

Christian Teachers Falsifying the Record of the Early Church and the Rapture

The early Christian writers expected the Church to face the Great Tribulation and the Antichrist.

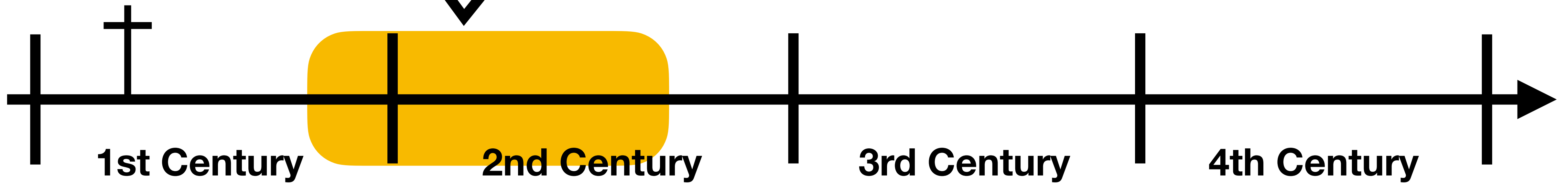
Not a single one expressed the belief that they would be raptured before the tribulation or the Antichrist.

Didache

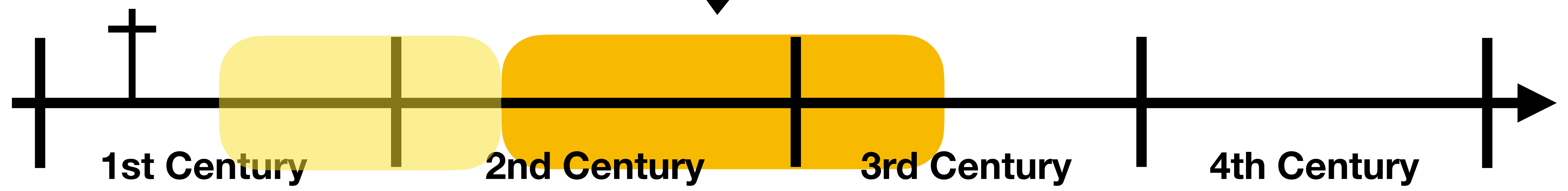
Epistle of Barnabas

Shepherd of Hermas

Justin Martyr



Irenaeus
Hippolytus
Tertullian



“Well, a lot of people say the rapture, or the secret rapture, or the pre-trib rapture was invented by Darby in the 1800s. I still run into that constantly. And we see many early church fathers, in first and second century that were pre-trib.”

—Ken Johnson

“Nepos was bishop in Egypt in the fourth century and he actually wrote a book called Refutation of the Allegorists in which he showed all of the early Church fathers believed in premillennialism and the pre-trib rapture.”

—Ken Johnson

“The title of our message right now is The Rapture According to the Early Church. I will be guiding you through the reason why, the pretribulational rapture view, in my opinion, is the most Scriptural view and it was the view that was espoused by the early Church at least through 300 AD”

—Mike Golay, Behold Israel Ministries

“Because they all knew in the in the first century, second century, that if you came to Jesus, it was known in the churches through the teachings of the Apostles, and now these guys, (the early Church Fathers) that you don’t go through this persecution, or this tribulation, or this so called Day of the Lord period leading up to the second coming.”

—Mike Golay, Behold Israel Ministries

As we've seen in previous sessions, these claims are 100% false. Let's walk through some of these claims to analyze how some Pre-tribbers twist or rip various statements out of context.

Shepherd of Hermas (150 AD)

**“The Shepherd of Hermas speaks of
the pretribulational concept of
escaping the tribulation.”**

—Tommy Ice

**“The Shepherd of Hermas ... show[s]
that many second century Christians
believed in a pre-tribulational rapture.”**

—Ken Johnson, Rapture

“Now, later on, we are going to get into the Shepherd of Hermas, where he is going to talk about this and comment that it is the rapture, that it is clearly referencing the Church being raptured out before the great and mighty persecution.”

