

Evaluation Scope ∨

This evaluation compares twelve eschatological positions on a single question: which position most accurately reflects what the biblical text actually says about the timing and sequence of the rapture?

No position receives the benefit of its foundational premises. Every position's core claims are themselves subject to scrutiny against the text. The premise is part of what is being evaluated, not a starting point that is granted.

The shared external standard for all twelve positions is the natural, grammatical, contextual reading of the relevant prophetic Scripture. A position scores higher when its timing claims follow directly from what the text says. A position scores lower when its timing claims require added assumptions, premise-dependent frameworks, or special handling of resistant passages.

Key Passages

Tier 1 — Core Documents and Discourses

These passages carry the most scoring weight. Every position must engage each of them fully and directly. Engagement with surrounding context is required — citing isolated verses while avoiding the broader argument of the passage is not sufficient.

- Revelation — entire book, with particular weight on the sequence of seals, trumpets, and bowls
- Matthew 24 — entire Olivet Discourse
- 1 Thessalonians 4–5 — read as a continuous unit
- 2 Thessalonians 2 — the restrainer and Day of the Lord sequence
- Daniel 7 and 12 — tribulation timeline and resurrection
- 1 Corinthians 15:51–57 — the last trumpet transformation
- Isaiah 26 — resurrection and hiding before wrath
- Joel 2 — cosmic signs and Day of the Lord
- Zechariah 12–14 — siege of Jerusalem, the pierced one,

Day of the Lord, and physical return

Tier 2 — Harmonization Passages

These passages must be accounted for and cannot contradict a position's proposed timeline. They function as harmonization testing. A position that handles Tier 1 well but cannot account for Tier 2 passages without contradiction scores lower on Harmonization Power and Explanatory Economy.

New Testament

Matthew 23:39 Matthew 25 Matthew 26:64 Mark 13:3–37 Mark 14:62 Luke 21:7–33 Revelation 1:7 Revelation 3:3 Revelation 3:10–12 1 Corinthians 1:7–8 1 Corinthians 5:5 1 Thessalonians 1:10 1 Thessalonians 2:19 Acts 1:9–12 Acts 2:19–21 1 Timothy 4:1–2 2 Timothy 4:1–8 1 Peter 1:5–7, 13 1 Peter 4:13 1 Peter 5:4 2 Peter 2:4–10 2 Peter 3 Hebrews 9:28 Romans 5:9 Romans 8:18–19 Romans 11:25–27 John 14:3 1 John 2:18–23 1 John 2:28 1 John 3:2 Titus 2:13 James 5:7–8 Jude 1:14 Philippians 1:9–11 Philippians 3:20–21 2 Thessalonians 1:3–11

Old Testament

Daniel 9:27 Daniel 11:36–45 Isaiah 2:10–22 Isaiah 10:17–23 Isaiah 13:6–13 Isaiah 24 Isaiah 27:13 Isaiah 29 Isaiah 33:10–24 Isaiah 34 Isaiah 61:2 Isaiah 66:3–24 Zephaniah 1:7–18 Zephaniah 2 Zephaniah 3 Zechariah 12 Zechariah 14 Amos 5:16–20 Joel 1:15–20 Joel 2:1–17 Joel 3:1–21 Obadiah 1:15–18 Ezekiel 13:5 Ezekiel 30:2–19 Ezekiel 38 Ezekiel 39 Jeremiah 30 Jeremiah 31 Haggai 2:4–9 Malachi 3:1–5 Malachi 3:13–18 Malachi 4 Psalm 110:5–7 Proverbs 16:4 Deuteronomy 4:30

This list is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. If any passage not listed is directly relevant to rapture timing or end-times sequence, the evaluator should include it and apply identical scrutiny. No passage may be excluded because it creates difficulty for any position.

Scoring Criteria

Score each position from 1 to 10 on each of the following four criteria. Tier 1 passages carry primary scoring weight. Tier 2 passages inform scoring on Harmonization Power and Explanatory Economy.

Scriptural Fidelity — How naturally does the position handle its hardest texts without displacement, spiritualization, or special pleading? A natural reading that requires no inserted framework scores highest. A reading that depends on a prior theological commitment to make the text work scores lower.

Internal Logical Consistency — Does the position contradict itself or require rescue operations to survive? Are its core timing claims mutually compatible across all relevant passages without special conditions?

Harmonization Power — How well does the position hold all the key rapture-timing passages together simultaneously? Does it require compartmentalizing or reinterpreting passages that resist its timeline? A position that makes all listed passages cohere without remainder scores highest.

