

7 Pre trib (rapture) problems

Part 7

National Israel and the Church

Intro

Comparison of Pre-Trib and Pre-Wrath teaching.

Not necessarily about proving one view right and the other wrong, but being good Bereans.

Recap

Pre-Wrath position based upon the 'triple lock'.

- That Joel 2:31, Matthew 24:30-31, and Rev 6:12-14 describe the same cosmic event.
- Thereby, chronologically linking these passages together (and placing their contextual information into a specific chronological sequence).

So far, we have...

- Unlocked the idea that the cosmic sign of Joel necessarily precedes the rapture.
- Unlocked the idea that Mt 24:30-31, is referring to the rapture of the Church saints.
- Distanced the 'signs' of 2nd Thess chapter 2, from 'necessarily' preceding the rapture.
- Questioned the idea that the 6th Seal 'begins' God's outpour of wrath, and is the sign that locates when the rapture takes place within the book of Revelations chronology.
- Clarified the Pretrib doctrine of 'imminence'.

Prewrath premise

- God's prophecy to Daniel concerning the 70th weeks concerns Israel.
- The 70th week of this prophecy particularly concerns what God will do with Israel at this time.
- But, God can, *and has* worked with both the Church and Israel during the Church Age, and that He will continue to do so in the final 7-year period.
- So, the prophecy doesn't demand that the Church must be raptured before Daniel's 70th week commences.
- The Church will have a part to play in the fulfilment of this prophecy.

This is in response to the Pretribulationists (supposed) view that:

- God does not work with Israel and the Church at the same time.
- A hard distinction must be made here concerning Daniel's 70th week.
- The Church will not play any part in its fulfilment
- God has completely paused his dealings with National Israel during the Church Age.

Prewrathers observe that:

- The Pretribulationist view concerning National Israel and the Church is their foundational argument for the rapture.
 - If God cannot work with both entities at the same time, then the rapture must precede the commencement of Daniel's 70th week.

- This is due to a unique, or unnecessary, view of how God works through National Israel and the Church.

Immediate response

Clarify the Pretrib position:

The issue is not God using the entities of National Israel and the Church at the same time, or relating to the same general purpose.

For example, at the moment:

- God is using the Church as a vehicle of salvation to contain all believers, regardless of ethnicity.
- God is using National Israel, as an example to the world, of why we should not reject God's salvation, communicated by His Messiah.

So, same time, same general purpose...but there is a difference.

This difference is understood by appreciating the nature of Dispensationalism, and God's covenant programme, which creates different 'house rules' for each dispensation, which brings a different dynamic to corporate and individual relationships.

To nutshell this whole issue... Daniel's 70th week is about the salvation of National Israel, and God cannot relate to individuals the same way (He does through the Church today).

To put it simply:

- At this time, God relates to The Church, the wider world, including individual Israelis, on the basis of the New covenant, (which is National Israel's birth right, but they nationally rejected it, Romans 11:24).
- At this time, God relates to National Israel according to the Abrahamic covenant, AND to individual unbelieving Israelis according to the curse of the Mosaic law (Galatians 3:10).

Conclusion - God may use two different entities at the same time etc. but He does not relate to them the same way (which has an impact upon how the 'end' of the purpose is experienced).

How does this relate to Daniel's 70th week?

Daniel's 70th week is about the salvation of National Israel.

God uses the same means, Messiah and the New Covenant, but...

Where National Israel are involved, the Abrahamic Covenant and the curses of the Mosaic Law are also applicable.

Now, yes, the Abrahamic covenant is relevant to the Church, and gentiles, in relation to prophecy and the promise of salvation to individual gentiles. However, it does not bestow upon them the natural birth right of National Israel to be saved by their Messiah.

So, from a dispensational perspective.

- Daniel's 70th week belongs to the same dispensation as that of the preceding 69 weeks.

- This is when God was bringing salvation to the world, by bringing it to Israel (first and foremost).
- Daniel's 70th week does not belong to, or feature as the culmination of the Church age, where salvation only concerned individuals, not nations.
 - (We will deal with the salvation of gentiles in Daniel's 70th week later).

As concrete proof of the incompatibility between how God relates to the world, including the Church, now, through the New Covenant alone. And, how God will deal with Israel in the 70th week, note:

- Daniel's 70th week is a unique period and sees a unique way of God operating.
- Evident because God saves National Israel by...
 - By saving those that believe.
 - By physically destroying those that do not believe.
 - Thereby leaving a nation of believers.
 - This will be unique in Israel's history, AND in world history.
- God does not operate in that way today.
- This unique means of National salvation is brought about by the combined effect of...
 - The Mosaic curses.
 - The Abrahamic promise.
 - The New Covenant (made with Israel).

