

Entrust Eschatology Rapture & Second Coming - Separate Events 11/16/23

The assertion has been made that there are similarities between the pre-tribulation Rapture passages and the Second Coming of Christ. Therefore, the objection goes, the rapture is not a separate event, but those passages simply speak of Christ's Second coming.

Response:

- There are similarities to the Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ. This is to be expected because they are both eschatological events; they both involve Christ doing something involving his people towards the end of the age.
- However, there are enough differences between the events to substantiate the view that there will be a Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the church, followed by a bodily return of Christ to earth at the conclusion of the 7-year Tribulation to begin his Millennial Reign.

Here are some differences between the Pre-Tribulational Rapture and the Second coming of Christ to begin his millennial reign:

- 1) At the Rapture, Christ comes in the air/clouds and returns to heaven, but at the Second Coming, he comes to earth to dwell and reign (Matt 25:31-32). One Rapture passage says that God's people who are alive at the time will be "caught up" (αρπάζω, "snatched away," "to take something away") together with "them" (the dead who rise, 1 Thess 4:16) in the clouds to "meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess 4:17). However, at the Second Coming of Christ, he returns and descends upon the Mt. of Olives (Zech 14:4, Acts 1:11-12). None of the Second Coming passages speak of saints being "caught up" to meet Christ in the clouds/air.
- 2) At the Rapture, both living and dead saints are said to receive glorified bodies (1 Thess 4:16-17). However, at the Second Coming of Christ, there is no reference to saints living at the time receiving glorified bodies. Instead, Rev 20:4-5 indicates that there is a resurrection, but it is the resurrection of saints martyred during the Tribulation.
- 3) The Rapture and the Second Coming are spoken of at two different times. The Rapture is said to occur before the wrath of God is poured out on the earth (See 2 Thess 2:1-3 argument: false apostles wrote a letter to the Thessalonian church, impersonating Paul, saying that the "Day of the Lord"/Tribulation had already happened. As a result, the Thessalonian church was distraught, thinking they had missed the Rapture. This is a powerful argument for the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. They were distraught because, if the Day of the Lord/Tribulation had

already happened, it meant that they missed the Rapture). Another argument for the Rapture happening before the Tribulation is from Revelation 3:10 (see notes) and the fact that the church is never mentioned during the Tribulation passages from Revelation 6-18. However, the Second Coming is said to happen at the conclusion of the Tribulation (Matt 24:15-31, Rev 19:11-19).

- 4) No Millennial Reign/Messianic Kingdom is spoken of in relation to the Rapture (John 14:1-3, 1 Thess 4:16-17). However, at the Second Coming, there are passages which refer to the establishing of Christ's kingdom.
- 5) At the Rapture, Christ comes to reward (1 Thess 4:17); while at the Second Coming, Christ comes to judge (Matt 25:31-46).
- 6) At the Rapture, believers depart from the earth (1 Thess 4:15-17); while at the Second Coming, unbelievers are taken away from the earth (Matt 24:37-41).
- 7) At the Rapture, unbelievers seem to remain on the earth (implied from the fact that only believers are "snatched up" into the air/clouds, 1 Thess 4:16-17). At the Second Coming, believers remain on the earth (Matt 25:34).
- 8) At the Rapture, there is no mention of Christ's kingdom on earth, while at the Second Coming, Christ's kingdom is established (Matt 25:31, 34).

Given these differences between the Rapture and Second Coming passages, it seems best to see them as two separate events.