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## THE RAPTURE; TRUE OR FALSE?



By Peter Salemi | BICOG

# The Rapture; True or false?

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*“I pray NOT that thou shouldst take them out of the world,” (John 17:15).*

*Millions of people believe in the doctrine called the Rapture of the saints. Best selling books have been written on the subject. Ministers in the Christian world preach it. But is it true? In this booklet we are going to deal with this doctrine and see what the bible really says about the church, and where the church will be in this end time.*

## Origin of the Rapture Doctrine

When did this doctrine of the Rapture appear in church? In his book “Secret Rapture” by Alan Campbell, he writes: “...the Secret Rapture theory was virtually unheard of and untaught until around 1830, it is essential to examine its origins first. Such a teaching was unknown to the early Church Fathers e.g. Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, who were convinced that the Christian Church would pass through great tribulation at the hands of the antichrist system before the return of the Lord. Furthermore the Rapture theory was not taught by the great stalwarts of the Reformed Faith - Huss, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Cranmer or even by the Wesley brothers in the 18th Century. Whence came this teaching therefore and where did this novel idea arise?

“At the time of the Reformation, the first Protestants widely believed and taught that the Papacy was antichrist, and the Roman Church was the Harlot System of Revelation 17. It therefore became necessary for certain Romish theologians to take the pressure off the Pope by inventing a new school of prophetic interpretation now known as Futurism. It was a Jesuit priest named Ribera (1537-1591) who first taught that the events prophesied in the books of Daniel and Revelation would not be fulfilled until three and a half years at the end of the age when an individual world dictator called Anti-Christ would arise. Thus Ribera laid the foundation of a system of prophetic interpretation of which the Secret Rapture has now become an integral part.

“Nevertheless in spite of the efforts of false prophets like Ribera and Cardinal Bellarmine it was not for another two and a half centuries that the Jesuit fables began to gain acceptance by Evangelical Christians. In the early 19th Century Futurism entered the bloodstream of Protestant prophetic teaching by three main roads:

“(a) A Chilean Jesuit priest, Emmanuel Lacunza wrote a book entitled ‘The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty’, and in its pages taught the novel notion that Christ returns not once, but twice, and at the ‘first stage’ of His return He ‘raptures’ His Church so they can escape the reign of the ‘future antichrist’. In order to avoid any taint of Romanism, Lacunza published his book under the assumed name of Rabbi Ben Ezra, a supposedly converted Jew. Lacunza’s book found its way to the library of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and there in 1826 Dr Maitland, the Archbishop’s librarian came upon it and read it and soon after began to issue a series of pamphlets giving the Jesuit, Futurist view of prophecy. The idea soon found acceptance in the Anglo-Catholic Ritualist movement in the National Church of England, and soon it tainted the very heart of Protestantism.

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“(b) The Secret Rapture doctrine was given a second door of entrance at this time by the ministry of one, Edward Irving, founder of the so-called ‘Catholic Apostolic Church’. It was in Irving’s London church, in 1830, that a young girl named Margaret McDonald gave an ecstatic prophecy in which she claimed there would be a special secret coming of the Lord to ‘rapture’ those awaiting His return. From then until his death in 1834 Irving devoted his considerable talent as a preacher to spreading the theory of the ‘secret rapture’.

“(c) However, it was necessary for Jesuitry to have a third door of entrance to the Reformed fold and this they gained via a sincere Christian, J. N. Darby, generally regarded as the founder of the ‘Brethren’. As an Anglican curate Darby attended a number of mysteriously organized meetings on Bible Prophecy at Powers court in Ireland, and at these gatherings he learned about the ‘secret rapture’. He carried the teaching into the Brethren and hence into the heart of Evangelicalism. With a new veneer of being scriptural the teaching spread and was later popularized in the notes of the Scofield Reference Bible.

“So today the three measures of Roman leaven have corrupted the Prophetic teaching of almost all the Fundamentalist world. Well might we say of the ‘secret rapture’, can any good thing come out of Rome?” (The Secret Rapture-Is It Scriptural? emphasis added). So now we see the reason behind the doctrine of the rapture and why it was created. Before this time mentioned, all scholars believed that the church, which the bible plainly says it does, goes through the tribulation period.

But what is interesting is, “Many sincere, born again Christians don’t believe in the secret rapture. Some times impressions are given in certain publications and in certain circles is that serious, conservative, born-again, Bible believing Christians hold to the secret rapture. But there are many such-both lay people and scholars-who do not believe in the secret rapture teaching” (The Rapture -A Second Look, Marvin Moore, p. 5 Inset box, emphasis theirs). Interesting that the impression most people get is that *all Christians believe in the rapture*, but this is simply not so. But still many of them do, so we are going to have to deal with this doctrine and pray that people will look into these things for themselves, and believe what the bible says about this matter.

