Thessalonians 1:6 and Revelation 1:9, 2:9-10, whereas it is used in “technical” way in Matthew 24:9, 21, 29, Mark 13:19, 24 and Revelation 7:8, 14 where it is used with reference to the Tribulation period.
God does not want the Christian to believe in the “mid-tribulation” position because it denies the distinction between Israel and the church in the sense that it places the church in the first half of the seventieth week, which was decreed for Daniel’s people the Jews according to Daniel 9:24.

Why is it important that the Christian knows that the mid-tribulation view is incorrect? God does not want the Christian to believe in the “mid-tribulation” view because it denies the doctrine of the immanency of the rapture in that they apply to the church all the signs that were designed to warn Israel of Christ’s Second Advent. He wants you to know that the rapture is imminent because it serves as motivation to live our lives in a manner worthy of the Lord (1 John 3:1-3).

The “mid-tribulation” view argues that God promises the church tribulation and therefore can expect to experience the first half of the Tribulation period. However, the term “tribulation” can be used in a “technical” way referring to a specific period in the future and a “non-technical” way meaning it is not used with reference to a specific period of time in the future.

The term “tribulation” is used in relation to the church in a “non-technical” way in John 16:33, Romans 5:3, 8:35, 12:12, 1 Thessalonians 1:6 and Revelation 1:9, 2:9-10, whereas it is used in “technical” way in Matthew 24:9, 21, 29, Mark 13:19, 24 and Revelation 7:8, 14 where it is used with reference to the Tribulation period. It is also important for every Christian that he or she understands the pre-tribulation view of the rapture is the correct view because it is God’s will and God wants His children to know His will.

Also, it is important for every Christian that he or she understands that they will not go through the tribulation period because it is in the Word of God and Christians in 2 Peter 3:18 are commanded to grow in the grace and “knowledge” of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God is His mind and thinking.

Lastly, it is important for every Christian that he or she understands that the mid-tribulation view of the rapture is incorrect in order to minister to fellow Christians who have been misled by such teaching and instruct them in the correct doctrine.
Post-Tribulation View

The third view is the “post-tribulation” position, which contends that the rapture will take place at the end of the Tribulation period, which means then that the church would have to go through the Tribulation. With this position, the church is taken off the earth and then immediately placed right back down on it, which obviously leaves no time for the Bema Seat Evaluation of the church to take place (2 Corinthians 5:10) and the Marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:1-7).

The “post-tribulation” position denies all distinctions between the rapture and the Second Advent since they make them one and the same event. The rapture delivers the church while the Second Advent delivers Israel. The rapture is seen only by the church and is therefore invisible while the Second Advent is the visible manifestation of Christ on the earth. The Lord meets the church in the earth’s atmosphere at the rapture, whereas the Lord physically lands on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem at the Second Advent.

Signs do not precede the rapture whereas visible signs precede the Second Advent. The Lord claims His Bride at the rapture but He returns with her at the Second Advent. The rapture completes God’s program for the church while the Second Advent is related to God’s program for Israel. The rapture is a mystery, not known to Old Testament saints whereas the Second Advent is prophesied throughout the Old Testament canon. The rapture leaves creation unchanged whereas the Second Advent entails a change in creation. The rapture does not fulfill God’s covenants to Israel whereas the Second Advent marks the beginning of their fulfillment. The rapture precedes the Tribulation whereas the Second Advent follows it.

Therefore, as we can see the “post-tribulation” position denies all distinctions between the rapture and the Second Advent since they make them one and the same event. Also, the “post-tribulation” view like the “mid-tribulation” view argues that the church has been promised tribulation, which indicates then that the church will have to go through the Tribulation period. However, the “tribulation” can be used in a “technical” way referring to a specific period in the future and a “non-technical” way meaning it is not used with reference to a specific period of time in the future.

The term “tribulation” is used in relation to the church in a “non-technical” way in John 16:33, Romans 5:3, 8:35, 12:12, 1 Thessalonians 1:6 and Revelation 1:9, 2:9-10, whereas it is used in “technical” way in Matthew 24:9, 21, 29, Mark 13:19, 24 and Revelation 7:8, 14 where it is used with reference to the Tribulation period.

Also, another problem with the “post-tribulation” position is that it considers the prophecy of Daniel’s Seventy Weeks to be completely fulfilled. A “week” in the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 refers to 7 prophetic years of 360 days; therefore,
the prophecy of the 70 weeks of Daniel refers to 490 prophetic years of Israel’s history.

Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. (NASU)

The phrase “your people” indicates that the prophecy deals specifically with the history of the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem and not with world history or church history.

“To finish the transgression” refers to the nation of Israel’s apostasy and sin and wandering over the face of the earth will be brought to its consummation within the seventy-sevens or 490 prophetic years at the 2nd Advent of Christ, on the Day of Atonement.

“To bring an end of sin” refers to bringing sin into judgment at the cross, and extending forgiveness for sins already committed through faith in the coming Redeemer, the Messiah.

“To make an atonement for iniquity” refers to the Cross of Christ as it affects the restoration of the nation of Israel at the Second Advent of Christ (See Zechariah 12:10).

In the Hebrew text, the phrase “to bring in everlasting righteousness” literally means “to cause to bring in everlasting righteousness” and refers to the millennial reign which will be characterized by righteousness.

The phrase “to seal up vision and prophecy” refers to the fact that all that God promised to Israel throughout her history by means of the prophets will be fulfilled during Christ’s millennial reign.

The sixth divine objective “to anoint the Most Holy Place” refers to the dedication of the most holy place in the millennial temple which is described in detail in Ezekiel 41-46.

Daniel 9:25 So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. (NASU)


The first three decrees say nothing about the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem itself since the first two decrees pertain to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem
and the third relates to finances for animal sacrifices at the temple but the fourth
decree granted the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem’s city walls.

The first period of 49 years refers to the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Neh. 2:12-15)
and the 62 “sevens” or 434 years extend up to the introduction of Jesus as the
Messiah to the nation of Israel (“until the Messiah, the Prince”), which was
concluded on the day of our Lord’s Triumphal entry into Jerusalem just before He
was crucified (“cut off”).

Daniel 9:26 Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and
have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city
and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there
will be war; desolations are determined. (NASU)

The statement “after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off” refers to
the crucifixion of Christ.

“The people” refers to the Romans who under the general Titus destroyed the
city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

“The prince who is to come” refers to the Antichrist who will make a seven
year treaty with Israel to begin Daniel’s 70th week.

Three and a half years into the treaty, he will break and desecrate the rebuilt
Jewish temple and declare himself world-ruler and God and will demand to be
worshipped as God.

So we can see that the first seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks that followed
it ran consecutively with no time between them and totaled 483 years and extended
from March 5, 444 B.C to March 30, 33 A.D.

In order to understand how 444 B.C. to A.D. 33 can equal 483 years, we must
understand that the Jewish calendar had 360 days per year, thus 483 years times
360 days equals 173,880 days. The Gregorian Calendar contains 365 days a year
and under this 444 B.C. to A.D. 33 would be 476 years since only one year expired
between 1 B.C. and A.D. 1. A total of 476 years divided by four (a leap year every
four years) gives 119 additional days but three days must be subtracted from 119
because centennial years are not leap years, though every 400th years is a leap
year. Thus, 476 years times 365 days equals 173,740 days and if we add 116 days
in leap years and 24 days (March 5-30), we have 173,880 days.

The church age takes place between Daniel 9:26 and 27 and was a “mystery”
(Eph. 3:9) meaning it was not known to Old Testament prophets such as Daniel.

Ephesians 3:8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, 9 to
preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ and to bring to light
what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God
who created all things. (NASU)
God has temporarily set aside Israel because of her rejection of Jesus Christ as Messiah (Rom. 9-11) in order to form the church and to fulfill the “times of the Gentiles,” which we will note in this study of the day of the Lord.

Romans 11:25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery so that you will not be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. (NASU)

Daniel 9:27 And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate. (NASU)

The statement “he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week” refers to antichrist making a covenant with Israel, which actually begins Daniel’s 70th week (See 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4).

“But in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate,” refers to the antichrist stopping the Levitical sacrifices that will be reestablished in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week.

The statement in Daniel 9:27, “on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate” means that the Antichrist will proclaim himself as God and seat himself on the mercy seat between the wings of the two cherubim on either the recovered Ark of the Covenant or one built by himself, which will be located in the Holy of Holies in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem.

Matthew 24:15 Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. (NASU)

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the departure comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. (NASU)

The phrase “even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one (Antichrist) who makes desolate” refers to the destruction of antichrist at the 2nd Advent of Christ when he will be thrown into the lake of fire (See Revelation 19:20; Daniel 7:11, 26).

