

PRE-TRIB PROOF FROM JOHN'S APOCALYSE

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Introduction

Three Common Arguments from Revelation for the Pre-Trib Rapture Are Not Game-Changers

1. Rev 4–19 is silent about the Church on earth. This is an argument from silence, so the mid-, ¾-, and post-trib people insert the rapture where their systems would like it. Though I agree that the silence of Rev 4–19 derives from the pre-trib rapture, it does not change the game.
2. Rev 4:1 hints at the rapture being at that point. Absolutely right, but the only people persuaded that it relates to the rapture are pre-trib already, so it does not change the game.
3. Rev 3:10 is often seen as a rapture passage, but it is not.
 - A. Defining you in 3:10 with the Hermeneutical Hand.
 - B. Grammatical statistics favor repunctuating the verse. Imagine a document written all in caps w/o punctuation (like early Gk NT manuscripts) read:

HE ATE BREAKFAST BECAUSE HE WAS HUNGRY HE ALSO ATE LUNCH EARLY

Which of the following punctuations/capitalizations is *normal* English grammar?

1. He ate breakfast. Because he was hungry, he also ate an early lunch.
2. He ate breakfast, because he was hungry. He also ate an early lunch.

Both English and Greek dislike starting sentences with *because* (*hoti*).
Less than 12 NT sentences start w/ *because* (*hoti*); ≈400 put it in 2nd clause.
Statistics do not prove the case, but suggest taking a closer look.

3:8-10 says: Vindication because of faithfulness, unconditional deliverance:

- (1) **I know** your works...you have kept My word...
- (2) **I have given** you an open door...
- (3) **I am making** those of Satan's synagogue...
- (4) **I will make** them worship...and know that I have loved you,
because you have kept the word of My perseverance.
- (5) **And I** [*kagō = kai + egō*] **will keep** you from the hour...

- C. This makes sense of the *and* [*kagō*] and the repeated "you have kept My word."
- D. The special love God has for those who keep Jesus' word is also found in John 14:23.

Rev 5:9-14: The antiphonal *New Song* sung just before Jesus opens the first seal (6:1)

Psalm 136 is an another antiphonal song:

For His mercy *endures* forever.

¹ Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good! For His mercy *endures* forever.

² Oh, give thanks to the God of gods! For His mercy *endures* forever.

³ Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords! For His mercy *endures* forever:

⁴ To Him who alone does great wonders, For His mercy *endures* forever;

⁵ To Him who by wisdom made the heavens, For His mercy *endures* forever...

Textual Issue in 5:9:

5:9b. A translation of the *Majority Text* appears first, then a rendering of N-A/UBS). The difference is that the *Majority Text* includes the word *hēmas* (*us*), while N-A/UBS do not. One could supply men or people in italics within the blank space (as did the NASB).

“For You were slain and redeemed us to God by Your blood from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.” [Rendering of the *MajT*]

“For You were slain and redeemed _____ to God by Your blood from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” [Rendering of N-A]

A solitary Greek manuscript (Alexandrinus) omits the word *hēmas* (*us*). Despite such slender evidence, Nestle-Aland²⁸ and UBS⁵ follow Alexandrinus. The rest of the Alexandrian family includes *hēmas* (*us*), as does the *Majority Text*. Additionally, strong evidence exists for Alexandrinus to have committed a scribal error here. The first part of the verse is at the bottom of one column, the rest is at the top of the next one:

The last line of column 1 reads:

OTIESPHAGĒSKAIĒGORASASTŌTHEŌ
For You were slain and redeemed to God

HĒMAS
us Omitted between
columns!

The first line of column 2 reads:

ENTŌAIMATISOUKPAŚĒSPHUL[ĒSKAI]
by Your blood from every tribe [and]

The exact place where *HĒMAS* (*us*) should appear is right where the scribe made his column-break. He dipped his pen, changed columns, and omitted a word.

Although the Nestle-Aland and UBS texts agree with Alexandrinus (by omitting *hēmas*), some other pro-Alexandrian editors include *hēmas*: von Soden, Vogels, Bover, while Merk includes it within brackets.

Implication of 5:9:

This is a new song, specifically composed for this occasion. The singers of 5:9 are human, not angelic. They sing, “You have redeemed us from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.” The singers are the twenty-four elders. The elders are human.