### **“No Pre-Tribulationists” Before the Last Century**

It has long been pointed out that pre-tribulationism is a relatively new doctrine. With one possible exception, there is no record of it being taught before the past century. Now this does not in itself mean that it is false, but it should raise some eyebrows. If Peter and Paul taught pre-tribulationism, then we would expect the early church to have been pre-trib [Meaning the church raptured before the Great Tribulation]. *This challenge intrigued Grant R. Jeffrey so much that he searched for over ten years for evidence of pre-tribulationism before the 1800s.*

- (1) He found one person in *the fourth century* whom he claims was a pre-tribulationist.
- (2) This person is called Pseudo-Ephraem.
- (3) Since there had been no official translation of this work into English, Jeffrey had someone translate it for him.

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According to his translation, Pseudo-Ephraem wrote “See to it that this sentence be not fulfilled among you of the prophet who declares: ‘Woe to those who desire to see the Day of the Lord!’ *Because all saints and the Elect of the Lord are gathered together before the tribulation which is about to come and are taken to the Lord, in order that they may not see at any time the confusion which overwhelms the world because of our sins.*” Now on the surface this does seem to support Jeffrey’s claim. But a few things are worthy of note. According to this document, Pseudo-Ephraem correctly understood the Tribulation to refer to the second 3 ½ years of Daniel’s seventieth week, not in the common way it is used today, which is to refer to the entire period.

“Also, in this same document Pseudo-Ephraem says, ‘Already there have been hunger and plagues, violent movements of nations and signs, which have been predicted by the Lord, they have already been fulfilled, and there is not other which remains, except the advent of the wicked one in the completion of the Roman kingdom.’ If Pseudo-Ephraem is claiming that some of the things which Jesus had predicted were then being fulfilled, then he thought that he was already in Daniel’s seventieth week. Also, he expected to see the antichrist before the Lord would return. At best, Pseudo-Ephraem was what we would today call a mid-tribulationist (explained below).

“Furthermore, I think it is amazing evidence against Jeffrey’s position that in over ten years of research this is all that he could find. This shows that even if Pseudo-Ephraem was a pre-tribulationist, this was the exception, not the rule.”(4).

### Footnotes:

1. Grant R Jeffrey, “A Pretrib Rapture Statement in the Early Medieval Church” in *When the Trumpet Sounds*, 105-125.

2. Actually, he claims two. John Gill taught that after the church is caught up to meet Christ we will be taken away while the earth is burned and then return. Since this happens after the Millennium, John Gill could hardly be considered a pretribulationist.

3. It was common in antiquity for unknown writers to write in the name and style of someone who was rather well respected, hence the name “Pseudo-Ephraem.”

4. It was not until after I had completed the rough draft of this book that I began to read books by other post-tribulationists. Robert Gundry in his book, *First the Antichrist* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), gives very convincing evidence that this passage has been taken out of its context and misapplied. A summary of his argument is as follows:

First, he states that “neither of the slightly separated passages cited for early pretribulationism mentions a coming of the Lord (as in the classic New Testament description of the rapture at 1 Thess. 4:16-17), or a resurrection of deceased Christians and translation of living ones (as in 1 Cor. 15:51-52; see again 1 Thess. 4:16-17 for the resurrection), or a heavenly destination (as in a pretrib understanding of John 14:2-4 and, often, of Rev 4:1-2).”

Second, just a casual reading of some of the surviving works of the real Ephraem (which Pseudo-Ephraem is undoubtedly building on) will show that he was clearly a post-tribulationist. Ephraem expected to see the antichrist and stated that he would come before Jesus would. He said that “the tribulation will be upon us . . . the dawn of the morning will be near to us for the good news and joy of our Lord; as also our Savior said, . . . ‘For the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.’” Also that “before the rise of the Man of Wickedness we must teach and

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admonish people (about) his ways, and his deceits . . . Even our Savior said, . . . ‘If possible, he would lead astray many of the elect.’”

This passage goes on to describe as our hope the coming of Christ after the tribulation. He also warns Christians against being deceived by “the Man of Sin” (cf. 2 Thess. 2:1-12). He says that Jesus spoke his command to flee to the mountains (during the tribulation, Matt. 24:16) “concerning the church.” Gundry also gives several other examples and states that such quotations could be multiplied indefinitely.

Finally, Gundry demonstrates that Ephraem very commonly spoke of “gathering” in reference to evangelism and conversion. Once again, many examples are cited. He even states that “This theme of Christ’s gathering Christian believers to himself attains so much force that Ephraem even makes the Antichrist imitate that gathering with one of his own: ‘Like a partridge he [Antichrist] will gather to himself the sons of confusion.’” If there is still any question on this matter the reader is urged to read Gundry’s book, first the Antichrist for himself.

