

**Irenaeus:
Correcting the False Claims of
Pretribbers**

Irenaeus

**Academic consensus recognizes that
Irenaeus expected the Church to face the
Antichrist.**

**Lee Brainard and Mike Golay both claims that
Ireneaus taught a pretribulational rapture.**

“The Church Fathers believed that the Church would be on earth during the tribulation period. This is seen in the earliest writers and there is nothing in the other writers to contradict this. They speak of the persecution of the Church by the Antichrist and of the Church being on earth at the second advent of Christ.”

– Charles August Hauser, Jr., *The Eschatology of the Early Church Fathers*

“...the early fathers largely held to a period of persecution that would be ongoing when the return of the Lord takes place and most would see the church suffering through some portion of the tribulation period.”

—James Stitzinger, (Associate Professor of Historical Theology, Master’s Seminary), *The Rapture in Twenty Centuries of Biblical Interpretation*

“The preponderance of evidence seems to support the concept that the early church did not clearly hold to a rapture as preceding the endtime tribulation period.... the early church fathers ... should be classified as posttribulational.”

—John F. Walvoord, *The Blessed Hope and The Tribulation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976)

“One of its (the early Church) distinctive features is that it places the Rapture of the Church at the end of the Tribulation, combining it with the Second Coming as one event”

—David Reagan, *Wrath and Glory: Unveiling the Majestic Book of Revelation* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf, 2001), p. 112

“When taken within the context of all of Irenaeus’ writings, it appears that he was not teaching pretribulationism.”

—Tommy Ice

Irenaeus' testimony:

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but shall receive power as if kings one hour with the beast” ... And they shall lay Babylon waste, and burn her with fire, and shall give their kingdom to the beast, and put the Church to flight. After that they shall be destroyed by the coming of our Lord.

(Against Heresies, V, 26, 1)

**Irenaeus sought to prepare his readers
to be able to identify the Antichrist
when he arrived:**

It is therefore more certain, and less hazardous, to await the fulfillment of the prophecy [concerning the revealing of the Antichrist], than to be making surmises, and casting about for any names that may present themselves, inasmuch as many names can be found possessing the number mentioned; and the same question will, after all, remain unsolved. . . . But he indicates the number of the name now, so that when this man comes WE may avoid him, being aware who he is. (Against Heresies, V, 30, 3, 4)

**Irenaeus stated that the resurrection
of the just happens after the
Antichrist:**

“For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in which the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord”

(Against Heresies, V, 35, 1)

“When in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, ‘There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be.’ For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption.”
(Against Heresies, V, 29, 1)

I e-mailed Mike Golay to ask him how he is able to teach that Irenaeus was pre-trib when he makes such clear post-trib comments. He wrote back saying he would respond but never did. I followed up two more times and he has refused to answer my e-mails.

I also reached out to Lee Brainard concerning his mishandling of Irenaeus. Here are his responses:

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but shall receive power as if kings one hour with the beast” ... And they shall lay Babylon waste, and burn her with fire, and shall give their kingdom to the beast, and put the Church to flight. After that they shall be destroyed by the coming of our Lord.

(Against Heresies, V, 26, 1)

“This must be understood in light of his generic use of the word ‘church’.”

—Lee Brainard

Irenaeus uses the word “Church” close to 200 times. Every single time, it refers to the Church proper and is never once used generically to refer to Israel.

It is therefore more certain, and less hazardous, to await the fulfillment of the prophecy [concerning the revealing of the Antichrist], than to be making surmises, and casting about for any names that may present themselves, inasmuch as many names can be found possessing the number mentioned; and the same question will, after all, remain unsolved. . . . But he indicates the number of the name now, so that when this man comes WE may avoid him, being aware who he is. (Against Heresies, V, 30, 3, 4)

“When he comes, all believers will recognize him. All agree this is true.”

—Lee Brainard

But one cannot, nor would anyone need to, recognize him if they are not here.

“When in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, ‘There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be.’ For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption.”

(Against Heresies, V, 29, 1)

“This is one of the strongest pre-trib rapture passages in the early fathers.”

—Lee Brainard

There is no reason to see this statement as contradicting Irenaeus' other very clear post-tribulational statements.

Does Irenaeus have split personalities from one chapter to the next?

Or is Brainard simply attempting to rip one comment out of its context and twist it in an effort to create the illusion of Pretribulationism?