So, we can see that the seventy weeks of Daniel of 490 prophetic years are divided into three segments: (1) 7 “sevens” (49 years): The decree of Artaxerxes in 444 B.C. (Neh. 2:1-8) to the completion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Dan. 9:25).
(2) 62 “sevens” (434 years): The completion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem to Christ’s Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem and crucifixion in 33 A.D. (Dan. 9:25-26)
(3) 1 “seven” (7 years): Tribulation period (Dan. 9:27).

None of the events mentioned in Daniel 9:27 have been fulfilled in history, thus refuting the “post-tribulation” position that Daniel’s Seventy Weeks have been fulfilled. Also, the Lord Jesus Christ in His Olivet Discourse, in which He addressed the future of Israel, spoke of a yet future fulfillment of the Seventieth Week of Daniel “after” His death.

Matthew 24:15 “Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand).” (NASU)

Proponents of this “post-tribulation” view contend that John the Baptist began his ministry as the “Seventieth Week” was ushered in and Christ was baptized, tempted and began to preach a few months later. They also say that the first half of the week was used in preaching the gospel of the kingdom and the middle of the week was reached at Passover. They contend that the Passover was exactly in the middle of the seventieth week.

According to this theory Christ becomes the one who confirms the covenant and in the period of His ministry the six great promises of Daniel 9:24 have already been fulfilled. In response to this, it can be stated that the six areas of promise in Daniel 9:24 are related to Israel and Jerusalem and are the logical outgrowth of the covenant with that nation. Israel has not experienced her national salvation. The church can not now be fulfilling these promises. Therefore, we can conclude that the six promises in Daniel 9:24 await a future fulfillment.

Christ could not have confirmed the covenant as the “post-tribulation” view holds since the “he” of Daniel 9:27 must have as its antecedent “the prince that shall come” of the preceding verse. Therefore, because this one is related to the people who destroyed Jerusalem, namely the Romans, the one confirming the covenant can not possibly be Christ but rather Antichrist who will make a treaty with Israel, which he shall break.

“Post-tribulation” view most strongly depends on the interpretation that the resurrection of all believers whether the church or Old Testaments saints is at the end of the Tribulation period just prior to the millennium. Again, they fail to see the distinction between Israel and the church in that they have the resurrection of the church taking place at the same time as the resurrection of Israel. They also fail to see that the Scriptures teach that the resurrection of believers throughout history takes place in stages.

The chronological order of events in God’s resurrection program: (1) The humanity of Christ in hypostatic union (Matthew 28; Mark 16:1-14; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-9). (2) The Church at the rapture, which takes place prior to Daniel’s
Seventieth Week (1 Cor. 15:51-58; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Philippians 3:21). (3) Old Testament believers and Tribulation martyrs at the Second Advent of Jesus Christ, which ends Daniels’ Seventieth Week (Daniel 12:2-3; Revelation 20:4). (4) Every non-believer in human history will be raised from the dead at the Great White Throne Judgment of unbelievers at the end of human history (Daniel 12:2; Revelation 20:11-15).

Lastly, another argument used to support the “post-tribulation” position is that the wheat in our Lord’s parable of the wheat and the tares that appears in Matthew 13 refers to the church being raptured.

Matthew 13:24-30 records our Lord giving this parable.

Matthew 13:24 Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. 26 But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. 27 The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ 28 And he said to them, ‘An enemy has done this!’ The slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?’ 29 But he said, ‘No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.’” (NASU)

Matthew 13:36-43 records our Lord explaining the parable to His disciples.

Matthew 13:36 Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” 37 And He said, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, 38 and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. 40 So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, 42 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.” (NASU)

This parable of the wheat and the tares does not refer to the history of the church has some have erroneously interpreted it to be but rather it is the history of
the kingdom of God. It does not refer to the church age but rather the entire age from the rejection of Christ to His Second Advent.

In the parable, God will be sowing and so will the devil and at the end of the age, God will distinguish those who are His children and those who are the devil’s. The latter will be removed from the earth. This judgment will be followed by the establishment of the millennial kingdom on earth. So the rapture is not in view in the parable and thus the parable cannot be used to support the “post-tribulation” position.
Partial Rapture View

The fourth view is the “partial” rapture theory contends that not all believers will be taken off planet earth at the time of the rapture but only those who are “watching” or “waiting” for that event and who have reached some degree of spiritual development that makes them worthy to be included. Those who adhere to this theory use Luke 21:36, Philippians 3:20, Titus 2:13, 2 Timothy 4:8 and Hebrews 9:28 to support this view that only those believers who “wait, look for” and “have loved His appearing” will be removed from the earth at the rapture.