### Daniel’s Seventy Weeks

The whole theory of the rapture I have found is centered on the prophecy in Daniel the 9<sup>th</sup> Chapter. People who believe in the rapture believe that the last week, meaning the 70th week in Daniel’s prophecy is the great tribulation, and that week really means 7 years, which is correct. They believe that the “Anti-Christ” “shall confirm the covenant with many for one week:” meaning some sort of peace plan, and that “in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease,” he will break this peace plan and all hell is going to break loose. Is this interpretation true? Absolutely Not! Nowhere in the bible do you find that the great tribulation lasts for 7 years. You find in the bible “42 months,” “time, times, and half a time,” “thousand two hundred and threescore days,” which is a span of 3 and one half years. This is the time span of the great tribulation.

So what does the last week of Daniel actually mean? Who is the one who “confirms the covenant” for one week? That one is Jesus Christ! Romans 15:8, says, “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, **to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:**” He was the one who confirms the covenant not the Anti-Christ.

JFB Commentary says: “The confirmation of the covenant is assigned to Him also elsewhere. Isa 42:6, ‘I will give thee for a covenant of the people’ (that is, He in whom the covenant between Israel and God is personally expressed); compare Luke 22:20, ‘The new testament in My blood;’ Mal 3:1, ‘the angel of the covenant’; Jer 31:31-34, describes the Messianic covenant in full. Contrast Dan 11:30, Dan 11:32, ‘forsake the covenant,’ ‘do wickedly against the covenant.’ *The prophecy as to Messiah’s confirming the covenant with many would comfort the faithful in Antiochus’ times*, who suffered partly from persecuting enemies, partly from false friends (Dan\_11:33-35)....” (pp.436-437, emphasis mine).

Notice, verse 26 of Daniel 9: “And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.” Notice its “AFTER” the 69 weeks that pass that Jesus was killed *not* during, that leaves us with the last week left, and “and in the midst of the [70th] week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease,” When Jesus died he caused the sacrifices of the temple to cease when the veil of the temple was split right down the middle and the holy of holies was exposed, “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom;” (Matthew 27:51).

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Again the Commentary says: "...Messiah was to cause all sacrifices and oblations in general to 'cease' utterly. There is here an allusion only to Antiochus' act; to comfort God's people when sacrificial worship was to be trodden down, by pointing them to the Messianic time when salvation would fully come and yet temple sacrifices cease. This is the same consolation as Jeremiah and Ezekiel gave under like circumstances, when the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar was impending (Jer 3:16; Jer 31:31; Eze 11:19). *Jesus died in the middle of the last week, A.D. 30. His prophetic life lasted three and a half years; the very time in which 'the saints are given into the hand' of Antichrist (Dan\_7:25).... The rending of the veil marked the cessation of sacrifices through Christ's death (Lev\_4:6, Lev\_4:17; Lev\_16:2, Lev\_16:15; Heb\_10:14-18). There cannot be a covenant without sacrifice (Gen\_8:20; Gen\_9:17; Gen\_15:9, &c.; Heb\_9:15). Here the old covenant is to be confirmed, but in a way peculiar to the New Testament, namely, by the one sacrifice, which would terminate all sacrifices (Psa\_40:6, Psa\_40:11)....*" (ibid. pp.436-437 emphasis mine). History also records the oblations and the sacrifices ceased because of the crucifixion of Jesus, see Edersheims, Life and Times of the Messiah, pp.610-611. So this is the true meaning of that verse. *Read our booklet "Daniel's Seventy Weeks" of full details.*

Now since we now know the Messiah is the one who "confirms the covenant," and in the "midst of the week" was cut off, then we don't have to deal with one group who believes Christ is going to rapture his church away in the middle of the seven year period. Their whole argument is based on that, and since we debunked it, we don't have to deal with them, so we will deal mostly with the one other group who believes Christ is coming for his church *before* the Tribulation. Let's examine that theory and see whether it is true or not.

### Labels

I have noticed that many people, theologians etc...like to label people when they believe in certain doctrines so they can degrade them in a certain way, so they can feel better about what they believe, or that if they label them in a certain way it makes their doctrine right and the other wrong. I have been labeled on a lot of my beliefs, like "a legalists," a "cult" or an "Armstrongists," and do people think that because they label people these things that this makes their doctrines true and the others false? The three labels that people want to hang on other people and categorize them into certain groups about this particular subject are:

- 1) **Pre-tribulationists** that believe that the rapture will happen before the great tribulation. This will cause many non Christians, including the 144,000 of Israel to put faith in Jesus Christ and become the martyrs of the tribulation period.
- 2) **Mid-tribulationists** believe that the rapture will happen in the middle of the tribulation period. (at the 3 1/2 year point) They say that it's improper to link the Great Tribulation to Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. The first three and one half years will be peace and safety. The second three and one half years will be when desolation occurs, so this is when we will be raptured out, just as the desolation begins.
- 3) **Post-tribulationists** believe that the resurrection of the saints will happen at the end of the tribulation period, just when Jesus is returning to earth to begin the 1000 year reign.

