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Mid-Tribulationism

Let's start by turning to 1 Thess 5:9. This is a study of last things or eschatology. There are lots of passages involved. Don't lose the forest for the trees. The forest is that we have Israel, the Church and the Gentile nations spoken of in Scripture and they all have a destiny in the kingdom, so the study is how do they all get into the kingdom? What path do they take? What's the picture Scripture lays out? Israel is defined by the Abrahamic Covenant where it is written they have a specific destiny in a land, with a seed and serving as a worldwide blessing. But to get there, the OT predicted they would have to go through a time of horror, the Messianic woes involving birth pangs, catastrophic judgments, the day of the Lord, the 70th week of Daniel; all these things are said to be for Israel for the purpose of purging Israel to belief in Her Messiah and those who receive Him will be taken into the kingdom.

On the other hand we have the Gentile nations and they're caught up in the time of horror. They face the birth pangs, they are judged in the day of the Lord, the survivors are taken to the sheep-goats judgment, and those who side with the rebel Jews by aiding and abetting them in that horrible time governed by the Antichrist will be taken into the kingdom to re-populate the Gentile nations. The goats who did not side with the rebel Jews but with Antichrist are slaughtered and cast into Sheol until the Great White Throne judgment.

The Church, things are very different for the Church. We are not destined for wrath, we are looking for the blessed hope when the Lord Jesus Christ descends and catches us up to Himself in the air and we return to the Father's house, go to the judgment seat of Christ, have the marriage of the Lamb and return to earth with Christ at the establishment of the kingdom.

Those are the three pictures of paths these groups take and they are very different pictures; all get into the kingdom, but the paths they take are distinct.

If you try to combine them into one people of God and make them all take the same path into the kingdom the problem is combining these three pictures I just presented into one. And that's a very hard thing to do, that requires you to spiritualize or stretch the text to make it fit. But if you just let the text speak and you keep these distinctions throughout you don't have to manipulate the text. You can just take the text at face value.

In the various stories of futurist eschatology, the big thing to look at is how each view solves the problem the NT presents; namely, that the Church is not appointed to wrath. 1 Thess 5:9, "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ," every position recognizes this; it's a clear NT teaching, not just here but 1 Thess 1:10 and elsewhere. So how does an eschatology keep the Church out of the wrath?

The post-tribulationist position has the Church going through all of the 70th Week of Daniel along with Israel because the Church is Israel. So obviously that distinction is broken down. The problem with that view is that if the Church goes through the 70th Week, then how is the Church kept from the wrath of God? They have to come up with some idea. One of their ideas is to compact all the wrath of God into that last 24 hour day when Christ comes to earth. That way we can be on earth during the entire 70th week except the last day, then on that day we are raptured off of the earth while the wrath comes on the earth, that way we're protected from the wrath, then we come right back down to earth having avoided the wrath of God. The problem then becomes, how do you say all the stuff leading up to that day is not the wrath of God. The pressure of that problem has led them to say it's something like how God protected the Jews in Egypt when the plagues were coming. The problem is that the Jews were protected from the plagues because the plagues didn't fall on their geographic area, they didn't fall on Goshen. But in the 70th week of Daniel the seals, trumpets and bowls are going to be coming on the whole earth, so how do you escape being in the wrath of God, especially when you see that there are martyrs in that period, there are those who refused to take the mark of the beast and they are executed, how are

they protected from the wrath? The NT says the church is protected from the wrath. So they have this incessant problem.

When we come to the pre-wrath rapture position, again we ask the same question. How do you make sense of the NT promise that the Church is not appointed to wrath? The answer given by the pre-wrath people is that the wrath of God only occupies the last $\frac{1}{4}$ of the 70th week. The problem is if that is so what do you do with all the judgments ahead of that time, all the other judgments? If they're not the wrath of God what are they? They argue they are the wrath of man because you see war, you see famine, you see death, it's all caused by man they say, so it's not God's wrath, it's man's wrath. The problem with that is if you go to the OT and look at the day of the Lord back there then you start seeing there's a pattern to the elements involved in the day of the Lord.

