

## Addendum:

# Harvest Bible Chapel's position of the Rapture event

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The *rapture* may be defined as *Christ's removal of the Church from the earth*, and under the topic of premillennialism, has prompted no little discussion. The primary texts from which the understanding of this position are discussed and drawn include 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Daniel 9:24-27, John 14:1-3, Revelation 3:10-11, and 1 Corinthians 15. Though Harvest Bible Chapel Oakville is decidedly a church that interprets scripture to be teaching a *premillennial* stance, we do not have such hard and fast lines for the interpretation of the rapture. It is therefore the effort of this addition to simply make mention of the various views, presenting each in as charitable a way as possible.

To stress the point however, concerning the event of the rapture, we strongly state that we do not dogmatically hold to any view with the rigidity of the more critical doctrines of the faith. To that end, we would counsel the people of God at Harvest Bible Chapel to do the same, being charitable with one another concerning this doctrine.

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### Position 1: A Pre-tribulation Rapture of the Church<sup>1</sup>

With the tribulation period described in the New Testament as a period of intense suffering and trial as the wrath of God is poured out upon the face of the earth, this position sees the rapture as occurring *prior* to the tribulation.

#### Proponents of this view believe:

- The promise of the exemption from divine wrath (Romans 5:9, 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10)
- The promise of the exemption from a time of divine wrath (Revelation 3:10)
- The need for an interval of time between the rapture and the second coming of Christ to allow for such things as the marriage supper of the lamb (Revelation 19:6-10)
- The need for flesh-and-blood believers in the millennial period (see Isaiah 65:17-25) require that not all who follow Christ in the tribulation will be glorified. This is understood if Christ has taken his Church out, glorified them, and then others come to know him during the tribulation.
- The early Church's understanding that Christ's return is imminent (i.e. Matthew 22:42-44) is explained by a rapture event which could occur at any time.
- The understanding that precursors to the return of Christ (i.e. The preaching of the gospel to all nations Mark 13:10, and the coming of the Antichrist, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10) are understood as occurring after the rapture and prior to the Second Coming of Christ.
- There is no mention of the church in Revelation chapters 4-18.

### Position 2: A Mid-tribulation Rapture of the Church<sup>2</sup>

The church is to be taken from the earth in the middle of the tribulation period, but *prior to the wrath of God being poured out*.

#### Proponents of this view believe:

- There is a need to explain *events which must precede the second coming* of Christ
  - The early Church's eager understanding that Christ's return is immanent (i.e. Matthew 22:42-44)
  - The understanding that 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 and 5:1-9 are describing separate events (the rapture and the second coming, respectively).

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<sup>1</sup> As outlined by Paul Feinberg, *Three Views on the Rapture: Pre-, Mid-, or Post-Tribulation*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 45-86.

<sup>2</sup> As outlined by Gleason Archer, *Three Views on the Rapture: Pre-, Mid-, or Post-Tribulation*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 113-146.

- The promise of the exemption from divine wrath (Romans 5:9, 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10)
- The promise of the exemption from a time of divine wrath (Revelation 3:10)
- The need for flesh-and-blood believers in the millennial period (see Isaiah 65:17-25) require that not all who follow Christ in the tribulation will be glorified. This is understood if Christ has taken his Church out, glorified them, and then others come to know him during the tribulation.
- There is a need to explain *events which must precede the rapture*
  - The events described in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 are understood as happening prior to the rapture, and that Matthew 24:27 is directly referring to the rapture.
  - Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians comforting them with the mystery of the rapture is no comfort at all if the church is removed from pain.
- There is an emphasis on the mid-point of these seven years of tribulation.
  - There is a clear emphasis on three-and-a-half months in both Daniel (7:25, 9:27, 12:7, 11) and Revelation (12:14).
  - The blast from the seventh trumpet of Revelation 10:7 corresponds to the last trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15:52

### Position 3: A Post-tribulation Rapture of the Church<sup>3</sup>

The church is to go through the tribulation and will be taken from the earth at the end of the period, prior to the battle of Armageddon when Christ returns to the earth. In this understanding, the rapture and the Second Coming are facets of a single event of Christ’s return.

#### Proponents of this view believe:

- Texts which speak of the Church’s exemption from a time of wrath do not necessarily refer to the Great Tribulation period. In fact, the timing of the rapture event as it is related to the tribulation period is nowhere clearly stated in scripture.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 and 5:1-9 are describing a single event (the rapture and then immediately following, the second coming).
- The Church is promised persecution, trials, and tribulations (cf. John 16:33, James 1:2, 1 Peter 4:12). We should not think it unreasonable to conclude that the Church will be present for the greatest of these trials.
- The terminology used in relation to the return of the Lord – *apocalypses* (“revelation”), *epiphania* (“manifestation”), and *paousia* (“presence”) – are seen as strong indicators of a final glorious event.
- The events described in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 are understood as happening prior to the rapture, and that Matthew 24:27 is directly referring to the rapture at the end of the tribulation.
- Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians comforting them with the mystery of the rapture is no comfort at all if the church is removed from pain.
- Passages in the New Testament which stress the imminency of Christ’s return can be explained by either stating that language does not necessarily require an “any-minute” rapture<sup>4</sup>, or that the events themselves may possibly have already occurred.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> As outlined by Douglas Moo, *Three Views on the Rapture: Pre-, Mid-, or Post-Tribulational*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 169-212.

<sup>4</sup> Moo, 210.

<sup>5</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Christian Beliefs*, 122.