

Instructor

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Required Texts

1. Blaising, Craig, Alan Hultberg, and Douglas J. Moo. *Three Views on the Rapture: Pretribulation, Prewrath, or Posttribulation*. Counterpoints. Edited by Stanley N. Gundry and Alan Hultberg. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. [Note this is the “Second Edition with New Contributors”; do not use the first edition.]
2. Blaising, Craig A., Kenneth L Gentry, Jr., Robert B. Strimple, *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*. Counterpoints. Edited by Stanley N. Gundry and Darrell L. Bock. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.

Course Description

This course will analyze the major eschatological passages in the Bible. Students will be introduced to the exegetical and theological debates about these passages. The importance of eschatology to the coherence and culmination of the biblical storyline will be stressed.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Analyze the structure and content of major eschatological Bible passages
2. Summarize the basic eschatological positions held by orthodox Christians.
3. Evaluate these positions based on sound exegesis and theological reasoning.
4. Defend what you believe to be the biblical position on a given eschatological topic.

Course Activities

Textbook Reading

Read the two required texts **before** the start of the first class. Outline the argument of each essay (see example below) **before** the start of the first class and write a brief personal evaluation of the arguments in each essay.

Bible Reading

Read the following passages of Scripture while taking this course. It will help you to have read these passages prior to the lectures.

Psalm 2, 110; Isaiah 2, 11, 13, 24-27, 60-66; Eze. 1, 36-39; Daniel; Joel 2-3; Zephaniah 1, 3; Zechariah 1, 3-4, 6, 12-14; Matthew 24-25;

Mark 13; Luke 21:5-33; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; 2 Thessalonians 1-2; Revelation.

Though not required, you will find it helpful to read the New Testament passages multiple times in multiple translations. You will also find it helpful to read the Olivet Discourse in a harmony of the Gospels.

Tests

The final exam will be comprised of several brief essays that require you to summarize and evaluate from Scripture the eschatological teaching covered in the lectures.

Project

Write a 10 page, double-spaced paper that:

- Summarizes the Bible's teaching on the intermediate state (including a critique of soul sleep)
- Critiques the doctrine of purgatory

- Evaluates whether or not Christians should cremate their dead
- Defend eternal, conscious punishment against universalism, postmortem salvation, and annihilation

Course Schedule

Lecture 1: The Kingdom of God

Lecture 2: Daniel, chapters 2 and 7

Lecture 3: Daniel's 70 Sevens

Lecture 4: The Day of the Lord in the Old Testament

Lecture 5: The Olivet Discourse

Lecture 6: The Rapture

Lecture 7: Approaches to Interpreting Revelation

Lecture 8: Survey of Revelation, Part 1

Lecture 9: Survey of Revelation, Part 2

Lecture 10: The Millennium, Part 1

Lecture 11: The Millennium, Part 2

Lecture 12: The Eternal State

* This lecture schedule reflects my general plan for the class, but keep in mind that it is subject to change as the class progresses.

Course Policies

Academic integrity

Students are expected to demonstrate honesty in the completion of their assignments. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are not acceptable.

Late Work

Late work will be docked 2% for every day late.

Grading

Point Values

Item	Quantity	Points	Total
Reading Report	2	100	100
Paper	1	100	100
Final Exam	1	50	50
Total			350

Scale

A	90-100 %
B	80-89 %
C	70-79 %
D	60-69 %
F	0-59 %

Example of Outlining an Argument

Below is an example of how to outline an argument. The example is drawn from the first edition of *Three Views on the Rapture*. Overall I think Blaising presents a better case for the pretribulation rapture than Feinberg, but Feinberg makes some specific arguments that are very good. Thus this example serves a double purpose. It is a model for how you should outline the arguments in the two assigned texts, and it presents you with an additional argument for the pretribulation position.

Note that this example does not include a personal evaluation of Feinberg's arguments, but you will want to follow your outline with *at least* a paragraph of evaluation.

Feinberg, Paul D. "The Case for the Pretribulation Rapture Position," in *Three Views on the Rapture*. Counterpoints. Edited by Stanley N. Gundry. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

Some Preliminary Remarks

- Practical significance
 - Not a test of orthodoxy
 - "we aspire to know the *whole* counsel of God" 47
 - "Am I to expect Christ's return at any moment?" 47
 - "is my home the protection in and deliverance by God from a time of worldwide tribulation?" 47

On the Ecclesiological Backdrop

- People often think that pretribulationism stems from a dispensational ecclesiology
- Feinberg doubts this is the case; thus arguments against dispensationalism are not necessarily arguments against pretribulationism

Presuppositions and Assumptions

- Feinberg presupposes the Premillennial position
- Feinberg presupposes "a futuristic interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27 and the // Book of Revelation." 49-50
 - "Daniel 9:27 gives the seven-year chronological framework" 50
 - See Paul D. Feinberg, "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Daniel 9:24-27," in *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles L. Feinberg*, ed. John S. and Paul D. Feinberg (Chicago: Moody, 1982), 189-220.
 - "Revelation 6-18 details the judgments that make up this period."