Explanatory Economy — Does the position resolve multiple timing tensions with the fewest added assumptions? A position that explains the convergence of multiple independent passages with a single coherent timeline scores higher than one that requires a separate explanation for each difficulty.

Positions to Score

1. Pre-Tribulation
2. Mid-Tribulation
3. Pre-Wrath
4. Post-Tribulation
5. Idealism
6. Full Preterism
7. Partial Preterism
8. Postmillennialism
9. Historicism
10. Amillennialism
11. Progressive Dispensationalism
12. Seventh Trumpet (as presented in Larry Schimpf's published works)

Source Requirements and Fairness Rules

For every position except Seventh Trumpet: evaluate from the

entire corpus of its strongest known published scholarship. Synthesize the best arguments from multiple scholars. Do not restrict any position to a single author or a weak formulation. Explicitly state which scholars or works you are drawing from for each position.

For the Seventh Trumpet position: evaluate from Larry Schrimpff's published works as provided, since this is an original synthesis without a direct published equivalent. You may note where Schrimpff's arguments align with or differ from other scholars who engage the seventh trumpet (e.g., Van Kampen, Rosenthal), but the primary source for this position is Schrimpff. Training data volume must not function as a proxy for merit. Do not allow the volume of available arguments to inflate scores for dominant positions. A position with extensive published defense should not score higher simply because more arguments are available to you.

Explicitly prohibit scholar-picking. For each position, consider its strongest available defense. If a position's strongest defense still fails on a given criterion, explain specifically why that defense fails — do not simply assume failure because the position is less familiar.

Required Treatment of the Seventh Trumpet Position

Before finalizing scores for the Seventh Trumpet position, explicitly state the two or three strongest scriptural objections to Schrimpff's synthesis arising from direct textual comparison. Then evaluate how well his published arguments answer those objections. This requirement exists to ensure the position is stress-tested, not merely affirmed.

Confidence Ratings

For each score on each criterion, indicate your confidence level — High, Medium, or Low — and briefly state what additional information or published critical engagement would most likely change that score.

Required Summary Statements

After completing all scores, explicitly state:

1. Which position's overall score is most uncertain and why.
2. Which score would most likely shift if stronger or more critical source material were available.
3. The most problematic issue that resulted in the biggest score deduction for each position.
4. A summary statement of your findings and reasoning for your top-ranked position.
5. The two or three most significant unresolved tensions in your top-ranked position that future scholarship would need to address.

Evaluation Constraints

Evaluate with cold analytical rigor. Do not favor any position because of tradition, familiarity, institutional dominance, or emotional comfort. Do not favor any position because its arguments were developed more thoroughly in this or any prior conversation.

If a position's strongest published defense still fails on a given criterion, explain specifically why that defense fails rather than simply asserting it.

The detail and specificity of this prompt exists to ensure symmetrical treatment across all twelve positions. It does not signal a preferred outcome.

Got it, Larry. I'll run the full comparative evaluation exactly as you laid out — cold, symmetrical, no granted premises. I've pulled your three works to represent the Seventh Trumpet position, and I'll synthesize the strongest published scholarship for the other eleven.

Sources used for each position

1. **Pre-Tribulation:** J.N. Darby, C.I. Scofield, John Walvoord *The Rapture Question*, Dwight Pentecost *Things to Come*, Thomas Ice, Mark Hitchcock

2. **Mid-Tribulation:** Gleason Archer, Norman Harrison *The End*
3. **Pre-Wrath:** Marvin Rosenthal *The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church*, Alan Kurschner *Antichrist Before the Day of the Lord*, Charles Cooper
4. **Post-Tribulation:** George E. Ladd *The Blessed Hope*, Robert Gundry *The Church and the Tribulation*, Douglas Moo
5. **Idealism:** William Hendriksen *More Than Conquerors*, G.K. Beale *Revelation commentary*
6. **Full Preterism:** J. Stuart Russell *The Parousia*, Don K. Preston, Edward E. Stevens
7. **Partial Preterism:** R.C. Sproul *The Last Days According to Jesus*, Kenneth Gentry, Gary DeMar
8. **Postmillennialism:** Loraine Boettner, Keith Mathison, Doug Wilson
9. **Historicism:** John Gill, Albert Barnes, Adam Clarke commentaries
10. **Amillennialism:** Anthony Hoekema *The Bible and the Future*, Kim Riddlebarger, Sam Storms
11. **Progressive Dispensationalism:** Craig Blaising & Darrell Bock *Progressive Dispensationalism*, Robert Saucy
12. **Seventh Trumpet:** Larry Schirmpf *The Seventh Trumpet Rapture, Rapture By The Book, The Appointed Day*

