

New Features on Prewrathministries.org

We have created a new **Guestbook** feature on the website. This not only allows for feedback from site visitors, but also allows others to share in the quest for truth that the Pre-Wrath view provides concerning end-time prophecy. It is encouraging to find out that there are other people who think the same way you do and that are struggling with the same issues with which you may be struggling. It also helps to find people that are coming from a similar theological background and how they have come to a Pre-Wrath belief. Please sign the guestbook the next time you visit PreWrathMinistries.org!

What Others Are Saying

One of the critical arguments against the PreWrath view has to do with the teaching of Imminency. For a description of Imminency, read the end of the main article in this newsletter. Critics say that the PreWrath view does not allow for the imminent return of Jesus - and this is true. They go on to say that imminency is the major concept that keeps evangelism alive in the church. This knowledge that Jesus could come at any moment makes the imperative of sharing Christ all the more urgent and without imminency, there is no urgency to share the gospel. People will wait until they see things happening and then decide. Well, first, the Bible tells us that we are not promised tomorrow. So, there is no guarantee that any of us will see the end-time prophecies fulfilled. Secondly, I must differ with the view that imminency gives evangelism its urgency. I find that the opposite is true. The belief that we will all be rescued in the rapture and have nothing to worry about - to me - makes the church complacent about the return of Christ. The urgency lies in the

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Feature Article: Pre-Tribulation Assumptions

By Elbert Charpie

As is mentioned on the website, I began as a pre-tribulational rapturist. In fact, I had a friend introduce me to Van Kampen's book The Rapture Question Answered. After reading the book, I saw the validity of the pre-wrath view but resisted embracing the view because for me it meant a complete theological change. Finally, I had to admit that scripturally - I had no choice. Especially the passages in 1 Thess 4 & 5 and 2 Thess 2 convinced me that there was no alternative. The study "In View of the End" was the result. In putting together this study, I realized that my pre-tribulation upbringing was based on 6 assumptions and no clear scriptural evidence. So, in this article I want to look at these 6 assumptions. I define an assumption as a belief or doctrine that is not explicitly stated in scripture. Assumptions are made to explain WHY the scripture says what it says, rather than scripture describing what we believe.

Assumption #1: The 70th Week is only for the Jewish Nation: Israel and the church are separate entities God cannot work with both at the same time.

This assumption is based on the scripture: *Luke 21:23 (NIV) How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. 24 They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the **times of the Gentiles** are fulfilled.* The basis for this assumption is that God dealt with the world through the Jewish nation in the Old Testament, but after Jesus came, a new dispensation of grace came. They see the 70th week of Daniel as a return to the Old Testament dispensation as God deals again specifically with Israel. However, this assumption is invalidated by the scripture in... *Acts 2:15 (NIV) These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. 18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. 19 I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. 20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. 21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'* According to this assumption, this prophecy in Joel should have been applied to Jews only, however, it was applied to the early church. The importance of this assumption is that it gives a foundation to the pre-tribulational claim that Matthew 24 was written specifically for the Jewish people. This is an assumption because nowhere in scripture is this distinction made.

Assumption #2: Matthew 24 was written specifically for the Jews. This is an assumption made because Matthew 24 just simply does not conform to a pre-tribulational view of end-time prophecy. The same people that adamantly hold to this assumption would never allow this invalidation of scripture with any other passage - and yet there is nothing in scripture that supports this exclusive application.

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Assumption #3: Rev. 4:1 signifies the Rapture. This passage is: *(Rev 4:1 NIV) After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."* There is a door standing open in heaven, a voice like a trumpet, and the proclamation to "Come up here." Pretribulationists vehemently stand by the principle that this passage depicts the rapture. The reason this assumption is so important is that it provides the **only** scriptural evidence of a pre-tribulation rapture. The problem is that the natural sense of the passage is that John was taken by the Spirit into heaven and to see this as applying to the rapture stretches the natural meaning to the extreme - that application is an assumption.

Assumption #4: The Holy Spirit is the Restrainer in 2 Thess 2:7. This passage states... *(2 Th 2:6-8 NIV) And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. {7} For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. {8} And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.* That phrase "one who now holds back" in the NASB is "the restrainer" and the "one who letteth" in the KJV. It is never stated, yet pre-tribulationists assume that this "restrainer" is the Holy Spirit. This gives evidence that the Holy Spirit is removed out of the way (along with the church in the rapture) and then the Antichrist is revealed. If this restrainer is NOT the Holy Spirit, then this passage destroys a pretribulation rapture, because the Antichrist MUST come first. The restrainer is simply not identified. However, Daniel 12:1 gives the possibility that the restrainer could be the archangel Michael.

Assumption #5: 144,000 Jews sealed in Revelation 7 become evangelists. There is a problem with the pre-tribulation rapture view and that is how to explain the multitude that no one could count that shows up in Rev. 7. Therefore, it is assumed that the 144,000 Jews that are sealed become evangelists and win this multitude during the tribulation period. This is extraordinary when these same assumptions conclude that the Holy Spirit has been taken out of the world. Moreover, the book of Revelation indicates that during the tribulation period (70th week) that rather than responding to God, people will harden their hearts. *Rev 9:20 (NIV) The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood--idols that cannot see or hear or walk.* This leads to the last assumption...

Assumption #6: the greatest revival in history takes place during the 70th Week. This is an assumption because nowhere is there any indication that this revival takes place, in fact, as we have seen the opposite is true. As we have said, this revival is assumed to explain the presence of the multitude that mysteriously appears in heaven. If one does not assume this revival then the only explanation for this multitude would have to be the rapture which would NOT happen before the tribulation period begins.

Now these assumptions are significant in that one must accept all of these assumptions to believe in a pre-tribulation rapture. If any of these assumptions are rejected then the case for a pre-tribulation rapture is seriously in doubt, if not impossible. Yet, these assumptions are also significant because of the fact that they ARE assumptions. There is not a single existing scripture that teaches explicitly a pre-tribulation rapture.

There is one other issue here that could almost be classified as a pre-tribulation assumption. However, it is not a foundational assumption supporting the pre-tribulation view, but comes as a natural consequence of accepting the view. This issue is the doctrine of Imminency. Imminency states that nothing else needs to happen before the rapture takes place, but this is not taught in scripture. Imminency sounds so spiritual and correct as preachers proclaim that "Jesus could come at any moment." However, scripture declares at least three things that must happen before the Day of the Lord occurs. 1) The sign of the Day of the Lord - see Joel 2:31, 2) The prophet Elijah must come - see Malachi 4:5, and 3) The Antichrist must be revealed - see 2 Thess 2:3. None of these has happened as yet, therefore the doctrine of imminency cannot be correct. Now, does this mean Jesus could not come soon? No. In fact, Jesus told His followers in Matthew 24, "When you see standing... the Abomination of Desolation..." Based on Jesus' words there is a possibility that we may not even realize what is happening until the Abomination of Desolation takes place. At that point Jesus return could happen VERY quickly. I also address imminency in the article in this newsletter, "What Others Are Saying."

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Biblical teaching that God's people will be purified and that persecution may very well be a part of that process. The scripture declares that we must be ready - to watch and wait. The message for the lost is that wrath is coming and the only hope is found in Jesus. *Matt 24:44 (NIV) So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. 45 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46 It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.*