Arguments for a Pretribulation Rapture

The Promise of Exemption from Divine Wrath

- All "participants of this debate ... agree that God has exempted the church from divine wrath." Quotes:
 - J. Barton Payne, "Jesus is Coming Again: Pasttribulation," in *When Is Jesus Coming Again?* 72-73.
 - George E. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, 120
 - J. Oliver Buswell, *Systematic Theology*, 2:389
 - John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question*, 69
 - Leon Wood, *Is the Rapture Next?* 20.
- The church will still experience "trial and suffering ... (e.g., John 16:33; Phil 1:27; 1 Thess. 3:3; 1 Peter 4:12, 13). See also, Eph. 6:10-20; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3-4; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Phil. 3:1-16; 2 Tim. 2:5)
- The exemption from wrath is not based on the fact that Christ bore God's wrath on the cross
 - Everyone agrees that there will be people saved people who will live through the Tribulation period [Pretribulationists would teach that many Jews and Gentiles will come to faith in Christ during the Tribulation]

- The church will be exempt from God's wrath due to "a sovereign decision of God" See 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Rev. 3:10; maybe also Rom. 5:9; Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6
- Argument from 1 Thessalonians
 - 1 Thess. 1:10
 - The context in the book is the day of the Lord (which includes the Tribulation)
 - "the text itself states that it is a 'coming wrath' and implies that rescue is related to Christ's return" 53
 - "the wrath of 1 Thessalonians 1:10 seems related to that of 5:9 where the advent of eschatological woes are in view" 53
 - 1 Thess. 5:9
 - 5:1-3 uses terms that clearly refer to eschatological events
 - "Times and epochs"
 - "day of the Lord (e.g., Isa. 2:12; Amos 5:18, 20; etc.)." 54
 - "labor pains on a pregnant woman"; see Matt. 24:8
 - "Unbelievers will not escape"; they are contrasted with believers 55
 - It is in this context that verse 9 says "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ"
 - "This salvation is not only deliverance from eternal damnation, but also to 'live (*ingressive aorist*) together with him' (5:10). Thus, this deliverance (σωτηρίας) is parallel to the rescue (ρύομενον) of 1:10." 54
 - Counterarguments
 - Preterist (J. Barton Payne): Daniel 9:27 and "much of Revelation" have already taken place; the tribulation will be short; God will protect Christians within it
 - Posttribulation (Ladd)
 - 1 Thess. 5:9 could refer to just the final judgment
 - The church could be spared the judgments of God during the Tribulation just as God spared the Israelites from some of the Egyptian plagues
 - Posttribulation (Robert Gundry)
 - Expands on the second argument of Ladd
 - Adopts a recapitulation model for the seal, trumpet, bowl judgments; God's wrath begins "the sixth seal, the fourth trumpet, and the first bowl"; the Day of the Lord only begins at the end of the Tribulation period.
 - The text signals that these judgments fall on the "earth-dwellers," those with the mark of the beast, those who will not repent, etc.
 - Midtribulation (J. Oliver Buswell)
 - The Tribulation is a period of "man's wrath against God's people" 57
 - Divine wrath will follow the Tribulation (cf. Matt. 24:29; cf. Mk. 13:24-25; Luke 21:25-26).
 - Response to counterarguments
 - Rejects preterism (see presuppositions above) and notes that most Premillennialists are not preterist.
 - "the *whole*, not just a part, of the seventieth week is a time of divine wrath"
 - Acknowledges that some occurrences of wrath words in Revelation refer to the end (Rev. 14:8, 10, 19; 15:7; 16:1, 19; 19:3; 19:15)
 - Revelation 15:1 could indicate that the bowl judgments finish judgments that have already been underway; Feinberg admits this is not definitive
 - Revelation 11:18 mentions divine wrath in a context that could either be at the middle or end of the tribulation, depending on one's scheme
 - Revelation 6:16, 17 provide "the first reference to wrath in the book."
 - Gundry wants to limit this wrath to unbelievers and to locate these events at the end of the Tribulation

