

The Origin of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Doctrine



I believe this picture may depict an accurate description of 1 Thessalonians 4. But when?

By Mark Williams.

How did the pretribulation doctrine come about? A brief rundown would go something like this:

In 1591 a Jesuit priest named Francisco Ribera wrote a 500-page commentary on the grand points of Babylon and the antichrist, the object being to set aside the Protestant teaching that the Papacy is the antichrist. In his commentary, he assigned the first chapters of Revelation to the first century. The rest he restricted to a literal three and a half years at the end of time, BEFORE the resurrection. He taught that the Jewish temple would be rebuilt by a single individual antichrist that would abolish the Christian religion, deny Christ, pretend to be God, and conquer the world. Thus was laid the foundation for Dispensationalism.

In 1812 another Jesuit priest, named Emmanuel Lacunza, started teaching that there would be a 45-day tribulation period, AFTER Christ's coming.

In 1826 Edward Irving translated Lacunza's book and published it in 1827. Sometime after that, Irving started to teach a three-and-a-half-year tribulation after Christ's coming.

In 1830, a man named John Darby of the Plymouth Brethren started teaching a seven-year tribulation period. He came to America seven times to promote his teaching. When George Muller of Bristol came up against the Dispensationalist doctrines of the Brethren movement, he severed all connection with it. "The time came," he said, "when I had to either part from my Bible or part from John Darby. I chose to keep my precious Bible."

So in 1812, we see the teaching of a 45-day tribulation after the rapture.

Around 1827 Edward Irving taught a three and a-half-year tribulation after the rapture. Then in 1830, the final turn to a seven-year tribulation after the rapture. Others picked up on this new doctrine and added to it.

In 1909, C. I. Scofield published the Scofield Reference Bible. His dispensational notes were mixed in with the verses of the Bible so well that if you didn't know better, you would think they were part of the Holy Scriptures. Over two million copies of his Bible were sold with this new dispensational teaching. Scofield, although not a Plymouth Brethren, was a devoted disciple of John Darby.

After that, W. E. Blackstone wrote a book titled *Jesus Is Coming Again*. A millionaire financed sending several hundred thousand copies of this book to missionaries throughout the world.

After Israel became a nation in 1948, prophecy teachers sprung up like wildfire, teaching that the Second Coming would happen approximately forty years after Israel became a nation. They got this belief from misinterpreting the word "generation" in Matthew 24. Hundreds of books were written on this subject. People learned about this new doctrine, not from the Bible, but from these so-called prophecy books.

Today Dispensationalism has become the generally accepted belief of the Fundamentalist wing of popular Protestantism.

In his tract, "Who is the Antichrist?" a former Catholic priest, Joseph Zacchello, says: "The Jesuits were the first ones to introduce a new theory in order to divert men's minds from perceiving the fulfillment of the prophecies of the antichrist in the papal church. The Jesuit Ribera brought out the futuristic system, which asserts that the antichrist is yet to appear." And to this statement, he adds: **"Protestants who advocate the futuristic system are pleasing the pope and are playing into the hands of Rome."**

The teaching that the Church is to be raptured to heaven just prior to a time called the great tribulation was not known prior to the 1800s. It's amazing with all the writings left to us from early Christians on the rapture, all agreed that if there is going to be a tribulation at the end of time, the Church would go through it. Since no voice spoke out in favor of a pre-tribulation rapture, the only conclusion possible is that the Church did not teach this in the beginning and that it should not be teaching it now.

Conclusion

This material was condensed down from hundreds of pages of notes just to give you a quick insight into the problem we are facing today. If we continue to curl up into a ball and keep our mouths shut because somebody might get their feelings hurt, the original truth that was taught by Jesus and his apostles, will one day vanish.

I'm not saying that we should go out and create war with those who disagree, but we should, in a loving manner, spread the whole truth of the Gospel. And if it were only on the last days, it would be easier for me to keep my mouth shut. But Satan has caused Christians to pervert his truth in dozens of chapters throughout the Bible.

It's sad to think that a large part of God's Church teaches that the Abrahamic covenant is yet to be fulfilled and yet the Bible teaches it has been fulfilled to the very letter. It's sad to see Christians teaching that Jesus Christ isn't reigning now when a simple study of the Bible shows he is and that Jesus is reigning from David's throne now just as the Scriptures foretold. It's sad to see Christians misleading the world into believing that after Christ comes back, there will still be a chance for salvation, and again, the Bible says no such thing. Friends, the Bible warns against believing in false doctrine, and yet to many, it's not a problem. I believe that Christians can come together with a more unified understanding of the Scriptures, but only if we take the time to study amongst ourselves and not be afraid to ask questions or get our feelings hurt. Our goal should be stamping out false doctrine and becoming unified in Christ Jesus. Remember, we are commanded to study to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Now if you still disagree with my notes, I would love to hear what you have to say and I promise to keep an open and honest heart. I for one do not want to stand face to face with Jesus only to find out that I've been deceived my whole life and neither should you.