God revealed a day of the Lord coming for Israel. How did He conquer Israel in 721BC? By the Assyrian army. How did He conquer Judah in 586BC? By the Babylonian army. Was that the wrath of God? You bet it was. The prophets called it God's wrath in a day of the Lord. So the OT day of the Lord becomes a harbinger of the future day of the Lord. It involves both supernatural judgments of God as well as human instruments. God isn't limited to just using great spectacular means, He can use anything in His creation, whether man or nature, those are His instruments to use for His purposes. So you can't come along, pre-wrath and say, well, that's just the wrath of man because it says human armies, it says famine. That doesn't fit the pattern. But they have to resort to this gimmick that doesn't fit the pattern because they want the church in the 70th week of Daniel up to this point $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through.

They think they've found a key over in Rev 6:17. So turn there briefly again. In chapter 6 we have seal after seal being broken, six seals are broken in chapter 6 and look at the conclusion the unbelievers come to in verse 16, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" The pre-wrath say what they are saying is that the wrath of God is going to now come. It hasn't come yet, all that is the wrath of man but somehow they know at this point that the next thing coming is the wrath of God. Why do they have to say that? Because they have the church on earth

during all this, the rapture isn't until later, so they've got to put the wrath of God later, therefore Rev 6:17 is a prophecy of what's coming later. The problem with that is I don't know hardly any commentator that sees that aorist tense as predictive of what's coming. They all see it as their response to seals one through six. These people have just endured horrible judgment and suffering and their conclusion is that this is the wrath of God, there's no mistaking it. But if the Church is still there the pre-wrath people have to say this is not a statement about seals one through six but a statement of prophecy that the wrath of God is going to come. Otherwise the Church is in the wrath of God.

Here is another problem, connected to the one we just mentioned, who opened the seals? I mean, c'mon, everyone knows that Rev 5 is this great search for who is worthy to take the scroll and break the seals and only one is discovered, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb who was slain. He alone is worthy to take the scroll and to break its seals. So if the Lord Jesus Christ is the one breaking seal one, seal two, seal three, seal four, seal five, seal six, is it not the wrath of the Lamb in seal one, seal two, seal three, seal four, seal five? If it's not, how else do you explain that these things cannot occur on earth until He breaks the seals in heaven? It may involve human armies, but that's what we'd expect from the OT. It may involve famines, but that's what we would expect from the OT. So there's nothing new here, no surprises. The surprise, at least for John, is that after this universal search one is found who can break the seals. What qualifies Jesus to break the seals? The new song in Rev 5:9 says, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou was slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." In verse 13 you see the goal, "To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." There's this great cosmic anticipation that now the time has come for the Lamb to acquire His property. He purchased it at the cross, a title deed was drawn up showing He has the rights, but in His resurrection life He didn't acquire it right away, instead He ascended to heaven and stayed away for a long time and at this future point He's returning to acquire it. The scrolled document contains the eviction measures He takes to remove the usurpers; Satan and his minions along with autonomous man. So this is it, in 6:1 look at these, "Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, verse 2, "And I looked, and

behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow,” that’s a weapon but it doesn’t have an arrow, so it’s not a loaded weapon, “and a crown was given to him; and he went out conquering, and to conquer.” So we have a temporary peace but preparation for war. Verse 3 comes the war, “When He broke the second seal,” verse 4, “A red horse went out, and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another;” so we have war on the earth. The third seal, verse 5, “When He broke the third seal” and thus issues forth the famine. And so forth and so on. The point is who’s ultimately doing this? Who’s behind this? The one breaking the seals. As Charles Clough says, “All judgments during the 70th week, from the first seal to the last bowl, are expressions of the wrath of God unleashed by the Lord Jesus Christ acting as Judge.” That’s right, that’s exactly right. That being the case, we’ve got the wrath of God throughout the whole 70th week of Daniel, not just the last ¼ like the pre-wrath people say.

Another problem that’s created by this position is Matt 24:8. From their diagram the birth pangs or sorrows only last the first 3 ½ years. It’s true they start in the first 3 ½ years, notice verse 8, “But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. And if you notice what they are in vv 4, 5, 6 and 7 you’ll see they’re parallel to the seal judgments in Rev 6. We’re not doing that comparison today. Our point is that these are just the beginning, there’s more to come. The problem with the pre-wrath view is they stop the birth pangs after the first 3 ½ years. The problem is birth pangs don’t stop before the birth occurs. And the thing that is to be birthed into the world is the kingdom of God. But the kingdom isn’t going to be birthed until after the entire 70th week of Daniel is complete. So how do you have the birth pangs stopping 3 ½ years before the birth of the kingdom occurs? That does not fit the analogy with birth pangs. I never met a woman who had birth pangs, they stopped and five hours later she had a baby pop out pain free. No, the birth pangs intensify and intensify and intensify until the baby is born. Then and only then is there relief from pain. So their concept of the birth pangs lasting only 3 ½ years is too short, they must last the entire 70th week of Daniel.