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They believe that they will have God's loving hand upon them to protect them but they will go through the tribulation period untouched by God's wrath.

These are the three categories, so when people know which one you believe, they can say "Oh you're a so and so..." thinking that if they sneer and snarl long enough, it makes whatever you believe in wrong. Well this article is not going to label anyone for their beliefs, but simply show you what the bible says about WHEN the second coming of Christ is going to occur, and when the saints will be resurrected. Afterward if people are going to put a label on it, it's their affair; we just want to print the truth of your Bible!

### **When Will the Saints be resurrected?**

We are going to deal with the subject of when the saints will be resurrected. Will it be before the tribulation? During it? Or after the tribulation and the start of the setting up of the Kingdom of God? What does your bible say?

Matthew the 24th chapter is the greatest prophecy given by Jesus Christ and he gave us a serious of events that will happen in the end time. He spoke of the Great Tribulation that was coming and the resurrection of the saints and the exact time sequence of those events to occur.

Jesus said: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

"And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.... Immediately *after* the tribulation of those days shall *the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light*, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

"*And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven*: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and *they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*" (Matthew 24:21, 22, 29-31). Here we have a series of events that exactly fit with Joel 2:31: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come." Notice Jesus said that "after" the tribulation the sun shall be darkened and the moon will not give her light. Joel says "before" the "day of the Lord" the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood. So here we have a clear series of events from both scriptures:

### **Great Tribulation—> Heavenly signs—> Day of the Lord.**

Simple step by step series of events. Now comes the part when the saints are resurrected:

"*Immediately after the tribulation* of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: [Heavenly signs]

"*And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven*: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [Day of the Lord; Second Coming of Christ]

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**“And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other”** (Matthew 24:30-31). Here is the simple plain answer from the Bible. The saints will be resurrected AFTER the tribulation during the time of the day of the Lord at the second coming of Jesus Christ! Why so much debate? Why so much confusion as to whether Jesus comes before or after the tribulation when Jesus makes it so plain?

Matthew 24:31 shows that there are angels sounding the trumpet and resurrecting the saints of God at his second coming. I Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians shows the same events that are taking place. Notice: **“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, *with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God*: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord”** (1 Thess 4:16-17).

**“Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed”*** (1 Corinth 15:51-52).

Some important points have to be made in these scriptures:

- 1) These two events are speaking of the same event because the apostle Paul included himself in both passages. He said “we” shall be changed, and “we” shall be with the Lord.
- 2) Nowhere does it say that the saints go to Heaven. It says they shall meet the Lord in the “air” in the “clouds.” That is this atmosphere. On earth!
- 3) When this transformation occurs, Paul said an Old Testament prophecy will be fulfilled.

In 1 Cor 15:54 it says: **“So WHEN this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, THEN shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”** This is a direct quote of Isaiah 25:8. And, Isaiah’s prophecy is clearly speaking of the coming of Christ’s Millennial Kingdom.

**“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.”** This is Isaiah’s prophecy. Notice God wipes the tears from their eyes. This very quote John writes in Revelation about God’s people that went THROUGH the Great Tribulation, **“These are they which came *out of great tribulation*, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

**“Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.**

**“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.**



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“For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*” (Rev 7:14-17).

Paul said that this particular millennial prophecy will be fulfilled at the resurrection of the Church. Therefore, the resurrection of the Church must occur at the beginning of the Kingdom, which is AFTER the Tribulation.

- 4) Notice the apostle Paul calls the trumpet the “LAST” trump. Why the “last”? Because there are six other trumpets that are sounded that we find in the book of Revelation.

The 7th trump sounds at the END of the tribulation, heavenly signs during the day of the Lord.

Notice in Revelation 6 we see the 6 seals being broken. The 5th seal was the Great Tribulation and the persecution of the church, Rev 6:9-11. The 6th seal starts the heavenly signs, Rev 6:12-16, and in verse 17 it says, “For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” This is the seventh seal which kicks off the wrath of God, the trumpet plagues and the three woes.

Notice Rev 7:1, “And after these things” John says, after the 6 seals were broken, then the sealing of the 144,000 happens, and the sealing of the great multitude of people. Why are these being sealed? Because God’s wrath is going to start when the seventh seal is broken and God is sealing them to protect them from the wrath of God that is going to happen to the entire earth. Divine protection from God! We read of the same thing in Ezekiel 9. The man with the “writer’s inkhorn” (v.3) was to “set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

“And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:

“Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark;” (vv.4-6). The people that had the mark were spared from God’s wrath.