The problem with this view is that it misunderstands the value of Christ’s death in the sense that this death, which propitiated the Father, reconciled the believer to God and redeemed the believer from the slave market of sin, frees the sinner from condemnation (Romans 8:1). This view does not understand the doctrine of justification, which by way of definition is a judicial act of God whereby He declares a person to be righteous as a result of crediting or imputing to that person His righteousness the moment they exercised faith in His Son Jesus Christ. Consequently, God accepts that person and enters that person into a relationship with Himself since they now possess His righteousness. Thus, Paul declares the following in our completed corrected translation of Romans 8:1: “Therefore, there is now, as an eternal spiritual truth, never any condemnation, none whatsoever for the benefit of those in union with Christ who is Jesus.” (My translation)

Thus the person who adheres to the “partial” rapture position is minimizing the perfect standing of the believer.

The other problem with this view is that it denies the teaching of the unity of the body of Christ since 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 teaches that through the baptism of the Spirit, all church age believers are united to the body of which Christ is the head (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18). Therefore, if only a portion of believers are raptured, then the body of Christ would be disfigured and dismembered and the building of which Christ is the chief cornerstone would be incomplete and so would be the new creation.

Furthermore, Paul teaches explicitly in 1 Corinthians 15:51 that “all” believers will be changed at the rapture.

1 Corinthians 15:50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. (NASU)
Lastly, as we noted the “partial” rapture view believes that the rapture itself is a reward in the sense that they contend that only those who are worthy will be resurrected at the rapture. This confuses the teaching of the Bible regarding rewards, which are given by the Lord at the Bema Seat to those believers for faithful service whereas the Bible teaches the rapture is not a reward but a gracious gift that completes the believer’s salvation.

As we noted earlier, adherents to the “partial” rapture position use Luke 21:36 as support for their theory.

Luke 21:36, “But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (NASU)

This passage is taken from our Lord’s Olivet Discourse in which He was addressing the nation of Israel and was speaking in the context of His Second Advent, which will deliver Israel from Satan, Antichrist and the Tribulational armies. Therefore, since He was speaking with regards to the future of the nation of Israel, this passage cannot be used for support of the “partial” rapture position.

“Partial” rapture adherents also use Matthew 24:40-41 for support of their position.

Matthew 24:40 “Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.” (NASU)

Again, our Lord was speaking to Israel and with regards to His program for that nation. The one taken is a Jew who is taken to judgment whereas the one left is a “born-again” Jew who is left to go through the millennium.

“Partial” rapture adherents also use Hebrews 9:28 for support of their position.

Hebrews 9:27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, 28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him. (NASU)

The writer is contrasting the unbeliever with the believer who is characterized as “those who eagerly await Him.” This passage teaches that Christ appeared once to die for sin at the cross (Hebrews 9:24) and now appears in heaven for the believer (Hebrews 9:26) and to that same group, He will again appear as it says in Hebrews 9:28 to complete the work of redemption. This passage infers that the same group to whom Christ appeared and for whom He now appears, will be the one to whom He will appear.

“Partial” rapture adherents also use Philippians 3:11 for support of their position.
Philippians 3:10 That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. (NASU)

This passage does not refer to the rapture but rather to the Christian experiencing His identification with Christ in His resurrection as a result of experiencing His identification with Christ in His death.

The active voice of the Greek verb translated “I may attain” indicates that Paul as the subject must produce the action of the verb whereas at the rapture the believer’s volition is not involved since the rapture takes place exclusively because of the sovereign will of God.

Those who support the “partial” rapture position also use 1 Corinthians 15:23 as support for their view.

1 Corinthians 15:23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming. (NASU)

This passage is used by “partial” rapture adherents who teach that it teaches a division in ranks of the believer in the resurrection of the church. However, Paul is not giving instructions on the order of the resurrection of the church but rather the divisions within the whole resurrection program, which would include not only church age believers but also Old Testament believers and Tribulation believers as well.

2 Timothy 4:8 is also used as support of the “partial” rapture view.

2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. (NASU)

The expression “all those who have loved His appearing” is found in the context of Paul discussing his receiving a reward from the Lord for his faithful service and is not speaking in the context of his being resurrected at the rapture of the church.

The expression “all those who have loved His appearing” refers to those believers who are motivated to faithful and diligent service to the Lord, which will result in rewards for them because they understand that the rapture is imminent.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 is also used to support the “partial” rapture position.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. (NASU)

This passage cannot be used as support for the “partial” rapture position since Paul is not using waiting for Jesus Christ as a condition to be delivered from the Tribulation period or in other words he is not saying that “if” we wait for Him, then He will deliver us from the wrath to come.