- Feinberg notes that on some schemes these events happen toward the middle of the Tribulation, not the end
- Feinberg argues that the "wrath is so general that it comes on all" 60
[PN: This line of argumentation is too indefinite]
- Feinberg is willing to concede that the Day of the Lord does not begin until the middle of Daniel's seventieth week, but he thinks that divine wrath may precede the day [PN: Blaising makes a good argument for equating the Day of the Lord and the seventieth week]
- Feinberg argues that the judgments in Revelation all flow from Rev. 4-5: "Every judgment from the first seal to the last judgment comes as the *retributive* wrath of God.... To identify the wrath of God simply with His *direct* intervention is to overlook the fact that primary and secondary agency *both* belong to God." 62

The Church Is Promised Exemption Not Only From Divine Wrath but Also From the Time of Wrath

- Key Verse: Rev. 3:10
 - "key phrase is κἀγὼ σε τηρήσω ἐκ ὧρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ" 63
 - "The word τηρήσω is usually translated 'keep' but most would agree that 'preserve' or 'protect' is more accurate.
 - "All lexicons and grammars are in essential agreement that ἐκ means 'out of, out from within.'" 63
 - "Had John wanted to express protection through the period, either ἐν or διὰ would have served better" 63
 - It is hard to square the promise of protection with the martyrdoms that take place during the tribulation
 - Thus the church would be raptured prior to the Tribulation
- Gundry "argues that ἐκ is a preposition of motion.... It means *out from within*.... The meaning here is that the church is *in* the Tribulation but is removed from it."
 - Liddell and Scott give examples of ἐκ used to "*denote a position outside its object with no thought of prior existence within the object or emergence from the object*" (64; quoting Jeffrey Townsend). Gundry dismisses as only in early writers.
 - LXX gives similar evidence
 - Prov. 21:23
 - Josh. 2:13
 - Ps. 33:19
 - Ps. 56:13
 - Prov. 23:14
 - Ps 59:1-2
 - NT gives similar evidence
 - Acts 15:19
 - John 12:27
 - Jesus was asking for "protection from that hour entirely"
 - Note parallels: "Let this cup pass from me: (Matt. 26:39; cf. Lk. 22:42)
 - Heb. 5:7
 - Jesus was asking to be kept from death
 - The idea that this is a reference to the resurrection does not harmonize with "the Gethsemane prayer."
[PN: This is an unlikely interpretation that needlessly weakens Feinberg's case]
 - James 5:20
 - John 17:15
 - "This is the only other occurrence of τηρέν + ἐκ in either classical or // biblical Greek."

- 17:15a shows that the idea of "out from within" would have been better been communicated in Revelation 3:10 by ἀπό + ἐκ.
- In 17:15b, "The disciples spiritually *were* not in the Evil One when Jesus prayed. It is this fact in conjunction with the meaning of τηρέω, which has the idea of protection *not* motion, that requires the ἐκ of 17:15b to be understood as preservation in a position outside the preposition's object." 67
- "Just as the disciples were not in the Evil One, so the Philadelphians would not be in the hour of testing." 68
- The hour of testing
 - "It is clear that the promise relates to a specific time; τῆς is the article of previous reference. Jesus is talking about a well-known time of distress and trouble. This was the Tribulation period (Deut. 4:26-31; Isa. 13:6-13; 17:4-11; Jer. 30:4-11; Ezek. 20:33-39; Dan. 9:27; 12:1; Zech. 14:1-4; Matt. 24:9-31)." 69
 - "Thiessen correctly noted that the promise was an *exemption from a period of trial*. Ryrie makes this point, 'It is impossible to conceive of being in the location where something is happening and being exempt from the time of the happening.'" 69
 - The statements "which is about to come upon the whole inhabited earth"; "to test those who dwell upon the earth" indicate that "the wrath is falling *everywhere*" indicating that the only way to carry out the promise is to remove the church from the earth. 70
 - Responses to Gundry's counter-arguments
 - The hour is also taking place in heaven
 - But "heaven is outside time" 69
 - "this is an hour that is to come on the 'inhabited earth'" 69
 - The focus is on the trials not on the time
 - Both are in view here
 - Jeremiah 30:7 is a parallel promise, and Israel is saved out from within "the time of trouble for Jacob" not exempt from it.
 - "Israel is *already within* the time of trouble. Therefore, the only kind of deliverance that is possible is deliverance from within the period." 70
 - "Revelation 3:10 does not set the church within the hour. Thus, its deliverance could be an *exemption from the period of time*." 70

The Necessity of an Interval Between the Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of Christ