The same thing is happening here in Revelation 7. God is sealing his people to protect them from the wrath of God to come on sinning mankind. Here is one example in the book of Revelation during the wrath of God of the sounding of the 5th trumpet: “And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads” (Rev 9:4). So during the wrath of God, it’s obvious that God is protecting his people. That is why the Bible says, “For God hath not appointed us to wrath,” (1 Thess 5:9).

So here, and the trumpets are not even sounded yet, we are already past the Great Tribulation and the Heavenly signs, and into the start wrath of God with the breaking of the 7th seal. Yet Paul said that the saints will be resurrected at the “last trump.” So the saints must be resurrected during the day of the Lord, which is what Jesus said all along in Matthew 24.

Revelation 8 continues the sequence: “And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

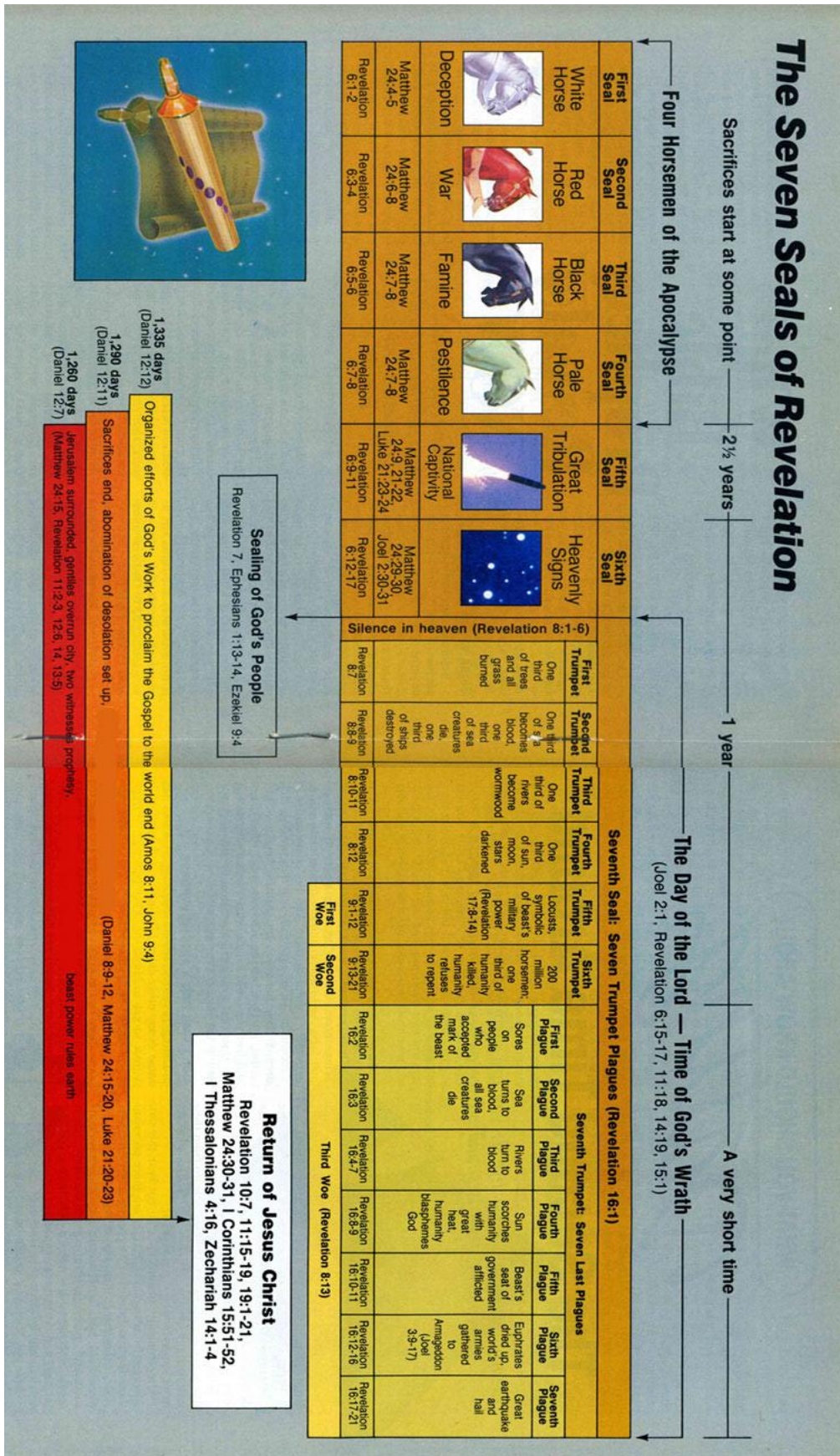
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“And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets” (vv.1-2). When does this occur? At the start of the wrath of God, the day of the Lord!

