

Dispensationalism — Pretribulationism (Pre-Darby)

Ephraem of Nisibis (306-373)

"We ought to understand thoroughly, therefore, my brothers, what is imminent or overhanging. . . . Why therefore we do not reject every care of earthly actions and prepare ourselves for the meeting of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that He may draw us from the confusion, which overwhelms all the world. . . . For all the saints and elect of God are gathered together before the tribulation, which is to come, and are taken to the Lord, in order that they may not see at any time the confusion which overwhelms the world because of our sins."

—— Pseudo-Ephraem, *The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Ephraem, Sermon on the End of the World*, Latin Translation.

"In this sermon, Pseudo-Ephraem develops an elaborate biblical eschatology, including a distinction between the rapture and the second coming of Christ. It describes the imminent rapture, followed by 3½ years of great tribulation under the rule of Antichrist, followed by the coming of Christ, the defeat of Antichrist, and the eternal state. His view includes a parenthesis between the fulfillment of Daniel's sixty-nine weeks and his seventieth week in Daniel 9:24-27."

—— James F. Stitzinger, *The Rapture in Twenty Centuries of Biblical Interpretation*, TMSJ 13/2 (Fall 2002), 158.

Brother Dolcino (1307)

"Again, [Dolcino believed and preached and taught] that within those three years Dolcino himself and his followers will preach the coming of the Antichrist. And that the Antichrist was coming into this world within the bounds of the said three and a half years; and after he had come, then he [Dolcino] and his followers would be transferred into Paradise, in which are Enoch and Elijah. And in this way they will be preserved unharmed from the persecution of Antichrist. And that then Enoch and Elijah themselves would descend on the earth for the purpose of preaching [against] Antichrist. Then they would be killed by him or by his servants, and thus Antichrist would reign for a long time. But when the Antichrist is dead, Dolcino himself, who then would be the holy pope, and his preserved followers, will descend on the earth, and will preach the right faith of Christ to all, and will convert those who will be living then to the true faith of Jesus Christ."

—— Francis Gumerlock, *A Rapture Citation in the Fourteenth Century*, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 159 (July-September 2002): 349-362. 8.

"This paragraph from *The History of Brother Dolcino* indicates that in northern Italy in the early fourteenth century a teaching very similar to pretribulationism was being preached. . . . While not suggesting that pretribulationism was the dominant view of the rapture in the Middle Ages, it is likely that such teaching did not occur in a vacuum and that others besides Dolcino were aware of it. It can reasonably be assumed that the Apostolic Brethren (who numbered in the thousands) believed, as did their leader, that when the Antichrist would arrive, they would be transferred to paradise and be preserved there from his persecution in the tribulation"

—— Francis Gumerlock, *A Rapture Citation in the Fourteenth Century*, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 159 (July-September 2002): 349-362. 17.

"Two things are fairly certain from *The History of Brother Dolcino*. Dolcino and the Apostolic Brethren believed that the purpose of the rapture was related to escape from end-time tribulation and persecution of Antichrist. And Dolcino and the Apostolic Brethren believed that there would be a significant gap of time between the rapture of the saints to Paradise and their subsequent descent to earth. Because of this, *The History of Brother Dolcino* stands as yet another literary witness for the existence of pretribulationism before the nineteenth century. As such a witness, it once again challenges evangelicals to re-evaluate their thinking about the history of the pretribulation rapture, especially those views that place the origin of the teaching, or its initial recovery, within the last two hundred years."

—— Francis Gumerlock, *A Rapture Citation in the Fourteenth Century*, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 159 (July-September 2002): 349-362. 18.

"A recent study of the fourteenth-century text, *The History of Brother Dolcino*, composed in 1316 by an anonymous source, reveals another important pretribulational passage."

—— James F. Stitzinger, *The Rapture in Twenty Centuries of Biblical Interpretation*, TMSJ 13/2 (Fall 2002), 159.

Joseph Mede (1586-1639)

"After this, [is] our gathering together Christ in His coming ... [that is, the] saints being translated into the air. ... [so that] they may be preserved during the conflagration of the earth, and the works thereof: 2 Pet. 3.10. that as Noah and his family were preserved from the deluge by being lifted up above the waters in the ark, so should the saints at the conflagration be lifted up in the clouds, unto their ark, Christ, to be preserved there from the deluge of fire, where the wicked shall be consumed."

—— Joseph Mede, Works, III, 611. [Cited in H. Orton Wiley; Christian Theology, chapter 34: The Second Advent (Nazarene Publishing House, 1940); also cited by Thomas Ice, "The History of the Doctrine of the Rapture" The Eighteenth Annual Barndollar Lecture Series].