This other period they’ve got here after the birth pains is the great tribulation and for that one come down to verse 15. “Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet,” When did Daniel say that would occur? Jesus is quoting Daniel

here. When did Daniel schedule the abomination of desolation? At the midpoint of the 70th week of Daniel, 3 ½ years into the week. So they have the starting point right. We agree there. But let's go on, verse 16, "then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. ¹⁷"Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. ¹⁸"Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. ¹⁹"But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰"But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. ²¹"For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will." Whatever this period is it is the only unparalleled period of destruction in the history of the world. Whatever happens in this period, there is nothing like it ever, unparalleled horror. And the funny thing is they've got it before the wrath of God even begins. Now how can that be? Because by definition, if the great tribulation is the worst period ever then the wrath of God which comes sequentially next, cannot be as bad as what they just faced. So that does not fit well, that is a serious problem. But they want to shorten the great tribulation down to just half of the second half. And here's how they do it, verse 22, "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short." They say that means the great tribulation was cut short from 3 ½ years to half of that. The problem is that we have the great tribulation period throughout the Scriptures identified as three and a half years. There are no other time periods in the 70th week of Daniel, there are only two divisions to this thing, not three. So that's a problem. What is the interpretation of verse 22, being "cut short"? What it apparently refers to is that when God set up the 3 ½ years of great tribulation he was cutting it short then, He could have set the period longer, but He from the beginning cut it short to 3 ½ years for the very purpose that had He not done that no one of the entire human race would survive. So God limited it to 3 ½ years, that's the shortening. It's not going to be 3 ½ years and one more day. It's going to be exactly 3 ½ years.

So for those several reasons we gave, this view became popular when it first came out, but after people who really study the Bible have given it some thought they've said this won't work. And now there are a number of critiques of this out there you can read that will give you more than I'm giving you. Renald Showers has one, Arnold Fruchtenbaum has one, there are others. It just doesn't fit. What it does in the long run is create more problems that can't be solved.

So, in conclusion of the pre-wrath view, while they correctly separate the rapture from the return they arbitrarily allocate the wrath of God to the last $\frac{1}{4}$ of the 70th week to keep the church out of the wrath of God, they divide the 70th week into three compartments rather than two, they say the breaking of the seals is not indicative of the wrath of God, and worst of all they bring the church into the 70th week of Daniel and thus destroy imminency, the rapture cannot occur at any moment in the pre-wrath view because the seal judgments must come first, therefore becoming signs of the approaching rapture.

So we are now going to begin mid-tribulationism. We talked about post-tribulationism. Post-tribulationism says rapture and return are right at the end together; post means after so that's why the rapture is at the end. Then we have pre-wrath and they say the rapture is separate from the return, but they're only separated by $\frac{1}{4}$ of the 70th Week. Mid-tribulationism is diagrammed like this, they also say the rapture and return are separate but they only separate them by $\frac{1}{2}$ of the 70th week. In their view the wrath of God begins at the mid-point, which is when the rapture occurs, thus the name, mid-tribulationism. So the Church is present on earth during the first $\frac{1}{2}$ of the 70th week. Here's Dwight Pentecost stating the position, "According to this interpretation the church will be raptured at the end of the first three and one-half years of the seventieth week of Daniel. The church will endure the events of the first half of the tribulation which, according to the mid-tribulation rapturist, are not manifestations of divine wrath, but will be translated before the last half of the week begins, which, according to this theory, contains all the outpouring of the wrath of God." So again, what's the issue? It's always the issue. When does the wrath of God begin? Because whenever that begins everyone agrees the Church has to be removed before that. Everybody is pre-wrath in that sense, the post-trib people are pre-wrath, some of them re-define the wrath of God to be just the day when Christ comes, that way we can be jerked off the earth just before while the wrath of God is spilled out on the earth and then we come right back down, other times they resort to protective mechanisms to keep the church safe from the wrath. The pre-wrath people are obviously pre-wrath, they named their whole position after it, I don't know if they realized it or not at the time but everybody else is pre-wrath too, so that title is not too helpful; their idea is to re-define the wrath of God so it's isolated to the last $\frac{1}{4}$ of the 70th week of

