

Refuting Lee Brainard's Claims of Pretribulationism in Pseudo- Ephrem

This presentation is the third in a series refuting Lee Brainard's false claims of Pretribulationism in the writings of Pseudo-Ephraim. Here we will refute three more of his alleged discoveries.

To properly understand Pseudo-Ephraim, we must begin by recognizing that like nearly the entire Church at his time, he was Amillennial and Postribulational. He believed in one universal resurrection and rapture followed immediately by the judgment of all mankind.

Let's examine Lee Brainard's alleged
Pretribulational "discoveries."

From the 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."

This comment is Post-tribulational. Brainard edits out the relevant portions which say:

- 1) “all the dead will rise” in a single resurrection.**
- 2) It happens when Jesus returns visibly in glory like the lightening.**

“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's full statement:

"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."

Brainard's select citation:

"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."

The following quote come from a Pseudo-Ephraim's
55 Beatitudes:

“Blessed is he who unceasingly remembers the fear of Gehenna and hastens to sincerely repent ... for he shall be delivered from the great tribulation.”

— Beatitude #19

This comment has nothing to do with a Pretribulational rapture. Again, Ephraim was Amillennial and Post-tribulational. He expected the universal resurrection and rapture to happen at the day of judgment.

In Beatitude #50 he expresses his belief in a Post-tribulational resurrection when “All the children of humankind” – both the righteous and the wicked would be resurrected at the same time.

"Blessed is the one who considers those who sleep in their coffins and in graves and has rejected every foul-smelling desire, for he will rise in glory when the heavenly trumpet sounds, rousing all the children of humankind from sleep." — Beatitude #50

He speaks of those who are righteous among his readers, who will join Jesus in “the bridal chamber” specifically on “the day of judgment” — not seven years before.

“Blessed are those who watch according to God continually, for they will be overshadowed by God in the day of judgement, becoming sons of the bridal chamber, in joy and gladness they will see the Bridegroom. But I and those like me, lazy and pleasure-loving, will weep and lament as we watch our brothers in everlasting glory, while we are in torments.”

—Beatitude #55

Pseudo-Ephraim, along with all of the early Church, knew nothing of the popular “once saved, always saved” teaching. They viewed the tribulation as the final and ultimate trial when the faith of all Christians would be tested greatly, resulting in many apostatizing from the faith unto eternal damnation.

“Blessed the one who continually remembers the fear of Gehenna and hastens with tears and groans to repent sincerely in the Lord, for he will be delivered from the great tribulation.”

—Beatitude #19

Those who sincerely repent in an ongoing manner will remain faithful throughout the final time of testing. Thus they will be saved or delivered from the great trial and apostasy.

Now 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?"

This is not talking about the rapture. Once more, Lee ignores both the title and the fuller context of the sermon, which clearly discusses how the Lord will “harvest” those saints who are “ripe” — ready to be with Him — 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.”

Throughout the sermon, those saints who die are described as being gathered to the Lord. He describes himself as unready / unworthy and thus remaining on the earth.

Once again, Brainard's alleged Pretribulational discovery is a flop. It is clear that he either did not read the whole sermon, or he deliberately ignored the portions that could not so easily be pulled out of context.

In conclusion, we have examined five of Brainard's best alleged Pretribulational discoveries. None were pretrib. We observed that Brainard often selectively edits his statements to create the false appearance of a pretrib rapture.