Three Main Views as to the Timing of the Rapture

I Thessalonians 4:13-17 makes reference to a time when believers will be caught up (raptured) to meet the Lord in the air. There are several views as to when this will occur:

➢ Post-tribulation View
This view states that the church will go through the tribulation period, and then be raptured at the time of Christ’s Second Coming. Support for this view would include:
- Many passages discussing Christ’s return only emphasize one future appearance (Matt. 24:30-31; I John 3:2).
- Revelation 3:10 seems to imply that believers will go through the trib period, yet be protected in some way.
- Passages have believers on earth during the trib, believed by this view to be the church (Matt. 24:22; Rev. 13:7).

➢ Mid-tribulation View and Pre-wrath View
These views state that the church will go through part of the tribulation and then be raptured midway through:
- Since believers are told we will experience tribulations on earth (2 Thess. 1:5-10), but not God’s wrath, these views state that we will be on earth until it is believed (by these views) that God’s wrath begins.
- Mid-trib views the rapture at Rev. 11:15-19 (7th trumpet); Pre-wrath places it at Rev. 6:17 (between 6th & 7th seal).
- These views see the early judgments as being “man caused,” and only the final judgments as God’s wrath.

➢ Pre-tribulation View
This view states the church will be raptured before the tribulation begins. Reasons the church may be gone include:
- Revelation 3:10 says the church will be kept from the “hour” of testing, not just the tests themselves.
- Believers are exempt from God’s wrath (including the entire trib period) (I Thess. 5:9; 1:10 with Rev. 6:17; 15:1).
- Christ returns “with” saints at the 2nd Coming, implying He had already come “for” them (Jude 14; Rev. 19:14).
- The church has no purpose in the trib. It is God’s wrath on the unbelieving world. Note, the church is mentioned 19 times in Revelation before the trib begins (chapters 1-3), but not once during the trib chapters (chapters 6-18).