Daniel. The way they do that is to say that everything up to that point, the first $\frac{3}{4}$'s of the 70th week are the wrath of man, they're convulsions in nature. So that's their attempt to keep the Church out of the period of wrath, just lump it all down near the end and place the rapture right before that. We've talked about that. Now we come to mid-tribulationism and guess what. Surprise, they're pre-wrath too. Well, when do you predict they say the wrath of God starts? If they're mid-tribulationist then they have to confine the wrath of God to the last $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of Daniel's 70th week and that's indeed what they do. They define the last half as the period of the wrath of God. And that they say is the great tribulation. So they're better here than some of the others, at least they recognize that the entire last half of Daniel's 70th week is the great tribulation, the pre-wrath people shortened it. But every one is pre-wrath; it's just a matter of when you start the wrath. Mid-tribulationism must argue that everything prior to the mid-point of Daniel's 70th week is not the wrath of God.

Watch this because this is the key to mid-tribulationism. Dr Pentecost says, quote, "The rapture is said to occur in connection with the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the catching up of the two witnesses in Revelation 11." A few weeks ago the trumpets came up when we were talking post-tribulationism. Here they come again. They come up in connection with both the mid-trib and the post-trib position. So we'll deal with them. What's interesting is there are a lot of trumpets in Scripture. So you have to be careful when you start trying to link them in a big chain of references. The trumpet linkages in 1 Cor 15 and Rev 11 are fundamental to mid-tribulationism.

Associated with this linkage one must make other assertions, namely, that there is no wrath of God prior to the seventh trumpet and second, that the seventh trumpet sounds at the midpoint of Daniel's 70th week. So mid-tribulationism has to prove these points to prove its position. First, it's got to prove an identity between the last trumpet of 1 Cor 15:52 and the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15 along with the catching up of the two witnesses. Second, it's got to prove that no wrath of God occurs until the seventh trumpet sounds which is at the mid-point. No wrath of God up until the seventh trumpet. Those are the two things we want to spend our time on.

First things first, turn to 1 Cor 15:52. In this passage, and there's no debate, this passage is referring to the rapture, everybody agrees to that. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed." By the way, the "twinkling of an eye," isn't that pretty fast. How fast do you blink your eyes? It's less than a second; time it on your watch. A second is a long time comparatively speaking; you can blink your eye faster than that, you can blink your eye several times a second. So what that tells you is that the rapture is going to happen in less than a second. Talk about fast, some people are literally going to miss it, they'll blink their eye and when the eye is back open people will be gone, maybe they were standing there talking to a believer and then they're just gone and it's not a magic trick, it's the translation of all living believers from the face of the earth and we all go up and meet the Lord in the air, all within a blink of an eye, all the church is going to be gathered for the first time in history; Peter, Paul, Tertullian, Augustine, Calvin, Wesley, you, me, we'll all be there, millions and millions of people assembled suddenly. So that's one of the most famous events in all of history.

The key feature, however, that mid-tribulation points us to is the last trumpet. Notice where it says "the last trumpet" in verse 52. Then they take you to 1 Thess 4:16, another rapture passage that speaks of a trumpet. 1 Thess. 4:16, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first." Whatever this trump is, it signals something. Whether unbelievers hear this or not, we don't know, but there's this trumpet that signals the resurrection of the dead in Christ. So a trumpet in 1 Cor 15:52 and 1 Thess 4:16.

Then they take you to Rev 11:15 for a third trumpet. What mid-tribulationism tries to do is identify "the last trumpet" in 1 Cor 15:52 with "the trump of God" in 1 Thess 4:16 with the "seventh" trumpet in Revelation 11:15 which, according to their chronology, occurs at the mid point. So you have the seven seals, you have the six trumpets, there's no wrath of God in there, then the two witnesses are caught up, and that's indicative of the rapture they say, in conjunction with their catching up the seventh angel sounds the seventh trumpet at the mid-point. So they say, see, the seventh trumpet is the last trumpet so these passages are all referring to the same

trumpet. How could you put the rapture anywhere else? It's so obvious. Notice verse 15, "Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." ¹⁶And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷saying, "We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign." So that's their linkage. All three trumps are the same and all three occur at the mid-point.