The 5th, 6th and 7th trumpets blasts start the “three woes” Rev 8:13; 9:1, 12; 11:14. The seventh trumpet starts the third woe which is the time of the “vials” of God’s wrath which is poured out without admixture, see Rev 16. By this time the saints are resurrected. They meet the Lord in the air, and we come back with him with the armies of Heaven, and to set up the kingdom of God with Christ, Rev 19:11-16. Here is the sequence of events from the Bible: (see next page).

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## The Seventh Trumpet

In Revelation 11 we see the two witnesses who are a type of Elijah and Moses, and their job was to "...prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth" (v.3). This three and one half year period is the Great Tribulation, heavenly signs, and Day of the Lord.

Notice in verse 7: "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." When does this happen? Verses 8-14 answers that question:

"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

"And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

"And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

"And after three days and *an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.*

*"And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.*

"And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

"The *second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.*" The death of the two witnesses comes at the time of the end of the second woe (Sixth Trumpet) just before the third woe (Seventh Trumpet) after the tribulation, and at the end of the Day of the Lord.

Now Verse 15 we get to the Seventh Trumpet, the third woe, the "last trump" Paul was speaking of, which is the resurrection of the saints at the end of the day of the Lord, at the time of God's wrath *after* the tribulation!

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever....thy wrath is come, *and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth*" (vv.15-18). The reward of eternal life comes to the saints at the last trumpet during the time of God's wrath after the tribulation.

The third woe then kicks off the vial plagues which is the "vials of the wrath of God upon the earth" (Rev 16:2). "For God hath not appointed us to wrath" (1 Thess 5:9). So there is the scenario of the resurrection of the saints in the end time. We have Tribulation, Heavenly signs, Day of the Lord. And at the end of the day of the Lord, at the time of the last vials plagues of God's wrath on the earth, the third woe, God resurrects his saints, meets them in the clouds of the air and they will ever be with the Lord! Now that should settle the issue. But we know that it does not settle the issue. So we are going to examine some of the scriptures people try to use to justify a rapture before the tribulation.

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## 1) “Coming as a Thief”

“Our blessed Lord said: ‘But know this, that if the good man of the house, had known in what hour the thief would come he would have watched and not have suffered the house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready for in such an hour as ye think not your Lord will come.’ Matt. 24:43-44; Luke 12:39-40.

The Rapturists tell us that this shows the secret nature of the Lord’s ‘coming for’ the saints, but does it? The only secrecy implied in the texts is in relation to the day and hour of Christ’s coming and there is nothing to indicate that the coming itself is a secret. In fact we are told:

‘The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a SHOUT, with the VOICE of an Archangel and the TRUMP of God.’ I Thess. 4:16. Nothing quiet about that, is there?

“Again they refer us to the words: ‘I will come on thee as a thief in the night and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.’ Rev. 3:3. Or again: ‘Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth.’ Rev. 16:15. However, in both instances just quoted, the secrecy is in connection with the timing not the nature of the event, and it is exactly the same in the other ‘thief text’.

“‘The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night’ II Peter 3:10 Here again it is the element of surprise that leads to the use of the thief as a symbol. Peter himself finishes this very same ‘thief text’ by saying that at the time of the Lord’s coming: ‘The heavens shall pass away with a GREAT NOISE’ Not much secrecy about that is there? After all did not Paul tell his readers: ‘But ye brethren ARE NOT in darkness that, that day shall overtake you as a thief?’ I Thess. 5:4.

“You see, as Christians, they were studying the signs of the times as we should be doing and were ready for Christ’s return. He will only come as a thief for those who are not prepared for Him.

“Furthermore the very concept of a ‘thief’ must be called into question for, at the time when our Lord and the Apostles spoke, a thief was much more likely to be a bandit or leader of a gang of robbers who swept down on his victims in swift, sudden, but open and daring raids, and he was not a sneak thief or burglar, as we have today” (Campbell, Secret Rapture, emphasis added).

## 2) “That Blessed Hope” Titus 2:13

People who believe in the Rapture often quote this passage to justify a rapture: “Looking for that blessed hope [The Rapture], AND the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ [Second coming of Christ;]” They read two events here in this passage. The Blessed Hope is the rapture, and the second event is the second coming of Jesus to this earth with his saints. Because the word “And” is there in the middle of the sentence, this is how they come to this conclusion.

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“The KJV is technically correct here, by translating the word ‘and’ [Greek - kai]. But, it does not account for the ‘Granville Sharp rule,’ which applies to this verse. The Greek word kai usually means ‘and.’ But, it can either mean ‘in addition to,’ or in the case of the Granville Sharp rule, it is used to restate, or connect words.

