

Testing claims of Pretribulationism in the early Church

Part 3

Pseudo-Ephraim (Part 2)

This analysis continues our previous examination of Lee Brainard's alleged Pretribulational "discoveries" in the Greek texts of Pseudo-Ephraim:

Brand's next alleged Pretribulational rapture stamens is found in Pseudo-Ephrem's *Sermon on the Advent, the End, and the Coming of the Antichrist*

"Watch always, praying continually, that you may be worthy to escape the tribulation ... if anyone has tears and compunction, let him pray the Lord that he might be delivered from the tribulation which is about to come upon the earth, that he might not see it all, nor the beast himself, nor even hear of its terrors."

Brainard comments:

“Notice the language! The qualification ‘that he might not see it at all, etc.’ demonstrates emphatically that he was using ‘escape’ and ‘delivered from’ in the sense of removal before the tribulation, not protection through it.”

This is a rather stunning example of Brainard's deliberate misrepresentation of the material. Brainard actually edited and removed a short part of the citation to create the illusion of Pretribulationism. Let's look at the full quote, including the portion that Brainard removed:

“And again: always be awake, watching constantly, so that you may be found worthy to escape the tribulation and stand before God, for the time is near. For we will all face this evil together, yet we do not believe. Let us continually be found in tears and prayers, night and day, falling upon God, so that we sinners may be saved. If anyone has tears and grief, let us pray to the Lord, that we may be saved from the future sorrow coming to the earth; that he may not see this beast at all, nor hear his terrors again.”

The full quote has Pseudo-Ephraim warning his readers that they would all face the coming tribulation of the Antichrist.

Why did Brainard remove this one very important line? Remember, Brainard said these quotes have “timing elements in [their] context that demanded a pre-trib rapture.” Its very difficult to believe that this one line, which does in fact have a post-tribulational timing context, was removed innocently.

Further, when one simply reads the whole sermon, it becomes very clear that Pseudo-Ephrem knew nothing of a Pretribulational rapture.

To the contrary, he speaks of the horrors of what he believed his listeners were about to face.

As we will see, Pseudo-Ephraim emphasizes how many saints would be “saved” not by a rapture, but by hiding in deserts or in caves so they would not even see the Antichrist.

“Many of you, at that time, will be found pleasing to God. You will be strong and find salvation in the wilderness and in desert places, through many prayers and unbearable tears. Because the holy God considers their unfathomable cries and sincere faith, and will have compassion on them, as a loving father, and he will preserve them in their hiding.”

“When the Dragon comes, you will not have rest on earth, but you will have great sorrow, turmoil and confusion. There will be death and famines to the ends of the earth; of these things, the Lord our God spoke by his mouth, saying that such things have not happened since the creation of the world.”

**“We need many prayers and tears, dear ones, so
that we may stand firm during the great
temptations.”**

"In peace, our Lord will come to us, in order that we may overcome the deception of the beast, sincerely striving for the steadfast faith of Christ, allowing us to overcome the power of the tyrant. We will maintain our testimony, standing firm, enduring patiently, thus leaving him with nothing in us. I, the least, brothers, beseech you, lovers of Christ, let us not be weak, but rather strong in the power of the cross."

“[The Antichrist] will falsely take on the form of the true shepherd. Let us learn therefore, O friends, in what form the shameless one will appear on the earth.”

“Many of the saints who then find themselves at the end of those days, will shed rivers of tears in groans to the Holy God because of the many murders of the Dragon. And they will flee in great fear into deserts, and hide themselves in mountains and caves with fear, and they will hide themselves under earth and the snow living in day and night destitution in many ways. But the Holy God will by His grace lead them to their hiding places where they will be saved hiding in the pits and caves, not seeing the signs or the terrors of the Dragon.”

In conclusion, Pseudo Ephraim, in his Greek *Sermon on the Advent, the End, and the Coming of the Antichrist* envisions the saints of his day about to endure the horrors of the Great Tribulation, hopefully being saved through hiding themselves and thus surviving until the return of Jesus.

It is clear that Brainard's alleged Pretribulational rapture passage here has been ripped from its context.

Not only does Brainard ignore the repeated Post-tribulational comments scattered throughout the sermon, but he even selectively and misleadingly removed a line from the middle of his quote to create a false impression of a Pretribulational rapture text.