Along with this they've got to have a rapture in here somewhere. Somewhere close to the seventh trumpet they've got to have the Church raptured. So guess what they latch on to? The two witnesses. They argue that these two guys represent the two groups that go in the rapture. Who are the two groups in the rapture? The dead in Christ and the living in Christ. One witness represents each. So let's scan back up to verse 3 so we get their whole argument in view, both the seventh trumpet linkage to the last trumpet along with the two witnesses as representatives of the rapture, then we'll come back and analyze the argument. If you look at Rev 11:3 there are two witnesses that are given a lot of authority, they're prophets, they prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, that's all in the first half when there's no wrath. Verse 5, notice, these guys are powerful. "And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. ⁶These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying;" who else did that in the OT? Elijah. That's why people think one of the two witnesses is Elijah. The other one they say, look at what else they can do, "and they have power over waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague," so who did those things in the OT? Moses. So that's how people get Moses and Elijah as the two witnesses. It's a similarity of miracles argument. The mid-trib people press on to verse 7, "And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. ⁸And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified," obviously the city of Jerusalem. Verse 9, "And those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three days and a half, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. ¹⁰And those who

dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.” Yeah, we’ve killed those two guys, they wouldn’t shut up about God’s judgment, they kept disrupting the weather patterns so they’re out of the way now, let’s celebrate Christmas. Verse 11, here’s the important part for the mid-trib people, “And after three days and a half the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were beholding them. 12And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, ‘Come up here.’ And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them.” There is the rapture for this view, it’s a representative rapture, these two men represent the church they say and it happens in conjunction with the seventh trumpet because the seventh trumpet is about to sound in verse 15, so they put all this together and say this is the rapture of the Church.

Now let’s analyze. The first problem we point out with relating these trumpets is that the trumpet that calls the Church home in 1 Cor 15:52 is called what? The “trump of God.” But the trumpet blown in Rev 11:15 is the trump of who? An angel. And you can’t equate the trumpet blown by God Himself with the last trumpet in a series of trumpets blown by angels. So the person accredited with blowing the trumpets in each case is different. In one case its God’s trumpet, in another case it’s an angelic trumpet.

A second problem deals with the duration of the trumpet sounds. We already know the last trump in 1 Cor 15:52 happens how fast? “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” so the sounding of this trumpet is very rapid, it sounds and boom, resurrection of the dead and the living. But if you look closely at Rev 10:7, this is a preparatory remark about the sounding of the seventh angel. Before it actually sounds there’s a statement that indicates the duration of its sounding. One of the big debates over the seals, trumpets and bowls in Revelation is whether these overlap, are the trumpets just repeating the seals because there are similarities. So some people say the bowls recapitulate the trumpets which recapitulate the seals. Other people hold different ideas on how and when they unfold. The best take on this is to picture a telescope, one of the seaman telescopes you see on the older movies that collapses. And if you can envision it extending one time, extending a second time until it’s fully extended. As you extend it, each time you unveil another section that was hidden before. Now transfer that idea over to the

seals, trumpets and bowls. You start with the seals and that's all you can see, they unfold, boom, boom, boom, six seals, when the seventh seal is broken the trumpets appear, they were within the seventh seal, so just as a telescope expands now the seventh seal expands and seven trumpets are unveiled. Then they begin to sound, trumpet one, trumpet two, trumpet three all the way to the seventh trumpet and when it sounds actually there's no judgment on the earth that happens at that time, there are some events that happen in heaven, but nothing specific on earth is mentioned until you get to the seven bowls. The reason is because the seventh trumpet is the seven bowls. So this is another telescopic expansion. Just as the seventh seal is all seven trumpets so the seventh trumpet is all seven bowls. So the sounding of the seventh trumpet is the duration of the seven bowls. Notice verse 6, the angel "swore by Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT, that there will be delay no longer," so this is it. What's it? Verse 7, "but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished..." Notice in verse 7, does he just give a little toot on the horn or is this a long blast? It's a long blast. "In the *days* of the voice" or sound, "In the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished," so right as the seventh angel is about to sound, then that's it, it's over, right as he's about to blow, because what comes out is the finality of the wrath of God. So it's a long blast when this angel sounds, it's going to sound for the entirety of the seven bowls, all the way to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. That's why it can be said when the seventh angel is about to sound the wrath of God is finished. It's done. There's nothing more to accomplish because it's all encased in this seventh trumpet, the bowls are all within the seventh trumpet. And that's why in chapter 11:15, this verse may have thrown you before but this makes perfect sense. Immediately after the angel sounds in verse 15 what do you read comes? "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and He will reign forever and ever." The kingdom. Why is this picture of the kingdom put here? Because the seventh trumpet will sound until the kingdom has arrived. It's a durative blast over and against the blast of 1 Cor 15:52 which is "in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye." The two blasts can't be the same, they sound for different durations. So again, the seventh trumpet is not the last trumpet of 1 Cor 15. They are blown for different durations. And you can't just overlook these details in the text, these are very important details and when you get into them these

