

4. John 14:1-3 Parallels I Thessalonians 4:13-18

John 14:1-3 refers to Christ's coming again. It is not a promise to all believers that they shall go to Him at death. It does refer to the rapture of the church. Note the close parallel between the promises of John 14:1-3 and I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

1. The promise of a presence with Christ: "... *that where I am, there you may be also*" (John 14:3) and "... *thus we shall always be with the Lord*" (I Thessalonians 4:17).
2. The promise of comfort: "*Let not your heart be troubled ...*" (John 14:1) and "*Therefore comfort one another with these words*" (I Thessalonians 4:18). Jesus instructed the disciples that He was going to His Father's house (heaven) to prepare a place for them. He promised them that He would return and receive them so that they could be with Him wherever He was.

The phrase "wherever I am," while implying continued presence in general, here means presence in heaven in particular. The Lord told the Pharisees in John 7:34, "*Where I am you cannot come.*" He was not talking about His then-present abode on earth but rather His resurrected presence at the right hand of the Father.

In John 14:3 "*where I am*" must mean "in heaven" or the intent of 14:1-3 would be wasted and worthless. A post-tribulational rapture demands that the saints meet Christ in the air and immediately descend to earth without experiencing what the Lord promised in John 14. Since John 14 refers to the rapture, only a pre-tribulational rapture satisfies the language of John 14:1-3 and allows raptured saints to dwell for a meaningful time with Christ in His Father's house.

5. The Nature of Events at Christ's Post-tribulational Coming Differs from That of the Rapture

If one compares what happens at the rapture (John 14:1-4; I Corinthians 15:51-58; I Thessalonians 4:13-18) and the Second Coming (Zechariah 14:1-21; Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-27; Revelation 19) they describe two very different scenarios. We can find at least eighteen significant contrasts or differences. These differences demand that the rapture occur at a time significantly different from that of the final event of Christ's second coming.

1. Rapture - Christ comes in the air and returns to heaven (I Thessalonians 4:17)
Second Coming - Christ comes to the earth to dwell and reign (Matthew 25:31-32).
2. Rapture - Christ gathers His own (I Thessalonians 4:16-17)
Second Coming - angels gather the elect (Matthew 24:31)
3. Rapture - Christ comes to reward (I Thessalonians 4:17)
Second Coming - Christ comes to judge (Matthew 25:31-46)
4. Rapture - resurrection is prominent (I Thessalonians 4:15-16)
Second Coming - resurrection is not mentioned
5. Rapture - believers depart the earth (I Thessalonians 4:15-17)
Second Coming - unbelievers are taken away from the earth (Matthew 24:37-41)

6. Rapture - unbelievers remain on earth
Second Coming - believers remain on earth (Matthew 25:34)
7. Rapture - no mention of establishing Christ's Kingdom on earth
Second Coming - Christ comes to set up His Kingdom on earth (Matthew 25:31, 34)
8. Rapture - believers will receive glorified bodies (I Corinthians 15:51-57)
Second Coming - living believers remain in same bodies
9. Rapture – believers meet Christ in the air (I Thessalonians 4:7)
Second Coming – Christ returns to the Mount of Olives to meet the believers on earth (Zechariah 14:4)
10. Rapture – Mount of Olives is unchanged
Second Coming - Mount of Olives is divided, forming a valley east of Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:4)
11. Rapture – believers go to heaven
12. Second Coming – glorified believers come from heaven, earthly believers stay on earth
13. Rapture – world left unjudged and living in sin
Second Coming – world is judged and righteousness is established
14. Rapture – depicts deliverance of the Church from wrath
Second Coming – depicts deliverance of believers who endured wrath
15. Rapture – no signs precede it
Second Coming – many signs precede it
16. Rapture – revealed only in New Testament
Second Coming – revealed in both Old and New Testaments
17. Rapture – deals with only the saved
Second Coming – deals with both the saved and unsaved
18. Rapture – Satan remains free
Second Coming – Satan is bound and thrown into the Abyss

Additionally, several of Christ's parables in Matthew 13 confirm differences between the rapture and the final event of Christ's second coming.