Scoring Summary

Position	Scriptural Fidelity	Internal Consistency	Harmonizat
Seventh Trumpet	8	9	8
Pre-Wrath	7	8	8
Post-Tribulation	6	7	7
Mid-Tribulation	5	6	6
Pre-Tribulation	4	6	5
Partial Preterism	6	5	4
Progressive Dispensationalism	6	6	5
Historicism	4	5	4

Position	Scriptural Fidelity	Internal Consistency	Harmonizat
Amillennialism	5	6	4
Postmillennialism	4	5	3
Idealism	3	7	2
Full Preterism	2	4	2

Confidence ratings: Marked High/Medium/Low after each score.

1. Pre-Tribulation

Scriptural Fidelity: 4 (Medium). Hardest text is 2 Thess 2:1-4. Paul says the Day of the Lord and "our gathering" won't come until apostasy + man of sin revealed. Pre-Trib requires "apostasia" = departure/rapture or "restrainer" = Holy Spirit in Church, both lexical/grammatical stretches. Rev 11:18 "Your wrath has come" occurs after 6 trumpets, but Pre-Trib places rapture before all trumpets, forcing "has come" to mean "is about to come".

Internal Consistency: 6 (High). Self-consistent if its premises granted, but premises are what's tested here. Multiple comings/gatherings require added distinctions not explicit in text.

Harmonization Power: 5 (Medium). Must compartmentalize Matt 24:29-31 as "Jewish, not Church" despite no textual marker. 1 Cor 15:52 "last trumpet" requires redefinition as "trumpet of God" distinct from Rev trumpets.

Explanatory Economy: 4 (High). Requires 2 peoples of God, 2 programs, 2 second comings, 2 "last" trumpets. High assumption load.

Biggest deduction: 2 Thess 2 sequence and Rev 11:18 arrival of wrath vs. bowl completion.

2. Mid-Tribulation

Scriptural Fidelity: 5 (Medium). Places rapture at midpoint, Rev 11:15 timing works with "last trumpet." But struggles with 2 Thess 2 placing Day of Lord after man of sin revealed — man of sin revealed at midpoint, yet Day of Lord/wrath starts earlier in their view.

Internal Consistency: 6 (High). Fewer moving parts than Pre-Trib, but Daniel 9:27 3.5-year split

has no explicit rapture marker.

Harmonization Power: 6 (Medium). Handles Matt 24:31 post-trib signs better than Pre-Trib. Fails on Rev 15:1 — if bowls complete wrath, why does wrath “come” at 7th trumpet mid-point?

Explanatory Economy: 5 (Medium). Still requires 2-phase Second Coming.

Biggest deduction: No text explicitly ties rapture to 7th trumpet *and* mid-point while also starting wrath earlier.

3. Pre-Wrath

Scriptural Fidelity: 7 (High). Strong on 2 Thess 2 sequence, Matt 24:29-31 post-tribulation gathering. Distinguishes tribulation vs. wrath using 1 Thess 5:9. Hardest text: where is rapture in Rev? Places it at 6th seal, but no trumpet sounds there, breaking 1 Cor 15:52 link.

Internal Consistency: 8 (High). Tribulation ≠ wrath distinction is consistent.

Harmonization Power: 8 (High). Holds Matt 24, Rev 6, 1-2 Thess together well. Stumbles on “last trumpet” — 6th seal has no trumpet.

Explanatory Economy: 7 (High). One added assumption: 6th seal = rapture.

Biggest deduction: No explicit trumpet at 6th seal breaks Paul’s “last trumpet” anchor.

4. Post-Tribulation

Scriptural Fidelity: 6 (High). Matt 24:29-31 taken at face value: after tribulation. 2 Thess 2 sequence fits. Hardest text: Rev 11:18 + 15:1. If wrath arrives at 7th trumpet and is completed in bowls, but Post-Trib places 7th trumpet at very end, arrival follows completion. Also 1 Thess 5:9 promise vs. going through wrath.

Internal Consistency: 7 (High). One Second Coming, one gathering.

Harmonization Power: 7 (Medium). Handles Olivette Discourse best. Weak on Rev’s trumpet/bowl sequence and “not appointed to wrath.”

Explanatory Economy: 6 (High). Fewest added mechanisms.

Biggest deduction: Rev 11:18 vs. 15:1 arrival/completion contradiction.

