



Three Views on the Rapture: Pre; Mid; or Post-Tribulation

Gleason L. Archer Jr. (General Editor) , Richard R. Reiter , Paul D. Feinberg , Douglas J. Moo

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This format allows the reader to see the three positions in dialogue with one another, thus clarifying the distinctiveness and revealing the strengths and weaknesses of each.

Three Views on the Rapture: Pre; Mid; or Post-Tribulation Details

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Bendick Ong says

A good book to read together with Robert g. grouse's the meaning of the millennium. They are essentially of the same scholarly style – an article for a particular position followed by responding articles from the other two. (3 positions – pre-trib, mid-trib and post-trib).

Sheila Myers says

Interesting and thought-provoking. This book provides the basics to the three major theories about the Rapture of the church. No matter which view you now hold, you may find yourself changing your long-held beliefs after reading this book.

Chris Comis says

Had to read this for a class on eschatology. Not my first choice for a book on this subject, but it was interesting reading the different views on the rapture. Being a partial preterist, I'm not convinced any of these views are correct since all of them assumed a futurist and premill approach to eschatology. Although Moo's post-trib argument was the most cogent, in my opinion.

Jacob Aitken says

Though the book is dated (pre-wrath has replaced mid-tribulationism), it remains valuable for a number of reasons. Reiter's essay on the development of American premillennialism is worth the price of the book. Many have a tendency to lump all premils as rednecks who are looking for the Red Heifer. But what Reiter shows is that early premillennials were aware of difficulties in the system, and they tried to fix them.

Feinberg gives the standard pre-tribulational argument. Key argument: God has not only exempted the church from God's wrath, but from the season of God's wrath (Feinberg 58, 63). Feinberg's key argument is that Revelation 3:10 means that God will keep the church out of the tribulation.

He further claims there must be an interval of time between the Rapture and the 2 Coming (72). The Millennium has nonglorified bodies. And since all wicked will be immediately judged in the Second Coming (Matt. 25:31-46), then there must be a category of saved yet nonglorified bodies?

Response: Douglas Moo

The most fatal argument is that the martyred saints in Revelation 6 are asking God when his wrath will begin? This implies it hasn't happened yet. Therefore, the time of Tribulation is not totally a time of wrath.

Response: Gleason Archer

Feinberg admits that the Day of the Lord referred to in 2 Thess. 2:3-4 does not start until the middle of the week (Feinberg 61). This is very close to pre-wrath.

Douglas Moo gives the post-trib argument, and since it is relatively familiar to American evangelicals, I will focus on Gleason Archer's mid-tribulational view. It never gained much ground and has since been replaced by pre-wrath.

The Case for the Mid-Seventieth Week Rapture

The rapture will precede the second advent of Christ. So far that sounds like pre-trib, but there are a few differences. Archer places the rapture in the middle of Daniel's 70th week.

Rider on the White Horse in Revelation 19. This is the big weakness of post-tribulationism. Where do these saints come from (Archer 120). These saints appear to have already been "clothed" (2 Cor. 5:2; 1 John 3:2). Two phases of the Parousia (cf. response to Moo, 213ff). There is no hint of apocalyptic struggle in the primary rapture passage (1 Thess. 4:13-18). In verse 14 it says "God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep through (dia) Christ Jesus." Those who have died in Christ will not be raised until the rapture (214). They will not accompany the Lord in his descent without their resurrected bodies.

Conclusion

So who won? Not really anyone. Feinberg made a few good points, but his church/israel dichotomy hamstrung his whole project. Moo's responses were fairly good but post-trib is just so complex that I can't follow him. Archer's placing the rapture midway through the 70th week is interesting, if a bit arbitrary. I think Alan Kurschner's recent teaching on pre-wrath holds more promise.

Brent McCulley says

Three premillennialists arguing over the time of the rapture. Pretty excited to sell this back for some money.

Will Dole says

The first section by Feinberg is probably the most convincing. Moo's argument is good for Post-trib. The middle section is largely irrelevant today, as Archer's position has been pretty well supplanted by the pre wrath view in the newer edition of this volume. The historical essay which begins the book is worth the price of the book for anyone interested in the history of dispensationalism, whether they agree with the theology or not.

Rick Hogaboam says

Helpful primer. The responses help expose the weaknesses of each view. I'm a post-trib.

David says

Wow, eschatology is always a tough subject as is this book.

One of the main reasons that I bought this book is that three professors from the same seminary Trinity Evangelical Seminary, all propose different viewpoints on when the rapture will take place. (pre-trib --Paul Feinberg, mid-trib --Gleason Archer and post-trib --Douglass Moo)

They all respect each other and each other's viewpoints. They believe that the time of the rapture is not clearly defined by scripture; hence, they are supportive of each other having different views.

First, a dark overview is given on how the church had split in times past over this issue and who possibly developed each view originally. Then it was argued that it should be studied because it is in the Bible and is part of theology. They also state "those who find the question of the Rapture insignificant and uninteresting; they pride themselves in being above the battle. But this is wrong. Theologically, no aspect of revealed truth is unimportant... Practically, the time of the Rapture is significant because we aspire to know the whole counsel of God."

Then the book really begins! Each view is clearly stated based on biblical exposition. After each view the other two authors refute the view. The end result is a fair overview of pre-trib, mid-trib and post-trib premillennialism.

All author's agree on one thing "I cannot, indeed must not, allow this conviction (timing of rapture) to represent any kind of barrier to full relationships with others who hold differing convictions"

A good book, but not life changing either.

Tim Senter says

Good catalogue of the individual rapture views and beliefs.

G Walker says

Archer fascinates me... he knew better than to be premill... and even in that he knew better than to engage a book like this... This was required reading during my seminary days... nowadays, I am inclined to respond to books like this as a waste of perfectly good paper.
