

Does Revelation 5:9 &10 Support a Pre-Tribulation Rapture?- S.M. Platt

Revelation 5:8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

At first glance, Revelation 5:9 &10 would seem to suggest that The “us” referred to is limited to the 24 elders, who were redeemed “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;” since they are the ones singing this new song. We are told that they are wearing crowns and white raiment and were purchased by the blood of the lamb, which would mean they were men who were redeemed by Christ. This might give some weight to the argument that the 24 elders represent the church, affirming the Pre-tribulation rapture position.

However, if we continue reading, the context sheds more light.

Revelation 5:11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

John was not the only witness to this great display of worship. We see that there were also angels responding to the singing of the song, as well as “every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea,” whose voices were heard saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. How would these believers still be on the earth to proclaim such things if the Church was gone pre-tribulationally? If the twenty four elders WERE the Church already in heaven?

This song was being proclaimed to the whole world and all of creation. Angels, men and every creature, in heaven and on earth were responding to it in praise and worship of the lamb.

***It is worth mentioning that there will come a time when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is indeed Lord, but that is not at the beginning of the 70th week.**

Imagine the four and twenty elders as rulers before their people, proclaiming the great and wonderful blessings bestowed upon them all. They are singing their song, proclaiming to a vast audience of all of creation that “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And

hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” And all of creation responds, amen and halleluiah!

When the elders proclaim that God has redeemed “us” and made “us” priests and kings, it is not only themselves they are referring to but all believers who are in attendance on earth as well.

These cannot even be the so called “left behind” tribulation saints because this is prior to the seals being opened, which begins the 70th week, so the tribulation has not begun for them. If they were believers prior to the 70th week, they would be part of the Church and be where the church is. Obviously believers are on the earth at this time, unless of course this is a future event in which case the Pre-trib. rapture is again not supported.

The bible simply is not clear who the twenty four elders are here, so obviously we cannot base our beliefs or form doctrine on this passage of scripture. To claim a Pre-trib. rapture based on unclear symbolism such as this would not be sound exegesis.

The most literal interpretation would suggest an actual 24 men. There is no clear teaching in the bible that would link the number twenty four to ruling or thrones, but we know that the number twelve does have great significance in more than one way. It would be more logical to deduce two groups of twelve people each than to apply the number twenty four to the church with no basis (other than the demands of a pre-trib. rapture) It is also worth noting that the bible is very precise in the number of beasts (4), and angels (ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands), and yet when it refers to the church it is only represented by a random number-24 elders?

So, who are the 24 elders? I don’t think it’s a coincidence that there were 12 tribes and twelve apostles, or even 12 foundations (representing the twelve tribes) in the new Jerusalem. It would make more sense to suggest that they are the 12 patriarchs and twelve apostles.

Revelation 21:12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, (his 12 disciples) Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Or if we insist on rejecting the significance of the number 24, the twenty four elders could even possibly represent the Old Testament saints already in Heaven. Any way you look at it, there is no proof for the Pre-trib. claim that this can only be the raptured Church.