The Granville-Sharp rule is as follows;

*“If two nouns of the same case are connected by a “kai” [and] and the article is used with both nouns, they refer to different persons or things. If only the first noun has the article, the second noun refers to the same person or thing referred to in the first.” (Curtis Vaughn, and Virtus Gideon, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979), p. 83, Emphasis added).*

Now, let’s apply this rule to Titus 2:13. Here is the Greek text. “prosdecomenoi thn makarian elpida kai epifaneian thV doxhV tou megalou Qeou kai swthrov hmwn Cristou Ihsou.”

Here is a word-for-word literal translation;

***“Expecting the blessed hope and appearing the glory the great God and savior of us Christ Jesus.”***

The Granville sharp rule actually applies twice in this verse (1). It applies to the words “the great God and saviour.” Both “great God” and “savior” are nouns of the same case (masculine singular).

The first noun “great God” has the definite article “the” and the second noun does not. This means that the Greek word “kai” [and] is being used to restate, and the second noun is referring to the same thing as the first noun. So, in effect, “savior” [who is Jesus Christ] IS “the great God.” This is a definitive statement on the deity of Christ which is lost if Granville Sharp is not applied.

The same rule applies to the first sentence. Both “blessed hope” and “appearing” are nouns of the same case. And, the first noun [blessed hope] has the definite article in Greek, while the second noun [appearing] does not. This means the “appearing” and “blessed hope” is being referred to as a unit. The word “kai” [and] is used to restate or refer back to the first noun, it does NOT mean that the “appearing” is something we are looking for IN ADDITION TO looking for the “blessed hope.”

The NIV captures the meaning best in this verse.

Titus 2:13, “while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,”(NIV) So, in essence, this verse says that our “blessed hope” IS the “glorious appearing” of Christ. This begs the question, what is the “glorious appearing?”

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Matt 16:27

“For the Son of man shall come in the *glory of his Father with his angels*; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. (KJV)

Matt 24:29-31

“Immediately *after the tribulation* of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the *Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*.

“And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (KJV)

Mark 8:38

“Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, *when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels*. (KJV).

The “glorious appearing” is when Christ comes in all His power and glory, being manifest to the entire world. So, in effect, Titus 2:13 tells us that our “blessed hope” is Christ’s coming in power and glory, which is *after* the tribulation. Notice also it says that this is what we as Christians are “looking for.” This strongly implies that “the rapture [RESURRECTION] is after the tribulation” (Tim Warner, October 2000, emphasis added).

The Moffatt translates it this way: “awaiting the blessed hope of the appearance of the Glory of the great God and of our saviour Jesus Christ.” The Blessed Hope IS the second coming of Jesus Christ. There is no indication of a rapture here in this passage.

### 3) “As the days of Noah” Matthew 24:37

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

“For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

“And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

“Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left” (Matthew 24:37-41).

People who believe in the rapture say that these texts show that God’s people will be “taken” up to heaven, and the worldly people will be “left” behind. Is that what Jesus is teaching us here in these passages? Absolutely not! They have taken this totally out of context.

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The context is the days of Noah. There “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,” meaning that life goes on as usual. Then Noah entered into the ark, and they “knew not.” Knew not what? Noah was a preacher of Righteousness, see 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5. While the ark was being prepared he was warning them about GOD’S WRATH if they did not repent of their deeds. When the flood came, then they knew it was God’s wrath on them. And Jesus says “until the flood came, and took them all away;” It’s very important to understand that language to understand the rest of the verse in context.

Now Jesus says “so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” It will be the same in the end time Jesus says.

“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

“Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.” Taken where? Nowhere! Remember the context of Jesus words. The flood came and “took” them all away. The woman at the mill and the man in the field that are “taken” are the ***ones killed in God’s wrath like the flood of Noah’s day***, where the others that are left, like Noah and his family, they were left (alive) because ***God protected them from his wrath, like he does in the book of Revelation with the people who are sealed***. They are protected from God’s wrath because they, like Noah, obeyed God! So there is no rapture in these verses when you keep it in context. Actually the whole point of this scripture is that it would be unexpected (*the point also of the comparison of his second coming to that of the thief in the night*). The verse that introduces the section in which our two verses appear says, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man...” (verse 36). And the verse that immediately follows the 4 verses in question says, “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” (v. 42). In other words here’s the point, be ready, repent and be righteous because you don’t know what hour your Lord doth come!

#### 4) Greek Words: “Parousia” “Apokalupsis” “Epiphaneia”

Now I believe out of desperation to hold on to the hope of the doctrine of the rapture, some of the prophetic gurus turn to the Greek to try and prove that the rapture is in the Bible. One of the Greek words that they try to use for the rapture is “Parousia.” (Coming). This word means in the Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, number 3952 in the Greek, and is rendered: “a being near; advent; often, return-spec. of Christ to punish Jerusalem, or finally the wicked: aspect, coming, presence.”