1. **ADDITIONAL NOTES (NOT FOR CLASS)** In the parable of the wheat and tares, the tares (unbelievers) are taken out from among the wheat (believers) at the climax of the second coming (Matthew 13:30, 40), but believers are removed from among unbelievers at the rapture (I Thessalonians 4:15-17).
2. **ADDITIONAL NOTES (NOT FOR CLASS)** In the parable of the dragnet, the bad fish (unbelievers) are taken out from among the good fish (believers) at the culmination of Christ's second coming (Matthew 13:48-50), but believers are removed from among unbelievers at the rapture (I Thessalonians 4:15-17).
3. **ADDITIONAL NOTES (NOT FOR CLASS)** The rapture is unmentioned in either of the most detailed second coming texts (Matthew 24 and Revelation 19). This is to be expected in light of the observations above, because the pretribulation al rapture will have occurred seven years earlier.

Since the Rapture and Second Coming clearly are different events that do not occur at the same time, this would rule out a Post-Tribulation Rapture scenario.

6. Revelation 3:10 Promises That the Church Will Be Removed Prior to Daniel's 70th Week

The issue here is whether the phrase *"keep you from the hour of testing"* means "a continuing safe state outside of" or "safe emergence from within."

ADDITIONAL NOTES (NOT FOR CLASS) The Meaning of ἐκ (ek)

The Greek preposition ἐκ (ek) has the basic idea of emergence, but this is not true in every context. Two notable exceptions to the basic idea are II Corinthians 1:10 and I Thessalonians 1:10. In the Corinthian passage, Paul rehearses his rescue from death by God. Now Paul did not emerge from a state of death but rather was rescued from that potential danger.

Even more convincing is I Thessalonians 1:10. Here Paul states that Jesus is rescuing believers out of the wrath to come. The idea is not emergence out of (through) wrath, but rather protection from entrance into wrath.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (NOT FOR CLASS) Therefore, ἐκ (ek) can be understood to mean either "a continuing state outside of" or "emergence from within." Thus, no rapture position can be dogmatic at this point. At best, all positions remain possible.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (NOT FOR CLASS) The Meaning of τέρω ἐκ (tereo ek)

It has been argued that if John had meant "to keep from," he would have used τέρω ἀπο (tereo apo) (James 1:27). But it is more than equally true that if John had meant "protection within," he would have used τέρω (tereo) with ἐν (en), εἰς (eis), or διὰ (dia). The greater burden of proof lies with the mid- and post-tribulational positions since their solution of immunity within does not explain the use of ἐκ (ek).

1. ἐκ (ek) is much closer to apo in meaning than it is to ἐν (en), εἰς (eis), or διὰ (dia). The two frequently overlap, and in modern Greek ἀπο (apo) is absorbing ἐκ (ek). When combined with τέρω (tereo) ἐκ (ek) much more closely approximates ἀπο (apo) than it does ἐν (en), εἰς (eis) or διὰ (dia).
2. The phrase τέρω ἐν (tereo en) is used three times in the NT (Acts 12:5; I Peter 1:4; Jude 21). In each instance, it implies previous existence within with a view to continuation within. Now, if τέρω ἐν (tereo en) means continued existence within, what does τέρω ἐκ (tereo ek) mean? Since they are anything but synonymous, it quite logically means to maintain an existence outside.

Τέρω Ἐκ (tereo ek) in John 17:15

John 17:15 is the only other passage in the NT where τέρω ἐκ (tereo ek) occurs. This word combination does not occur in the Septuagint. It is assumed that whatever the phrase means here, it also means the same in Rev 3:10.

If τέρω ἐκ (tereo ek) means "previous existence within," it contradicts I John 5:19 which states that believers are of God and unbelievers are in the evil one. Now if I John 5:19 implies that believers are not in the power of the evil one, John 17:15

could not possibly imply that they are in the power of Satan and needing protection. John 17:15 records the Lord's petition to keep them outside of the evil one.

Since John 17:15 means to keep outside of the evil one, the parallel thought in Revelation 3:10 is to keep the church outside of the hour of testing. Therefore, only a pre-tribulational rapture would fulfill the promise.

The Martyrs in Revelation 6:9-11 and 7:14

If Revelation 3:10 means immunity or protection within as other positions insist, several contradictions result.

