

Postscript on Pre/Post-Tribulation

by Anthony Buzzard

The following contains a fascinating statement by the author of a recognized classic on the rapture question. The book is *The Approaching Advent of Christ* by Alexander Reese (Grand Rapids International Publications).

Reese was for many years a Presbyterian missionary in Brazil, and an ardent premillennialist. After 20 years of intensive study of prophetic theories and writings, he set out to refute the pre-tribulation views he had held and propagated from his youth. He remained a premillennialist and futurist but abandoned the pre-tribulation rapture theory.

The statements which struck me as interesting were: "I thought I was accepting truths as well established in Scripture as the main fact of Christ's return." "My mortification was greater when I learned that our professor had, earlier in life, held to the pre-trib. theories, but after careful study, had subsequently abandoned them as unscriptural." "I began to search the Scriptures afresh." "A thorough study of the Scriptures in regard to the resurrection soon showed me that the pre-tribulation position of a resurrection 7 years or more before the conversion of Israel, the destruction of Antichrist, and the inauguration of the Kingdom, was nowhere taught in Scripture." "Premillennialism never had a greater millstone round its neck than the...scheme" (pre-tribism). "The interests of Truth demand that, where we see a wrong doctrine held, it should be refuted and replaced by the true one."

Since the Church is to be the "ground and pillar of Truth," it seems clear that mistakes in our belief and teaching systems are doing us no good. An easy-going tolerance of mistakes in our own lives and in the corporate life of the church will harm us all. It can only be advantageous, therefore, for each of us to make certain that we are standing up for the Truth of all that Jesus taught. It is fatally easy for us to teach against mistakes we find in other churches, and to bypass issues within our own church.

The pre/post-tribulation problem can, I believe, be settled by careful examination of the evidence. Reese's book can be a most useful tool in this process.

Another interesting commentary on the rapture question comes from a leading London preacher of the 1940s-1960s (Campbell Morgan). As an evangelical he had been taught to believe in a double second coming, once for the church and then with the church, but later examination of the theory changed his mind. A letter published in *Christianity Today* (Aug. 31st, 1959) tells the story:

"During a Boston pastorate, I was privileged to attend a course of lectures given by Dr. Morgan at Gordon College. At the end of one session, I ventured to ask him, 'After your long study and extensive exposition of the Bible, Dr. Morgan, do you find any warrant for the distinction which many Bible teachers draw between the second coming of the Lord for his own (the Rapture) and the coming of the Lord with His own (the Revelation) with a time period of 3 1/2 or 7 years between these two events?'

"'Emphatically not!' Dr. Morgan replied. 'I know that view very well, for in the earlier years of my ministry I taught it and incorporated it in one of my books entitled *God's Method with Man*. But further study so convinced me of the error of this teaching that I actually went to the expense of buying the plates

of that book from my own publisher and destroying them. The idea of a separate and secret coming of Christ to remove the church prior to his coming in power and glory is a vagary of prophetic interpretation without any Biblical basis whatever.””

Should this verdict turn out to be true, it will be appreciated that the church has fallen into a trap. The presence of unbiblical doctrine in our midst will not promote growth or attract the blessing of God which we all desire.

[Return to Articles](#)

[Return to Home Page](#)