

## SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY (ORGANIZED BIBLE KNOWLEDGE)

### Part VIII: (Doctrine Of The End Times)

#### C. The Rapture

#### 3. Examining The Posttribulation Rapture Position

##### I. Introduction

- A. Posttribulationists believe the Church will be raptured at the end of the Tribulation, so believers will experience the Great Tribulation either **figuratively** in the *present or past*, or **literally** in the *future*.
- B. This belief tends to make believers dread the future to the harm of life and service, 2 Thess. 2:1-2, 16-17.
- C. We examine this school of thought in light of Scripture to see what to believe and thus how to live:

##### II. Examining The Posttribulation Rapture Position (I am indebted to John F. Walvoord's, The Blessed Hope And The Tribulation and to J. Dwight Pentecost's, Things To Come):

- A. Holders of the Posttribulation Rapture view generally departs from the consistent method of interpreting Scripture in the normal (literal, grammatical and historical) method of interpretation (as follows):
  1. Posttribulationists assume it is erroneous to distinguish prophecies concerning the nation Israel from those concerning the Church. They assume the Church and Israel are the same spiritual body.
  2. Thus, they assume Christ's Second Coming to earth is the **same event** as the rapture of the Church.
  3. Accordingly, they also assume that Daniel's 70th prophetic "week" in Daniel 9:24-27 must apply to the earthly life of Christ or to the Church rather than to the nation Israel as distinct from the Church.
- B. Consequently, all Posttribulationists arrive at the following beliefs on various key Scripture passages:
  1. Matthew 24-25 is thus suggested to prove the rapture occurs at the end of the Great Tribulation as this passage is assumed by Posttribulationists to relate to the Church as well as Israel.
  2. The Matthew 13:30 Parable of the Wheat and the Tares has the tares removed before the wheat, so Posttribulationists conclude this teaches the rapture occurs after the wicked are judged at Christ's Second Coming to earth following the Great Tribulation.
  3. Posttribulationists assume the phrase "Day of the Lord" **begins** at the end of the Great Tribulation. Thus, 1 Thessalonians 4-5, including chapter 4 which predicts the rapture, follows the Tribulation.
  4. The "first resurrection" of Revelation 20:4-5 is assumed by Posttribulationists to be the "first" only if the rapture has **not** occurred *before* Revelation 20! Since Revelation 20 speaks of events following Armageddon in Revelation 19, it is assumed the rapture comes at the end of the Great Tribulation.
- C. Yet, examining this stand with a **consistent** "normal" method of interpreting Scripture exposes its errors:
  1. Ephesians 2:11-3:6 clearly distinguishes between the nation Israel and the Church.
  2. Thus, the following mistakes by posttribulationists in handling various Scripture passages are clarified:
    - a. Near the end of His earthly ministry in Matthew 24:15, Jesus claimed the Daniel 9:27 "abomination of desolation" was **yet future!** Those who say the Tribulation came in Christ's earthly life thus err!
    - b. Matthew 24-25 should then be seen as referring to Israel in the Tribulation, not to the Church.
    - c. Matthew 13:30 merely shows God's separation of the godly from the ungodly at Christ's Second Coming seven years after the Church's rapture. There is no need to see the rapture in this passage!
    - d. The "Day of the Lord" includes the Great Tribulation according to 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, but believers **escape** God's wrath in it according to 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10. Thus, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 must speak of a rapture that precedes this "Day of the Lord" divine wrath expression!
    - e. The "first resurrection" of Rev. 20:4-5 is a first in **kind, not in sequence**, for the rapture gets believers up in the air (1 Thess. 4:17) to travel to heaven (John 14:1-3) where Revelation 20:4-5 shows Christ is already back on earth following His Second Coming when these saints rise! Also, in the "first" resurrection are at least two distinct events of resurrections according to 1 Cor. 15:23!

***Lesson:*** Posttribulationists errantly fail to distinguish between Israel and the Church by not interpreting Scripture **CONSISTENTLY** with literal, grammatical and historical guidelines. That produces an errant posttribulation rapture view with its resulting unrest for believers.

***Application:*** Interpreting Scripture **CONSISTENTLY** with **NORMAL** interpretation leads us to the **PRETRIBULATION** rapture view, and to comforted, peaceful living according to 2 Thess. 2:13-17!