— Mike Golay, Behold Israel Ministries

**In the Shepherd of Hermes Vision #2 there
is another very explicit Post-tribulational
statement:**

“Stand firm, then, you who are consistent in doing right, so that your departure from this life may be with the holy angels. Blessed are those of you who will endure the great trial that is at hand, those of you who will not deny their own lives. For, the Lord has sworn by His Son that those who have denied Christ in this life will themselves be denied by Him in world to come. But to those who never deny Him, He will show exceedingly great mercy.”

—Shepherd of Hermas, Second Vision

In conclusion, the Shepherd of Hermas teaches that Christians can “escape” the great tribulation by repentance, endurance, and laying down their lives, not by a Pretribulational rapture.

“...Behold, I saw a huge beast something like a whale, with fiery locusts coming out of its mouth. The size of the beast was about a hundred feet long and its head was a giant clay pot. As I began to cry and to ask the Lord to deliver me from the beast, I recalled the remark I had heard: ‘Herimas, do not fear in your heart.’ I put on, then, the faith of the Lord and, recalling the wonderful things He had taught me, I faced the beast with courage.”

“Now the beast came on with a rush capable of destroying a whole city. I came close to it and, for all its size, the monster only stretched itself on the ground, without doing anything except project its tongue. In fact, there was no stir in it at all, until I had passed by. There were four colors on the head of the beast: black, then the color of fire and blood, next gold, finally white.”

“After I had gone approximately thirty feet past the beast, behold, there met me a virgin, dressed like a lady coming from a bridal chamber, all in white and with white sandals. She was veiled to the forehead and her headdress was a turban. But her hair was white. I knew from former visions that it was the Church, and so I became more cheerful.”

“She saluted me with the words: ‘Greetings, my good man.’ My salutation in turn was: ‘Greetings, lady.’ For answer, she said to me: ‘Have you met anything?’ ‘Lady,’ I said to her, ‘a huge beast met me, capable of destroying peoples, but by the power of the Lord and His abundant mercy I escaped from it.’ Yes, indeed,’ she said, ‘you escaped, because you cast your care on God and you opened up your heart to the Lord, in the assurance that you can be saved by nothing except His great and glorious Name.’”

“Hence, the Lord has sent His angel who is set over the beast, whose name is Segri. He has shut its mouth, that it may not hurt you. By your faith you have escaped great persecution, because at the sight of such a great monster you were not swayed by doubt. Go off, then, and explain to the Lord’s elect His wonders and tell them that this beast is a symbol of the great persecution that is to come.”

“If you prepare in advance and repent to the Lord with all your hearts, you will be able to escape the persecution,
provided your hearts become pure and sinless and you serve your Lord blamelessly the rest of the days of your life. Cast your cares on the Lord and He will set them straight. Put your faith in the Lord, you men of divided purpose, because He can do all things and turns aside His wrath from you, while he sends scourges on you who doubt in your heart. Alas for those who hear these remarks and disobey them! It were better for them that they had not been born.”

**Pretribbers believe this is a slam dunk,
proving that the some within the early
Church believed in Pretribulationism.**

When the early Church writer's spoke of "escaping" the tribulation, to them it meant escaping the tribulation with their faith intact. To them, the greatest danger of the tribulation was apostasy.

Notice that the writer of the Vision describes himself facing the beast with courage, yet he escaped being devoured.

If they would simply read the rest of the vision, they'd see that the conclusion of the vision makes explicitly Post-tribulational statements.

“I asked her a question about the four colors on the head of the beast. She answered and said: ‘Still curious about such matters!’ ‘Yes, lady,’ I said. ‘Tell me what this means.’ ‘I will tell you,’ she said. The black is this world in which you live. The color of fire and blood stands for this, that this world must be destroyed in fire and blood. You who flee this world are the golden section. For, just as gold is tried by fire and becomes useful, so also you who live in the world are tried in it. So, then, you who remain in it and pass through the flames will be purified.”

“For, just as gold casts off its dross, so you also will cast off all sorrow and tribulation, becoming pure and useful for the building of the tower. Finally, the white section is the world to come in which the elect of God dwell; for those chosen by God for eternal life will be without spot and pure.”

“Do not let up, then, but speak to the ears of God’s saints. You have also the symbol of the persecution that is to come. If you are righteous, it won’t mean a thing. Remember what was written before. With this, she went away, but I did not see where she went, for there was a cloud and I turned back in fear, thinking that the beast was coming.”