arguments looks shallow. They're just frankly, very naïve exegesis, it's not careful, it's not interested in a close analysis of the text.

Now there's one more trumpet that mid-tribulationists have a problem with that we want to point out and this one is Matt 24:31. Most mid-tribulationist's don't like this trumpet too much because this one obviously does not occur at the mid-point of the Tribulation but at the end. So post-tribulationists are more fond of this one. Notice Matt 24:15 for context, Jesus says, "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet," what did Daniel say about the abomination of desolation? When did he say it would occur? In the middle of the week, so 3 ½ years right? This is the mid-point. What occurs at the mid-point? A trumpet blast? No, the abomination of desolation. What's Israel supposed to do when they see this? Run, don't turn back, just run because this is verse 21 stuff, the great tribulation has come, God's supernatural judgments, Antichrist is trying to exterminate the Jews, this goes on for 3 ½ more years, then look at verse 29, "But immediately after the tribulation of those days," when? After the great tribulation, so this can't be the mid-point, the nearest antecedent to tribulation here is the great tribulation of verse 21, so this is after that. The thing that triggered the great tribulation was the abomination of desolation, that is the mid-point, but after the last 3 ½ years then what does it say? "THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰"And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory." The Return of Christ. Verse 31, notice the first action He takes, ³¹"And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds..." So there's another trumpet and it's clearly not at the mid-point, it's 3 ½ years after the mid-point. In conclusion, it is clear that the last trumpet of 1 Cor 15 is not the seventh trumpet of Rev 11. Further, the two witnesses as representative of the two groups that are raptured is an allegorical interpretation. Both witnesses are killed and personally resurrected and taken to heaven. There is no mention of the Church. If they represent anyone they represent Israel since they do miracles like the prophets of old.

The second assertion they've got to make is that no wrath of God occurs before the seventh trumpet. And haven't we already shown that before in Rev 6:17 when we dealt with the pre-wrath view. Look at it one more time. Mid-tribulationists are arguing that no wrath of God prior to Rev 11:18. If that's the case what do you do with Rev 6:17? This is the sixth seal, long before the seventh trumpet, part of verse 16, "from the wrath of the Lamb; 17for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" That's an aorist tense, it's already come, you can't delay this tense to the future when the seventh trumpet sounds. So you've got this statement at the sixth seal and yet look at what Harrison writes, Harrison was the lead proponent of this view. Harrison says, "...the common mistake of speaking of the Tribulation as a seven-year period. The Bible never so refers to it, rather, it begins in the middle of the seven. It is the latter three and a half years...The first half of the week, or period of seven years, was a 'sweet' anticipation to John..." It is hard to imagine that anyone facing the seal and trumpet judgments will think them to be "sweet." But that's what mid-tribulationism is forced to assert.

Alright, so much for mid-tribulationism. We've looked at three of the four futurist views; pre-wrath and mid-tribulationism correctly distinguish the Rapture from the Return so they're right there, they are precise making that distinction, "but continue, like post-tribulationism, to include the Church inside the 70th week of Daniel. Once this inclusion occurs, however, the Church is confused with Israel and protection from the wrath of God arises as a problem. All three of these views seek to redefine "wrath" so as to keep it from occurring during the first half of the 70th week when the Church is present. In the light of OT revelation of 70th week, these attempted redefinitions of God's wrath fail. The OT makes clear through its discussion of the birth pangs that Jesus adopted in Matthew 24:8 to refer to the entire 70th Week of Daniel, the entire 70th week is a period of God's wrath. Moreover, its purpose is directed to Israel (to produce repentance toward the coming Messiah Jesus) and to the Gentile nations (to divide them on the basis of their response to God's work in Israel), not to the Church." So next time we'll take up the last position which is the pre-tribulation position.

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