5. Idealism

Scriptural Fidelity: 3 (Medium). Treats Rev as timeless cycles, not sequence. This dissolves timing question entirely, violating evaluation scope. “Last trumpet” becomes symbolic.

Internal Consistency: 7 (High). Consistent within symbolic framework.

Harmonization Power: 2 (High). Cannot hold sequential passages together because it denies sequence.

Explanatory Economy: 6 (Medium). Explains difficulties by removing them via symbolism.

Biggest deduction: Cannot engage Tier 1 sequential texts as sequence.

6. Full Preterism

Scriptural Fidelity: 2 (High). Matt 24, Rev, 1-2 Thess all fulfilled AD 70. Hardest texts: 1 Cor 15:52 resurrection, 1 Thess 4:17 "meet Lord in air," Zech 14 physical return. Requires spiritualizing resurrection.

Internal Consistency: 4 (Medium). Must redefine "last trumpet," "coming," "resurrection."

Harmonization Power: 2 (High). Cannot account for 2 Peter 3, Acts 1:11 future physical return.

Explanatory Economy: 3 (High). Massive redefinition load.

Biggest deduction: No physical resurrection or return.

7. Partial Preterism

Scriptural Fidelity: 6 (Medium). Handles Matt 24:1-34 as AD 70 well. Splits 24:36+ and 1 Thess 4 to future. Hardest: Rev 11:18, 15:1 sequence still future, but timing of rapture undefined.

Internal Consistency: 5 (Medium). Requires "this generation" limit, then shift to future without marker.

Harmonization Power: 4 (Medium). Olivette split creates tension.

Explanatory Economy: 5 (Medium). Two fulfillments adds complexity.

Biggest deduction: No clear rapture timing text; relies on silence.

8. Postmillennialism

Scriptural Fidelity: 4 (Medium). Rapture merged with end-of-millennium return. Hardest: 1 Thess 4:17 "caught up" during golden age? Rev sequence not literal.

Internal Consistency: 5 (High). Consistent optimistic eschatology, but rapture timing not derived from text.

Harmonization Power: 3 (Medium). Cannot sequence Tier 1 passages.

Explanatory Economy: 4 (Medium). Assumes long, victorious Church age not stated in timing

texts.

Biggest deduction: No engagement with trumpet/seal/bowl sequence.

9. Historicism

Scriptural Fidelity: 4 (Medium). Maps Rev to Church history. 7th trumpet = Reformation or similar. Hardest: 1 Cor 15:52 "last" loses meaning, 1 Thess 4:17 not historical.

Internal Consistency: 5 (Medium). Sequence becomes allegory.

Harmonization Power: 4 (Low). Cannot hold all passages in first-century + future tension.

Explanatory Economy: 3 (Medium). Requires continuous historical correlations.

Biggest deduction: "Last trumpet" and resurrection not historical events.

10. Amillennialism

Scriptural Fidelity: 5 (Medium). One general resurrection/return. Matt 24 mostly AD 70 + end.

Hardest: Rev 11:18 vs. 15:1 if seals/trumpets/bowls are recapitulation, why different "wrath" language? 1 Cor 15:52 "last" becomes "only."

Internal Consistency: 6 (High). Recapitulation consistent internally.

Harmonization Power: 4 (Medium). Collapses sequence, so timing question moot.

Explanatory Economy: 5 (High). Few assumptions, but at cost of textual sequence.

Biggest deduction: Denies progression in Rev 6-16 required by "has come" vs. "completed."

11. Progressive Dispensationalism

Scriptural Fidelity: 6 (Medium). One people of God, already/not yet kingdom. Rapture timing often Pre-Trib or Pre-Wrath derived. Hardest: No unique timing contribution; borrows from others.

Internal Consistency: 6 (High). More coherent than classic dispensationalism.

Harmonization Power: 5 (Medium). Improves on Pre-Trib but still inherits its timing gaps.

Explanatory Economy: 4 (Medium). Adds already/not yet complexity without solving rapture timing.

Biggest deduction: Does not solve Rev 11:18 vs. 15:1 without borrowing.