- There is a need for "some saints ... to go into the Millennium in nonglorified bodies" 72
 - Sin, sickness, and death will exist in the Millennium. The existence of these require people in non-glorified bodies.
 - But on the posttribulation scheme all the righteous are raptured and glorified at the second coming.
 - The wicked will not be permitted to enter the kingdom (Matt. 25:31-46)
- Posttribulation Response
 - Jews will be converted as Christ returns and enter the Millennium in their natural bodies (Zech. 12:10-13:1; Rom. 11:26)
 - Gundry suggests that the 144,000 are "a Jewish remnant who will be physically preserved through the Tribulation" and who will enter the Millennium in natural bodies. 73
- Rejoinder to the Posttribulation view
 - "First, there are some who argue that the repentance of Israel *precedes* the return of Christ "(Hos. 5:15-6:31 Matt. 23:29)." They have repented prior to seeing Christ return. 73
 - Even if the Jews were converted as Christ appeared in the second coming, "why [is it that] these Jews are not raptured immediately to receive their glorified bodies" 74
 - "there are many passages that speak of Gentiles populating the Millennium in non-glorified bodies (e.g., Isa. 19:18-25; Zech. 14:16-21; Isa. 60:1-3)." 74

- Second Posttribulation Response
 - "Scripture does not demand that *all* unbelievers be destroyed at the Second Advent. Instead, only the *actively rebellious* unbelievers will be slain at Christ's return." 74
- Pretribulation Rejoinder
 - Granted, but the sheep and goats are still separated
 - The wicked will not enter the kingdom
- Third Posttribulation Response
 - "a number of passages teach that wicked live in the kingdom period (e.g., Isa. 37:32; 66:15-20; Joel 3:7, 8; Zech. 14:16-19; and Rev. 20:7-9).
- Pretribulation Rejoinder
 - But these passages do not say the wicked enter at the beginning, which is what the separation of the sheep and goats judgment rules out.
 - Isaiah 25:22 teaches that all the wicked will be "*confined*" during this period. See also Zeph. 3:8; 1 Thess. 5:3; 2 Thess. 2:12.
 - The wicked who exist in the Millennium are those born to the non-glorified righteous
- Fourth Posttribulation Response
 - The separation of the sheep and goats judgment happens after the Millennium
 - Thus there will be unrighteous people who will enter the Millennium; their judgment will happen at the end.
 - Since the sheep and goats judgment has to do with "eternal life" and "eternal punishment," it cannot be a provisional judgment prior to the Rev. 20 judgment. 78
- Pretribulation Rejoinder
 - Matthew 25 and Revelation 20 are different
 - Matthew speaks "good and evil" being judged
 - In Revelation only the evil are judged
 - Gundry "simply does not deal with the opening lines of the judgment scene: 'But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him' (vv. 31-32a)." 77
 - "if the millennial kingdom is the first phase of the eternal kingdom....., then eternal life is not an inappropriate name for the reward of the righteous." 78
 - The reference to "eternal punishment" (and "eternal life") could be explained by prophetic foreshortening." [PN: [Here Feinberg undermined his whole rejoinder](#)]

The Differences Between Rapture Passages and Second Coming Passages

- Omissions
 - "in passages that deal with the Second Advent there are signs or events that lead up to and signal the return of Jesus Christ (e.g., Matt. 24:4-28; Rev. 19:11-21).... On the other hand, there is no mention of any signs or events that precede the Rapture of the church in *any* of the Rapture passages." 80
 - "every passages that deals with the Second Coming is set in the context of Tribulation and judgment" (e.g., Zech. 14:1-2; Matt. 24:21). Note "the silence about any such distress in the Rapture texts." 80-81
 - "there is no clear, indisputable reference to the Rapture in any Second Advent passage." 81
 - "it seems fair to ask what purpose the Rapture would serve in a scheme where the saints immediately accompany Christ to the earth." 81
 - Gundy says it is to protect them from the wrath at that time
 - "nowhere in the texts that deal with the Second Advent is there teaching about the translation of living saints" 82
 - "there is no clear, indisputable mention of the resurrection of the church at the Second Advent"
 - Daniel 12:2 refers to Israel
 - Rev. 20:4 refers to Tribulation martyrs

- The Rapture passages do not mention geographical transformations whereas Zech. 14:4 and Ezek. 40-48 do.
 [PN: Too many of these could simply be explained by the fact that different passages stress different aspects of a single event; the first bullet point is the strongest, and Feinberg should have developed that point further.]
- Differences
 - "there seems to be an inconsistency between the *time* of the resurrection at the Rapture and at the Second Coming" 84
 - In 1 Thess. 4:13-18 the resurrection happens "*during* the descent of Christ to the earth."
 - In Revelation 19-20 "the order seems to be: the descent of Christ, the slaying of His enemies, the casting of the Beast and the False Prophet into the lake of fire, the binding of Satan, and *then* the resurrection of the saints." 84
 [PN: Strong argument]
 - Those raptured and those saints at the Second Coming have a different "destination" 84
 - In the rapture the church meets the Lord in the air and are taken to be with Jesus in heaven (John 14:3).
 - In the Second Coming the saints come from heaven to earth
 [PN: Weaker argument]