

Testing claims of Pretribulationism in the early Church

Part 5

Pseudo-Ephraim (Part 4)

**This presentation continues testing the veracity of
Lee Brainard's claims of Pretribulational
statements in Pseudo-Ephraim.**

**The next statement is found in Pseudo-Ephraim's
sermon: *On the Second Coming of Our Lord Jesus
Christ:***

"The righteous ... shall be seized up in the clouds to meet him. While those who are lazy and timid like me shall remain on earth trembling."

**Nothing in this statement demands
Pretribulationism. To the contrary. Notice the fuller
context:**

“As the lightning, so does the coming of the Lord occur. For the trumpet will sound, and the earth will tremble at its foundations. The heavens, with their hosts, will be shaken, and all the dead will rise. Alas, alas, beloved! Who, in that hour, will not fear the examination of his heart? Forgive my weakness. For I understand that, in that hour, every breath will tremble. But the grace of God strengthens and gladdens the hearts of the righteous; and they are taken up in the clouds to meet him. While those who have become indolent and sluggish like me remain trembling on the earth.”

Ephraim says that “all the dead will rise.” This is in keeping with his Post-tribulational Amillennial belief that both the righteous and the wicked will all be raised together when Jesus returns in glory.

**Let's consider Brainard's next alleged
Pretribulational statement from Pseudo-
Ephraim's sermon *On the Fathers Who Have
Completed Their Course*:**

"Again, when we see the saints in glory flying off in light in the clouds of the air to meet Christ, the king of glory, but see ourselves in the great tribulation, who shall be able to bear that shame and terrible reproach?"

As always, we must begin by examining the full context of the sermon. As we will see, the sermon discusses in great detail how the Lord harvests those saints whose lives are ready to be with Him. The harvesting however is not through “rapture” but through death:

“For I see, Master, that like choice gold you take your saints from this vain world to the repose of life. Like a wise farmer with understanding, when he sees the fruits have ripened well, harvests them at once, that they may not be spoiled by any harmful damage, so you, O Saviour, gather in your elect who have toiled in holiness.”

“But we the idle, slack by choice, have remained so in our hardness, and our fruit has always remained unripe, for we have not had any firm intent to ripen well by good works and to be harvested in holiness into the granary of life.”

“Where are God’s friends, filled with the love of God? Possessing nothing corruptible on earth, but constantly taking up their cross they followed the Saviour... And therefore God loved them dearly and gathered them into the haven of life and into eternal joy, that they might be glad there, and in the Paradise of pleasure and the heavenly bridal chamber... They have gone from here to God, the holy, with them they have their lamps all prepared. Their virtue is not found among us now.”

“See, the holy and just are even now being chosen and gathered into the harbour of life, that they may not see the tribulation and scandals which are coming upon us through our sins.”

So throughout the sermon, those saints who die are described as being gathered to the Lord. He describes himself and his contemporaries as unworthy and thus remaining on the earth. Finally, Pseudo-Ephraim shifts to discuss the coming of the Lord.

“What then will come upon us in that hour, brethren when we see the saints again in glory, flying in light on the clouds of the air to meet Christ, the King of Glory, but see ourselves in the great tribulation, who will be able to bear that shame and that dread reproach?”

It is critical to note that Pseudo-Ephraim envisions seeing the worthy saints being raptured, while he remains on the earth, in the midst of the tribulation, which is already taking place, not something that is about to begin. He is not speaking of a Pretribulational rapture. He then completes his thoughts:

“Let us be alert, my brethren, let us be alert, beloved, let us be alert, friends of God... Let us fall down before God with many tears, let us beseech him with zeal unrestrainedly, that he may deliver us from the unquenchable fire and bitter punishment.”

**The deliverance that Pseudo-Ephraim
seeks deliverance from is not the
tribulation, but from the torment of eternal,
unquenchable fire.**

Once again, Barinard's alleged Pretribulational discovery is a flop. Pseudo-Ephraim simply envisions Jesus returning, catching up the righteous, while the wicked are left behind to be judged with the wicked, alongside the Antichrist and his hordes.

In conclusion, we have examined six of Brainard's best alleged Pretribulational Rapture texts in the early Church. Not one substantiated his claims. In fact, in some cases, we saw evidence that Brainard deliberately edited, manipulated, or hid relevant data to mislead his audience.

When all is said and done, among the multitude of statements made by early Church writers about the end times, there is not a single statement that may be claimed as articulating or supporting a Pretribulational Rapture.