Robert Maton (1607-1653)

"[W]hen our Savior comes to reigne over all the earth, he comes not alone, but brings all the Saints with him. ...[W]hy shall the saints come with him, but because they have a share in this Kingdome. [W]hy shall the elect onely be gathered together and the rest left behind. ... [T]hey shall be left, because the good Angels cannot at once assemble them to the place of Judgment, and the Elect to meete the Lord in the Aire, if these things were to be done at the same particular time. And therefore, as I suppose, they shall be left, either to perish in that great destruction, which shall come upon all the Nations that fight against the Jewes, whom our Savior shall then redeem: Or to bee eye-witnesses of Gods wonders in all Countreys at that time."

—— Robert Maton, Israel's Redemption (London, 1642), 60, 67.

John Archer (1598-1682)

"Christ shall come from heaven ... that is, Christ shall then visibly appeare, which is not spoken of as the Day of the last Judgment. For it is the Time of the Israelites great trouble, after the first conversion to Christianitie. ... First, He will raise up the Saints, which are dead before this his coming that they should sit as kings, and rule the Tribes of Israel, which cannot be meant of Heaven, for that is the Fathers Kingdome, and Christs Kingdom ends when the world ends. ... they should rule with him in his Kingdom ... our Raigning with Christ."

—— John Archer, The Personal Reign of Christ upon Earth (London, 1642), 16-17.

Ephraim Huit (1591-1604)

"[D]eliverance from outward trials is expressed by the Lords coming in the clouds ... in the deliverance of his Church, from Egypt, and preservation in the wilderness is described by his riding on the heavens ... Secondly, this coming of the Son of Man in the clouds is memorable event, not long before the general judgment, where of it was a foregoing signe, and must therefore teach some other ... some appearance. Thirdly, upon this comming of the Son of Man in the cloudes the kingdom is given to the Iewes ... but upon the Incarnation of our Lord, the kingdom was taken from the Iewes, and given to the Romanes [I]f any here should object [to] the summoning of the Elect by the sound of a trumpet but this trumpet is heard only by the Elect, so that to me it seems to intend some voyce, and call of the Lord, whereof the reprobates are incapable: [O]ur Lord Mat 24.30. & his beloved disciple Iohn Rev 1.7. do couple this coming of the Son of man in the Cloudes with that holy wailing of the Iewes in their conuersion ... Zac 12.10."

—— Ephraim Huit, The whole Prophecie of Daniel Explained, by a Paraphrase, Analysis and briefe Comment (London, 1643), 196-199.

Nathaniel Homes (1599-1692)

"The resurrection of those which slept in Christ, and the those which shall be left alive, together with them into the aire should be at one and the same time: For the words in 1 Thess 4. v.16,17 ... may admit a great distance of time. ... Everyone (or, all mankind) shall rise in their order, Christ the first fruits ... afterwards, they that are Christs at his coming ... notes a

distance of time of above a thousand and a halfe of yeers. ... Suppose this rapture of the Saints into the aire, be to translate them to heaven, the rapture of the Saints into the clouds, to be for their present translation into heaven.”
—— Nathaniel Homes, *Apocalypsis Anastaseos. The Resurrection Revealed: or the Dawning of the Daystar* (London, 1653), 492.

William Aspinwall (1605-1662)

“If God by some voice from heaven, I mean out of his Churches, say come up hither, Rev.11.12.13. Follow his cal, and fear not enemies; though you see them, & they see you ascend up to heaven, you shall be safe. Some commotion or earthquake will ensue, but no detriment to you that obey the voice from heaven. The detriment will be to the enemies themselves.”
—— William Aspinwall, *A Brief Description of the Fifth Monarchy, or Kingdome, That shortly is to come* (London 1653), 7-8.

John Browne (1627-1677?)

“the hundred fourty and four thousand, who are called Virgins, cannot be said to be the Virgins that attend the Spouse, the Lamb's Wife, seeing that they are upon the Earth after the said Spouse is taken up [T]his a hundered and fourty four thousand is the Women that flyeth into the wilderness. . . . [T]he Virgins do go forth to meet the Bridegroom.”
—— John Browne, *A Brief Survey of the Prophetical and Evangelical Events of the Last Times* (London, 1654), 2-3.

“Now this Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached in all Nations before that time come ... then will follow the calling of the two Tribes of Judah and Benjamin to Jerusalem ... and then the City is built, which bringing back of the ten Tribes will not be compleated till after the Saints are taken up, when as before that time both Jerusalem and the Temple will be built, and Sacrifice offered . . . After the calling of the two Tribes for to build and inhabite Jerusalem, the next remarkable thing that will in those days fall out to be, is the rising or manifesting of the Beast, and ten Hornes, or Kings”
—— John Browne, *A Brief Survey of the Prophetical and Evangelical Events of the Last Times* (London, 1654), 12-13.

