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I have had several questions sent to me regarding Jesus' return asking whether the rapture and glorious appearing are one or two events - and how Jesus can be at the Bema judgment in heaven and deal with the Jews on earth during the same time period. This is an important enough question that I have added it to my FAQ page and felt it deserved to be answered here.

The pre-tribulational rapture view does see Christ's second coming in two events - the rapture and the glorious appearing seven years later. The prewrath view sees both as the same event. Jesus will come and rapture his saints and every eye will see him. He will return with the armies of heaven at the battle of Armageddon, but this is not a return for His people. From the time of the rapture until Jesus sets up His millennial kingdom, He will be involved in many happenings upon the earth. He will deal with the Israelites in the wilderness and will lead them on a march back to Jerusalem. There they will be protected as God pours out His final wrath upon the earth and as Jesus defeats the Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon. Then Jesus will set up His millennial kingdom which will last for 1,000 years.

So, there is one second coming, but it will last a while until the millennial kingdom is established. In comparison, Jesus came the first time and his coming lasted 33 years.

Jesus does come back and rapture His saints and He does deal with them in Heaven, but at the same time He deals with the Jewish remnant here on earth. It is no problem for Him to travel back and forth. Furthermore, He is God, and as God, He shares the attributes of God including omnipresence (the ability to be everywhere at the same time). As far as the Jews are concerned, they are not raptured. The Jewish remnant will enter the millennial kingdom in their earthly bodies and will have charge of the earth along with a multitude of Gentiles that survive the 70th Week to re-populate the earth.

In the rapture, Jewish people who have accepted Jesus as their true Messiah will also be raptured and therefore, will not be a part of the remnant, but most Jews have rejected Jesus and will not accept Him until the end of the 70th Week.

Feature Article: The Tribulation

By Elbert Charpie

I want to devote this article to weeding out much of the misconception of the so-called "Tribulation Period," connected with the last days. Those who hold to a pre-tribulational rapture viewpoint have taken the predicted time of tribulation and associated it identically with the 70th week - lasting the entire 7 years. The main scripture that predicts this time is:

Matt 24:21 (NIV) For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again. 22 If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

The pre-trib camp views the entire 70th week of Daniel as "the tribulation period." However, let us look at the context of the passage—verse 9 begins...

Matt 24:9 (NIV) "**THEN** you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. 10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, 11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. 12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, 13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. 15 "**SO** when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand-- 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. 18 Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. 19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world...

Notice the words "then" and "so." These words indicate timing and clearly associate this time of persecution AFTER the Abomination of Desolation takes place. Even the pre-trib camp recognizes that the Abomination of Desolation takes place at the mid-point of the 70th week or the beginning of the latter 3 and 1/2 years.

Furthermore, in verse 15, Jesus could have used any event to warn us to watch for the persecution to come, but He chose the Abomination of Desolation. I have said before that this could be evidence that we may not even realize we are in the "tribulation period" until the Abomination of Desolation takes place.

There is an even a stronger argument because almost everyone agrees that the tribulation associated with these latter days is caused by the ascension of the Antichrist to power. Yet, we are told clearly in Revelation that the rule of Antichrist will be limited to 42 months or 3 and 1/2 years.

Rev 13:5 (NIV) The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months.

Compare this with 2 Thessalonians: 2 Thess 2:4 (NIV) He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up

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in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

There is no scripture that links the last day tribulation to a period of longer than 1,260 days. The only way around this for a pre-trib argument is to split up the different passages by suggesting some are the first half of the 70th week and some apply to the last half. However, there is not one single scripture that promotes this division. On the contrary, all scriptural evidence points to a single 1,260 day timeframe, as it relates to end-time events, that has to come at the latter half of the 70th week. There are three major events—the Abomination of Desolation and the revealing of Antichrist leading to his rule of 1,260 days; the fight of the woman to the wilderness - most commonly seen as the persecution of Israel; and the ministry of the two witnesses which lasts exactly 1,260 days. Although the pre-trib camp tries to divide these events, the context in which they happen can make no sense unless they happen concurrently. And, they have to happen during the second half of the 70th week. They are delineated at the front by the Abomination of Desolation and at the back by the sounding of the 7th trumpet and the return to Jerusalem of the wilderness remnant. The ministry of the two witnesses makes no sense unless it happens during the rule of Antichrist. The woman fleeing to the wilderness also has to be tied to the Antichrist's rule, and the rule of the Antichrist does not begin until the Abomination of Desolation takes place.

The scripture is all but silent regarding the first 1,260 days of the 70th week. The only event that is prophesied to happen at the beginning is the signing of the covenant with “the many.” This begins to make sense when the scripture criticizes Israel for making this covenant and for trusting in a time of peace.

Isaiah 28:15 (NIV) You boast, "We have entered into a covenant with death, with the grave we have made an agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us, for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place."

Jer 6:11 (NIV) But I am full of the wrath of the LORD, and I cannot hold it in. "Pour it out on the children in the street and on the young men gathered together; both husband and wife will be caught in it, and the old, those weighed down with years. 12 Their houses will be turned over to others, together with their fields and their wives, when I stretch out my hand against those who live in the land," declares the LORD... 14 They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace.

1 Thess 5:2 (NIV) for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

The Visible Return of Christ

One of the greatest stumbling blocks to me when I was a pre-tribulation rapture adherent, was the fact that over and over again Jesus declared that His second coming would be unmistakable. He said...

Matt 24:23 (NIV) At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it.

Matt 24:26 (NIV) "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. 27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Mark 13:21 (NIV) At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it.

Luke 17:23 (NIV) Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them. 24 For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other.

It just seems that Jesus went to a great degree of trouble to admonish us not to be deceived into thinking that He had come and we had missed it. If the rapture were a “secret” coming and only believers would know of it, why would Jesus make these statements? Furthermore, Revelation tells us:

Rev 6:15 (NIV) Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. 16 They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

This is why the pre-wrath view made so much sense to me because there is one coming and everyone will see it. The world will know that God has been true to His word and has returned to judge the world. The amazing thing is that still the world will reject Him. But we are told in 2 Thessalonians...

2 Thess 2:11 (NIV) For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12 and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.