Textual Issues in 5:10:

3

The *Textus Receptus* errs in 5:10. In this verse the Majority Text and N-A/UBS agree with each other. The King James Version and the New King James Version follow the *Textus Receptus* in substituting *us* and *we* for *them* and *they*. Most other translations get 5:10 right. Translations of the *Majority Text/N-A/UBS* and the *Textus Receptus* follow:

“And You have made them kings and priests to our God and they will reign upon the earth.” [from the *Majority Text/N-A/UBS*]

“And You have made us kings and priests to our God and we will reign upon the earth.” [from the *Textus Receptus*]

Implication of 5:10:

The singers do not claim to be kings and priests. Rather, they identify others (the elders) as kings and priests, who will reign. Rev 4:4 depicts the elders seated on thrones.

It is important to remember that 5:9-14 is antiphonal. Rev 5:8 identifies the singers of 5:9-10 as the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. The elders (humans) sang in 5:9, saying that they themselves were redeemed from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. The four living creatures (angelic beings) sang verse 10 in this antiphonal arrangement.

Further Proof that 5:9-14 Is Antiphonal

5:8 identifies singers for 5:9 and for 5:10: 24 elders and 4 living creatures.

5:11 identifies singers for 5:12: living creatures, elders, myriads of angels.

5:13a identifies singers for 5:13b: Every creature.

5:14a identifies the four living creatures for its words,

5:14b identifies the elders as giving [vocal?] worship.

The size of the choir keeps changing, so switching between the elders and the living creatures in 5:9-10 is not unexpected.

Theological implications of 5:9-10

The twenty-four elders will be humans who will have been appointed kings (over twenty-four nations). Rev 5:9-10 precedes the opening of the first seal (6:1), which starts the tribulation. For the elders to have been appointed kings requires that the *Bēma* had already occurred. Prior to the *Bēma*, of course, the rapture necessarily would have occurred. An interval will occur between the rapture and the start of the tribulation. The *Bēma* will occur then. Revelation 5:9-10, properly understood, is a clear proof of the pre-trib rapture.

A (New) Reinforcing Argument

The foregoing arguments are ones that I have made since 2004. However, recently, I have concluded that Rev 3:21a and 4:4 are parallel passages. Why is this important? Rev 3:21a speaks of Christ granting to overcomers to be seated on thrones. The elders of Rev 4:4 are the same ones that Jesus Christ made into kings and priests who will reign on earth (Rev 5:10). The linkage between Rev 3:21a; 4:4; and 5:10 creates a powerful validation of the foregoing arguments.

"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

At first glance (and in the common understanding of Rev 3:21) Jesus' throne may seem to be a bench-seat, upon which not only Jesus, but also overcomers would sit. Likewise, the common assumption is that the Father's throne is also a bench seat, occupied by both the Father and Jesus. This is the only NT passage in which co-rulers might be seen to sit on the actual throne (bench seat?) that Jesus will occupy. All other co-rulership passages, including Rev 4:4 (five verses after 3:21) distinguish Jesus' throne from the throne of any of His vassal-kings. Rev 3:21 does not actually require a bench seat.

The phrases in question read:

...*kathisai* [1] *met' emou* [2] *en tō thronō mou...*
 ...to sit [1] with Me [2] on the throne of Me...

...*ekathisa* [1] *meta tou Patros mou* [2] *en tō thronō autou...*
 ...I sat [1] with the Father of Me [2] on the throne of Him...

They do not transpose the prepositional phrases (as below):

...*kathisai* [2] *en tō thronō mou* [1] *met' emou...*
 ...to sit [2] on the throne of Me [1] with Me...

...*ekathisa* [2] *en tō thronō autou* [1] *meta tou Patros mou...*
 ...I sat [2] on the throne of Him [1] with the Father of Me...

Why is this important? *With (meta) someone* is less specific about location than *on (en) the throne of someone*. If the passage transposed the prepositional phrases, the thrones would be bench seats. However, in the text as it stands, kings could be *with (meta) Jesus*, but seated on their own individual thrones. In other words, 3:21 does not require these thrones to be bench seats.

Consider, Luke 22:29f, which seems to underlie Rev 3:21:

"And I bestow upon you [the Eleven] a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed *one* upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table [akin to *with Me*] in My kingdom, and sit on thrones [plural] judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

My understanding of Rev 3:21 is that 3:21a parallels 4:4:

"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me [as I sit] on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father [as He sits] on His throne." (3:21)

"Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads." (4:4)

CONCLUSION

Rev 3:21 speaks of overcomers being enthroned as a result of the Bēma. Rev 4:4 sees enthroned elders, described by Rev 5:10 as "kings and priests to our God." Rev 5:9-10 places the Bēma prior to the start of the tribulation. Necessarily, the rapture precedes the Bēma, so this is the proof within the pages of Revelation of a pre-trib rapture. The silence of Rev 4–19 about the Church on earth and Rev 4:1's hint at the pre-trib rapture take on significance via Rev 5:9-10, our go-to passage in Revelation on the rapture.