

Chapter 4 - Conclusion

The evaluation of the results of this research seems to indicate that the doctrine of the pretribulational Rapture of the Church was started primarily by Paul (and supported at least by Peter, James, John, and Jude), was then passed on to the early Church Fathers, who in turn, continued to spread it within the early Church through their writings. With the rise of Augustine's Amillennialism, as the "orthodox" eschatological doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, and upon entering the Medieval Church Period (that lasted for about 800 years), this belief was decidedly placed in the background. However, it still maintained an active voice throughout the Medieval Period (in much the same way as miracles, *charismata*, and manifestations of the Holy Spirit also fared throughout this same period).¹ In fact, there are many similarities between where and when "revival" appeared and a renewed interest in premillennial, pretribulational eschatology. But, that remains a separate issue for another time and place.

In the late summer of 2004, Oral Roberts received an eschatological vision from God. In this vision, he was shown that neither the Church, nor the world is ready for the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Second Coming would be separated into two parts—the Rapture of the Church in the clouds (before the Antichrist and the Tribulation), and the return of the Lord Jesus the second time to earth to judge the nations (at Armageddon). The Church has not been fully doing its job by proclaiming the Second Coming, in conjunction with preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus.² This concept of preaching and teaching both Comings (Advents) of the Lord Jesus as part of the Gospel appears to be implied in the Great Commission, "and lo, I am with

¹Dorries, 41-55.

²Oral Roberts, interview by Benny Hinn on *This is Your Day*, 20 August 2004, transcript OR542, Oral Roberts Ministries, 7777 South Lewis Ave., Tulsa, Ok.

you always, even to the *end of the age*” (Matt 28:20). The Apostles and the early Church Fathers did in fact preach and teach the Gospel in this manner (boldly declaring both Jesus’ First and Second Comings) and many of them were martyred for doing it.

Hopefully, this thesis has helped to answer the question of when the pretribulation Rapture doctrine began. It is also the author’s hope that this may help to resolve the confusion over this topic in the Church today, encourage the Church to become the pure, spotless Bride that the Lord Jesus is returning to receive, and help the Church to completely fulfill Oral Roberts’ vision to boldly preach and teach both Comings of the Lord Jesus in these Last Days. If this is accomplished, then unbelievers will hear, understand and most importantly, be ready for the pretribulation Rapture of the Church and be able to join in the “gathering together to meet the Lord in the air.” Now, according to the last words of the last book of the Bible (Rev 22:20-21), “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.”