1. If protection in Revelation 3:10 is limited to protection from God's wrath only and not Satan's wrath also, then Revelation 3:10 denies the Lord's request in John 17:15.
2. If it is argued that Revelation 3:10 means total immunity, then of what worth is the promise in light of Revelation 6:9-11 and 7:14 where martyrs abound? The wholesale martyrdom of saints during the tribulation demands that the promise to the Philadelphian church be interpreted as "keeping out of" the hour of testing, not "keeping within."

Summary

1. Ek (ek) can mean "emergence from within," or it can mean "a continued state outside."
2. Τερεο εν (tereo en) is used in Acts 12:5, I Peter 1:4, and Jude 21, and implies "previous and continued existence within." Therefore, τερεο εκ (tereo ek) logically must be understood as "continued existence outside."
3. If the immunity of saints to wrath through the tribulation was intended to teach a post-tribulational rapture, then John would have used τερεο εν εις or δια (tereo en eis or dia) Revelation 3:10.
4. Consistent with the previous observation, τερεο εκ (tereo ek) meaning "to keep within" in John 17:15 would contradict I John 5:19 if, in fact, it implied "previous existence within."
5. If τερεο εκ (tereo ek) in Revelation 3:10 implies "previous existence within," it contradicts the prayer in John 17:15 in limiting immunity to God's wrath. Or its alleged promise of total immunity is rendered null and void by the slaughter of saints in Revelation 6:9-11 and 7:14.
6. Only the interpretation of τερεο εκ (tereo ek) in Revelation 3:10 which understands that the Philadelphian church will not enter the tribulation, that is, they will be kept out or guarded from entering, satisfies a consistent exegesis of the phrase. This finding is in perfect harmony only with a pre-tribulational understanding of the rapture.

7. The Jewish Wedding Ceremony

In John 14:1-3 Jesus spoke some incredibly comforting words

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”

Being 21st Century Gentiles, we miss out on how the original disciples would hear and understand this. Jesus used the terminology of the Jewish wedding ceremony.

Once a man and woman were betrothed, he would return to his father’s house and add on a new room. When the room was nearing completion, he’d send a friend to tell the bride the time for the wedding was approaching. She’d get ready, but rarely knew the precise moment of his arrival. It was part of the suspense and romance of the event that she’d wait without knowing the precise hour of his arrival. But finally the day would come and the groom would go forth to claim his bride.

His friends went with him and made much noise, blowing trumpets and shouting to let everyone know the time for the wedding had finally come. When he arrived, there was a huge feast – the wedding supper, after which the man would take his wife into the new room he’d made, and they would stay sequestered there for, note this, 7 days! After which they emerged and he’d present her to the community as his beloved.

This is how the Rapture will occur:

Add on a new room – He is preparing a place for us

Send for his bride

She had to be ready, but wouldn’t know the precise moment of his arrival – We don’t know the date or time either

He & his friends let everyone know the time for the wedding had finally come –
I Thessalonians 4:16 (cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God)

There was a huge feast – Marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-10)

The man would take his wife into the new room he’d made - they would stay sequestered there for 7 days! – 7-year tribulation period

They would emerge and he’d present her as his beloved – we rule and reign with Him for 1,000 years

8. Unknown Time of Christ’s Return

One of the most powerful proofs for the Pre-Tribulation Rapture is that it’s the only one that can account for the repeated reference to the coming of the Lord being at a time not expected.

Daniel 9 spells out clearly that there will be 1,260 days from the time the Antichrist enters the temple in Jerusalem and declares himself god, till the Return of Jesus Christ. Yet, Matthew 24:36 makes it clear that no one knows the day of Jesus’s

Return. The only way to reconcile this is to see the Rapture and the Second Coming as two different events, separated by 7 years.

The Jews of Jesus's day missed His first coming because they had misinterpreted the prophecies of His coming. They did so because one set of prophecies foretold a suffering servant while the other set foretold a conquering King. They'd come to see the suffering servant prophecies as symbolic but interpreted the conquering king ones as literal. So, they looked for the Messiah to come in majesty and missed His coming in humility.

We need to learn this lesson, for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ also has two phases, just like the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah's coming. Before Jesus comes to Earth in glory as the Conquering King, He will come secretly in the clouds to receive His bride. This coming, as Paul says in I Thessalonians 5, is like a thief in the night, not a King in the mid-day sun.

No one knows when Jesus comes in the Rapture, which is very different from His Second Coming, which will be 1,260 days after the Antichrist enters the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem & declares himself god, demanding worship.