

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY (ORGANIZED BIBLE KNOWLEDGE)

Part VIII: Eschatology (Doctrine Of The End Times)

C. The Rapture

2. Examining The Midtribulation (Pre-Wrath) Rapture Position

I. Introduction

- A. Marv Rosenthal's book, The Pre-Wrath Rapture teaches anew an older view that the Church will live under antichrist's reign for the first 3 years of Daniel's (9:27) 70th "week" of years before the rapture.
- B. Adopting such a belief can frighten a believer away from living productively opposite the wishes of God as revealed by the Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 with 2:16-17!
- C. We thus view the Midtribulation Rapture Position in light of Scripture to see what the believer will or will not face, and thus know how to heed the 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 call for productive, comforted living:

II. Examining The Midtribulation (Pre-Wrath) Rapture Position (I used Pentecost's Things To Come.)

- A. Supporters of the Midtribulation Rapture Position depart from a **consistent** normal interpretation of the Bible to hold to the following stands: (Norman B. Harrison, The End, p. 111, 229, 104-105)
 1. They **assume** since Jesus in Mtt. 24:15-21 claimed the last half of Daniel's 70th "week" of years would hold "great tribulation," the **first** 3 years of that "week" of years are **thus NOT a tribulation!**
 2. Thus, the Tribulation Period is **alleged** to be only 3 years, or the latter half of Daniel's 70th "week."
 3. The last trumpet of Revelation 11:15 is **assumed** to be the "last trump" sounding for the rapture in 1 Cor. 15:52! Hence, the seal and trumpet judgments of Revelation 4-11 are **alleged** to occur in the first half of Daniel's 70th "week" of years and the bowl judgments with Rev. 11-19 in the **tribulation!**
 4. Accordingly, the resurrection of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:1-14 **allegedly** picture the rapture of the **Church** in the middle of Daniel's 70th prophetic "week" of years, Daniel 9:27.
- B. However, **consistently** interpreting Scripture with **normal** (literal, grammatical, historical) guidelines reveals the Midtribulation Rapture Position's treatments of these Scriptures to be in error (as follows):
 1. Regarding "II,A,1" above, one cannot assume the first 3 years of Daniel's prophetic "week" is not in the Tribulation just because the latter 3 years contain much more trouble! The whole "week" is a unit in Daniel 9:27, and well before the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15, Revelation 7:14 describes people as **already having come out of** "great tribulation"!
 2. Regarding "II,A,2," even the **appearance** of antichrist as the Man of Sin is **itself** divine judgment, for God judges the lost to be deceived by antichrist for not believing the Gospel of Christ according to 2 Thess. 2:9-12! That deception occurs in the **first** 3 years of Daniel's prophetic "week" of years.
 3. Regarding "II,A,3" above, (a) the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15-18 signals Christ's Second Coming to **earth!** To make this Revelation 11:15 "seventh trumpet" be the 1 Cor. 15:52 "last trump" produces more of a **Posttribulation** rapture position than a true **Midtribulation** rapture position! (b) Also, the "last trump" of 1 Cor. 15:52 can be explained in terms of the O. T. trumpets used to call Israel to move **geographically** during the wilderness journeys, cf. Numbers 10:1-2. Paul could have easily used the term, "last trump" figuratively to picture the last **geographical move** of God's people in their earthly sojourn -- a move to heaven! (c) Besides, John notes in Revelation 10:11 that Revelation 4-10 is one view of the Tribulation where Revelation 11-19 is a second view. As the seventh trumpet is in Rev. 11, the trumpet judgments encompass **both halves** of Daniel's 70th "week", cf. Pentecost, Things To Come, p. 362-363! The seventh trumpet sounds too **late** for a **Midtribulation Rapture!**
 4. Regarding "II,A,4," the two witnesses of Revelation 11:1-14 are individuals according to Zech. 4:2-3, 14! The events surrounding them occur to them as individuals, not to the Church, cf. Rev. 11:8 et al. These are Jewish leaders who witness for the coming of Christ to the earth in His Second Coming!

Lesson: (1) The "Pre-Wrath Rapture" (or the Midtribulation Rapture Position), when viewed against the CONSISTENT, NORMAL interpretation of Scripture, errantly holds the FIRST half of Daniel's 70th "week" of years is NOT when God expresses His wrath. (2) The Bible shows the ENTIRE 70th "week" IS INDEED when God expresses His wrath, so the Church is raptured BEFORE Daniel's 70th "week" of YEARS BEGINS. (3) We can thus live productively and in God's comfort, 2 Thess. 2:16-17.