John Birchensha (1605-1681)

“Jesus Christ (at this Juncture of time) will come in the Clouds. . . . They shall ascend up into heaven ... to meet the Lord in the Ayre ... warre will continue until a little before the next coming of Christ. During which time the world will be full of Great Troubles, and the Lord in this Age, as in former times, will punish the inhabitants of the earth, because with many Tribulations, they do continually afflict and persecute the people of the most high God.”
—— John Birchensha, *The History of the Scripture* (London, 1660), iii, 80.

Joshua Sprigg (1618-1684)

“[O]ne of them holds forth the secrecy of his coming, and the other holds forth a gradual coming. ... [I]t is Christ's spiritual and powerful coming and appearance in the saints, that is the great object of our expectation, and that which must do our business for us. It is not his appearing in the clouds, it is not his down upon the earth, and manifesting his glorious visible person . . . it is that that must quicken us at the last day and raise our bodies out of the dust, and make us live the life of glory.”
—— Joshua Sprigg, *News of a New World From The Word and Works of God, Compared together* (London, 1676), 8-9.

Pierre Jurieu (1637-1713)

“I would not be too confident, that this ought to be understood of a visible descent and abode of Christ on Earth; yea, I do not believe it probable. But to me it seems very Evident, that this Reign shall begin with some miraculous appearance of Our Lord in his glory. After which he shall go back to Heaven, and from thence govern this victorious Church. Mr. I. Mede, and others after him, would make this reign of Christ for a thousand years, to be the day of Iudgment, and that within this

time shall be the Resurrection of the dead. Other say, that the Resurrection, and Last Iudgement, shall be before this Reign of Christ; but I dare not determine that."

—— Peter Jurieu, *The Accomplishment of the Scripture Prophecies, or the Approaching Deliverance of the Church* (London, 1687) pt ii, ch xxiv, 381-382.

Thomas Beverely (1621-1702)

"And those saints that are then alive shall not prevent the rising of the saints that were dead at the coming of Christ, but every man in his own order. ... For the dead in Christ shall be raised first; then the saints alive in the Body, in this mortal state, shall be changed ... in the twinkling of an eye, less than a moment, raise all the dead Saints, and change all the Saints then alive into an incorruptible immortal state ... They shall be caught up in the Clouds to meet the Lord in the Air ... in this appearing of Christ... [B]ut here it's another sight of Christ, viz. as their Judge: for he will be to the Sinner and ungodly, when he shall come the second time in the Clouds of Heaven. ... coming to enter upon his Kingdom here on Earth, with all his Saints in a glorified State, prepared for this great Assize and Judgment of the World."

—— Anon, *A Short Survey of the Kingdom of Christ here on Earth with his Saints* (London, 1699), 9-11,15.

Oliver Heywood (1630-1702)

"[T]he Souls of the glorified Saints shall descend and be united to their own Bodies, and then ascend to meet the Lord in the Air, and the wicked are left behind on their dunghill the earth."

—— Oliver Heywood, *The General Assembly: or, a Discourse of the Gathering of all Saints to Christ* (London, 1700), 15.

Increase Mather (1639-1723)

"[W]hen Christ comes, Believers shall see the King ... in all his Glory, and shall go with him to the Land that is very far off. Heaven is the Land that is very far off. Christ has assured believers it shall be thus, John 14.2 In my Fathers House are many Mansions, that is in Heaven. ... He will not go back to Heaven and leave them behind him. No, they shall sit together with him in Heavenly places, The Armies of Heaven will follow him. When He shall come to judge the world, the Saints in Heaven will come with him... We are as sure to be raised up together in that Blessed day, when the Great God our Saviour Christ shall appear, and as sure then to ascend into Heaven and all the holy Angels shall come with him. Not some only, but all of them. And yet more, all the Saints in Glory shall then come down from Heaven to wait upon him. Zach.14.5 The Lord thy God shall come, and all his Saints with him. ... For he will cause all that are Dead to come forth out of their Graves in that day, but every one in his own order. He shall no sooner Appear, but Believers shall rise out of their Graves: 1 Cor.15.23 ... before the dispensation of judgment, which begins with the Glorious Appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be finished ... They shall be with him when he comes to Judge the World: they shall come with him and never be separated from him any more. 1 Thes.4.17 So shall we ever be with the Lord."

—— Increase Mather, *The Blessed Hope, and Glorious Appearing of the Great God our Saviour* (Boston, 1701), 23, 33, 122, 131.