Caveat – on a personal level I recognise that the above argument does not categorically exclude the presence of the Church upon the earth within Daniel's 70th week. It simply demands, either the Church would have to be inactive, the gospel rendered ineffective for the Church, or, the Holy Spirit stop convicting men of sin. Some Prewrathers suggest that the latter is the case, and cite 2nd Thess chapter 2, regarding the 'restrainer', as proof. There is some truth to that, but it does not prove the Churches presence upon the earth in Daniel's 70th week.

Nevertheless, let us examine some of the evidence put forward by Prewrathers for why the Church can still be present.

Prewrath evidence

1) The prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34 'a prophecy that was explicitly given to Israel'.

'But nearly every Christian agrees that this prophecy applies to the Church'.

Answer -

The statement 'That this prophecy applies to the Church' is misleading, because it suggests a direct consequential relationship between this passage and the Church, either:

- This passage prophetically caused the Churches existence.
- Or, this passage is actually about the Church, even though it mentions National Israel.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 does not mention the Church in any sense, particularly prophetically.

Jeremiah chapter 31 does tell us of God's prophetic intent to cut a new covenant with Israel and Judah.

Jesus fulfilled God's prophetic intent to cut a new covenant with Judah and Israel, as recorded in Jeremiah chapter 31, on the cross.

That Jesus's earthly ministry initially only concerned His Jewish brethren is clearly supported by Scripture.

It is national Israel's corporate rejection of this covenant that has opened it up to 'whosoever will', and has brought about the existence of the Church, and the Church age.

The existence of the Church, or at least the calling of the gentiles as we see it now in the Church age, is prophesied in Scripture, but not in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Conclusion – the Prewrath argument is incorrect.

2) "Tribulation Saints"

- a. Please note:
 - i. Prewrathers don't believe in tribulation saints, because they believe the Church is still present on earth in the tribulation and great tribulation period.
 - ii. Pretribbers define tribulation saints as gentile believers in Messiah, post the rapture
- b. Prewrathers say: "If God won't work with the Church and Israel at the same time, how do they explain these Tribulation Saints? Are they not saved? Do they not have the Holy Spirit? Are the Gentile believers among them not *the Church*? Is God not working with them (i.e., as the Church) because He won't work with them *and* the Jews at the same time?"

Answer –

Prewrathers seem to assume that...

- All tribulation saints are gentiles.
- Gentiles can only get saved, by being saved into the Church, at least after Jesus's first coming.

This could mean that any gentiles saved prior to Christ's first coming had to be saved into 'the Church', meaning that the Church existed prior to Pentecost, something the most Prewrathers who follow a dispensational view of Scripture, would reject.

Under the dispensations of the Patriarch's and The Law. Some gentiles were 'saved' through faith AND assimilation into National Israel, like Naomi. Others, were saved by faith in The God of Israel.

Notice, salvation for both parties included their conscious repudiation of any false national god, and their conscious identification with the God of Israel.

This meant that whilst these gentiles were saved by believing the 'proto' (or primordial) gospel contained within the promises of previous covenants; as was the case with Jews also; they were 'known' to God by their association with Israel.

At this time, Israel was the exclusive vehicle God that was using to bring about His salvation.

(Obviously, that was not the case prior to the dispensations of the Patriarch's and The Law, but this period is not our concern).

Conclusion – Gentile tribulation saints will be 'known' to God through their association with National Israel. Where, in Daniel's 70th week, National Israel is once more God's vehicle that concerns salvation.

This conclusion is supported by the fact that all people who live through Daniel's 70th week will be judged by their attitude and behaviour towards National Israel, Mt 25:31-46.

3) God has worked with Israel and the Church in the Past

Before the death and resurrection of Jesus, during the Old Covenant dispensation, a prophecy was *given to Israel* concerning God judging Israel with the Temple's destruction. This took place in the Church age in AD 70.

Answer – This statement is one of presenting 'apple and pears' as if they are the same.

AD 70 is a prophetic event, not a salvation related event, the two programmes run separately through the two different respective vehicles of the Church and Israel.

The above is why at the present, Pretribbers often say...

- The Church is God's present vehicle of salvation.
- National Israel is God's present vehicle of prophetic revelation.

4) God is working with Israel and the Church in the Present

Prewrathers claim God is also working with both the Church and Israel at the same time in present, in at least two ways.

- i) God is making Israel jealous and saving a remnant of Jews during the Church Age.
- ii) By God regathering Israel back to their homeland.

Answer –

Point i) concerns the salvation of individual Jews, not National Israel, so is a diversion. Point ii) is again presenting 'apples as pears' this is a prophetic event, it relates to salvation only in so far as it prepares the National of Israel for a future time of chastisement and eventual salvation, through devastating means, unlike those God employs today through the Church.

5) God is working through Israel and the Church in the Future

According to Prewrathers, the events depicted in Revelation chapter 12, concerning the woman sheltered in the wilderness occur within the 2nd half of Daniel's 70th week; and, *'the rest of her offspring... those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.'* (Rev. 12:12-17), are Church believers. Consequently, this depicts God working with National Israel and the Church working together.

Answer – Church believers are never described as those who *'keep the commandments of God'*.