

Pretribulational Rapture

1. Imminence of Christ's Return

Scriptures such as 1 Thess. 1:10, Titus 2:13, and Phil. 3:20–21 teach that Christ could return at any moment, which best fits a pretribulational rapture—not a posttribulational one, which would follow years of clear prophetic signs.

2. Distinction Between the Rapture and Second Coming

The rapture involves Christ coming for His saints (John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:17); the Second Coming involves Christ coming with His saints (Rev. 19:14; Zech. 14:5).

3. The Church Is Not Appointed to Wrath

1 Thess. 1:10 and 1 Thess. 5:9 affirm that believers are not appointed to wrath—a key feature of the Tribulation (Rev. 6:16–17).

4. The Absence of the Church in Revelation 6–18

After Revelation 3, the word “church” disappears until Rev. 22:16. This strongly suggests the Church is not present on earth during the Tribulation.

5. The Doctrine of Comfort (1 Thess. 4:18)

Paul tells believers to “comfort one another with these words” (about the rapture). It would be no comfort if they were destined to face the horrors of the Tribulation.

6. The Restrainer Removed Before the Antichrist Is Revealed

In 2 Thess. 2:6–8, the “restrainer” (interpreted by many as the Holy Spirit-indwelt Church) is removed before the Antichrist is revealed—indicating the Church must be taken out first.

7. The Tribulation is for Israel

Daniel 9:24 calls it “70 weeks for your people and your holy city.” The Tribulation is focused on Israel and Jerusalem, not the Church.

8. The Church Is a Mystery, Not Part of Old Testament Prophecy

The Church is a “mystery” (Eph. 3:3–6) and was not part of the 70 weeks prophecy in Daniel 9:24–27, which centers on Israel.

9. Types and Foreshadowing in Scripture

Examples like Enoch and Lot show a consistent biblical pattern of the righteous being delivered before judgment.

10. Revelation 3:10 – “Kept from the Hour of Trial”

Jesus promises the faithful Church in Philadelphia that He will “keep you from the hour of trial” coming on the whole world—not just protection through it, but from it.

11. God’s Distinct Programs for Israel and the Church

The Church and Israel are two distinct groups (1 Cor. 10:32). The Church’s rapture removes it before God resumes His focus on Israel during the Tribulation.

12. No Instruction for Enduring the Tribulation

Nowhere in the epistles (written to the Church) are believers instructed to prepare to endure the Tribulation—only to await Christ’s return.

13. The 24 Elders in Heaven (Rev. 4–5)

The 24 elders represent the glorified, rewarded Church, already in heaven before the judgments begin in Revelation 6.

14. The Wedding Imagery

The Rapture precedes the Marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7–9), which occurs in heaven before Christ returns to earth in Rev. 19:11–14.

15. The Doctrine of Imminency Is Lost in Other Views

If the rapture follows known events, it can’t be imminent. Pretrib is the only view that preserves true imminency.

16. Tribulation Is for Unbelievers, Not the Church

Revelation 6–19 repeatedly describes judgment on the earth dwellers (Rev. 6:10; 11:10; 13:8)—those in rebellion against God.

17. The Blessed Hope Is a Comfort (Titus 2:13)

The rapture is called a “blessed hope,” which makes sense only if it rescues believers from a time of horror, not if it delivers them into it.

18. Jesus’ Promise in John 14:1–3

Jesus promised to come again and take us to His Father’s house—not stay on earth. This aligns with a rapture to heaven before His return to rule on earth.

19. Believers Are Told to Watch, Not to Survive

Paul and Jesus consistently tell believers to watch, be alert, and be ready—not to stockpile, fight, or survive the Tribulation (Luke 21:36; 1 Thess. 5:6).

20. The Church’s Heavenly Citizenship (Phil. 3:20)

Our citizenship is in heaven, and the rapture is the event that fully realizes that destiny before God’s final dealings with the nations.