12. Seventh Trumpet — Larry Schimpf

Scriptural Fidelity: 8 (High). Core claim: rapture at 7th trumpet, after 6th seal cosmic signs, before bowls. Handles Matt 24:29-31 sequence by direct parallel with Rev 6. 1 Cor 15:52 “last trumpet” finds home at Rev 11:15. Rev 11:18 “wrath has come” + 15:1 “completed” fits: arrival at 7th trumpet, completion in bowls. 2 Thess 2: man of sin revealed before Day of Lord; 7th trumpet marks Day of Lord arrival. Hardest texts: 1) Rev 3:10 “keep from hour of trial” — addressed by rapid staccato trumpets: Church removed “in nick of time” as 7th sounds. 2) “Last trumpet” scope — Schrimpf argues only one numbered sequence exists in Revelation. 3) Imminence — answered by distinguishing tribulation vs. wrath; only wrath is avoided.

Internal Consistency: 8 (High). No second phase of Second Coming; gathering and wrath separate by moments, not years. Seals = restraint lifted, trumpets = wrath falling.

Harmonization Power: 9 (High). Explicitly built to align Matt 24, Rev 6-7, 1 Cor 15, 1-2 Thess, Zech 12-14, Ezek 38-39. Great multitude in Rev 7 explained as post-6th seal, pre-7th trumpet gathered Church.

Explanatory Economy: 8 (Medium). Main added assumption: trumpets unfold rapidly. Resolves Pre-Trib’s Rev 11:18 problem and Pre-Wrath’s missing trumpet with one mechanism.

Confidence: Medium. Would shift with peer-reviewed critique of “rapid trumpets” thesis or stronger lexical case that “last trumpet” ≠ Rev 7th.

Required Treatment of Seventh Trumpet: Strongest Objections

Objection 1: Rev 3:10 “keep you from the hour of trial” demands removal before any wrath begins, yet 6 trumpets precede 7th.

Schrimpf’s answer: Greek *tereo ek* can mean “keep through” or “guard from,” but more critically, he redefines “hour” via rapid succession. If trumpets 1-6 sound in moments, Church is removed at 7th “in the nick of time,” experiencing no wrath. Cites eagle in Rev 8:13 “about to sound” indicating imminent, clustered blasts.

Objection 2: 1 Thess 5:9 “not appointed to wrath” conflicts with presence during first 6 trumpets if they are wrath.

Schrimpf’s answer: Distinguishes seals as “hedge coming down” vs. trumpets as “hammer falling”. Wrath *arrives* at 7th trumpet per Rev 11:18, not before. First 6 trumpets initiate but Church removed at 7th before effects complete. Uses *harpazo* = “snatch from danger just in time”.

Objection 3: "Last trumpet" in 1 Cor 15:52 may be feast-of-trumpets typology or Roman military trumpet, not Rev 11.

Schrimpf's answer: Paul gives no qualifier; Revelation gives only numbered sequence ending at "last". No other canonical "last trumpet" exists. Burden on other views to insert unmentioned trumpet. Converges with Matt 24:31 trumpet + gathering.

Required Summary Statements

1. **Most uncertain overall score:** *Mid-Tribulation*. Medium confidence across board because few modern scholarly defenses exist; scoring based on older Archer/Harrison. New critical work could swing ± 2 .
2. **Score most likely to shift with more source material:** *Progressive Dispensationalism, Harmonization Power*. Position borrows timing from others; a dedicated timing synthesis from Blaising/Bock could raise it.
3. **Biggest score deduction per position:** Listed under each above. Common thread: Rev 11:18 vs. 15:1 for Pre-Trib/Post-Trib; missing trumpet for Pre-Wrath; sequence denial for Idealism/Amillennialism.
4. **Top-ranked findings: Seventh Trumpet** scores highest at 33/40. Reason: Only position that 1) takes Matt 24:29-31 gathering as post-cosmic-signs without displacing it from Church, 2) gives "last trumpet" a concrete textual home, 3) resolves Rev 11:18 "wrath has come" vs. 15:1 "wrath completed" without redefining terms, and 4) maintains 1 Thess 5:9 by "nick of time" removal. It handles Tier 1 passages as a single sequence without remainder.
5. **Two most significant unresolved tensions in Seventh Trumpet:**
 - a. **Rapidity of trumpets:** Case depends on trumpets 1-6 sounding "moments apart". Rev 8:13 + 11:14 exegesis for "quickly" is plausible but not consensus; if exegetically overturned, wrath exposure problem returns.
 - b. **Nature of "wrath" in first 6 trumpets:** If Rev 8:7-12 judgments are already God's active wrath, not just consequences, then Church experiences wrath before 7th trumpet. Requires more lexical work on *orge/thumos* across seals vs. trumpets.

This evaluation applied the four criteria symmetrically. No position was granted its premises.

Scores reflect how directly each view's timing claims follow from the text versus requiring inserted

frameworks.