Campbell writes: “... the one most used is Parousia, but never in the sense of anything that is secret. Paul frequently used this word to refer to the physical presence of himself and others at various locations e.g. he spoke of the ‘coming’ (PAROUSIA) of Titus to him from Corinth, II Cor. 7:6, and again in the same Epistle the ‘coming’ (PAROUSIA) of Stephanas etc. I Cor. 16:17. Again when writing to the saints at Philippi, Paul said that he would be ‘coming’ (PAROUSIA) to visit them.” (ibid).

In 2 Thessalonians 2:8, this scriptures shows exactly when the “Parousia” is going to take place, Paul writes, “And then shall that Wicked [One] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming [Parousia].” Jesus



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Christ's "Parousia" happens at the time when he destroys the false prophet. When does this happen? Before the Tribulation? No! At the time of God's wrath at the second coming of Jesus Christ during the day of the Lord. Revelation 19:11-20 shows Jesus' "Parousia":

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

"And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

"That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, [see 2 Thessalonians 2: 9] with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Is there any question when his "Parousia" is going to be?

Campbell writes: "Furthermore Paul spoke of the 'Coming (PAROUSIA) of the Lord and our gathering together to Him.' II Thess. 2 is an event seen by all after the appearance of antichrist, not in secret before the appearance of antichrist." (ibid, emphasis his & mine).

Another word they use is "APOKALUPSIS" But clearly the scripture shows when his APOKALUPSIS is going to be.

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed [APOKALUPSIS] from heaven with his mighty angels,

"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

"When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." (2 Thess 1:6-10). This is clearly *after* the tribulation at his second coming in Revelation 19.

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And the third word is “Epiphaneia” which means “brightness.” But this word also fails the test because in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 again we see Jesus destroying the false prophet “with the brightness [Epiphaneia] of his coming [Parousia]”

### 5) 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; 1 Corinthians 15:50-52

As we described above the resurrection happens after the tribulation at the last trump, or seventh trumpet, during the time of God’s wrath on the ungodly.

Now some try to argue that 1 Thessalonians is the rapture before the tribulation, and that Matthew 24 is the resurrection of the saints that were converted after the rapture and went through the tribulation. However the parallelism between the two passages clearly indicates they are describing a single event, not two different ones. If the resurrection of the saints is before the tribulation that takes place with the sound of the trumpet, why doesn’t Christ mention it before he talks about the tribulation? If it’s a “blessed hope”?

### 6) 1 Thessalonians 5:9: “For God hath not appointed us to wrath,”

As described above God is going to protect his people with the seal of the Father on their foreheads, see Revelation 7:1. Also the “wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 5:6). Why would God’s wrath come upon the people who obey him? That’s the reason why they are sealed. He does not have to rapture his people away, but protect them during that time.

### 7) Revelation 4:1: “Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.”

Some preachers say that this is the rapture before all the events in the book of Revelation take place.

First of all you do not see any of the saints of God going up to heaven in this scripture. Second John has to go up to him into Heaven, where in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16 Jesus comes down to us from Heaven to this atmosphere. In Revelation 4 we read of a, “voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking.” His voice is like a trumpet. In 1 Thessalonians, 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:50-52; Rev 11:15, a trumpet is blown.

In Rev 4:1 Jesus is not present, unlike 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 where he is present.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 Jesus is not in heaven but in our heaven meaning this atmosphere, where as the voice in Revelation 4 is in Heaven and not our heaven. So as you can see these two events are different. This entire event is the apostle John receiving a vision of the things that are happening in heaven of the opening of the seals, nothing here about a rapture.

### 8) Luke 21:36: “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

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This argument is also weak. The expression “to escape” is “ek-fyoo’-go” means in the Strong’s G1628 “to flee out: - escape, flee.” This is the same expression in the Old Testament “to flee” to the place of cities of refuge, see Numbers 35. Jesus is our refuge, he will protect us during the time of Great Tribulation on this earth.

- 9) **Revelation 3:10: “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”**

The word *keep* in the Greek is as important as the word *from*.

Strong’s Concordance number, 5083. “tereo, tay-reh’-o; from teros (a watch; perh. akin to G2334); to guard (from loss or injury, prop. by keeping the eye upon; and thus differing from G5442, which is prop. to prevent escaping; and from G2892, which implies a fortress or full military lines of apparatus), i.e. to note (a prophecy; fig. to fulfil a command); by impl. To detain (in custody; fig. to maintain); by extens. to withhold (for personal ends; fig. to keep unmarried):—hold fast, keep (-er), (ob-, pre-, re) serve, watch.”

### A Conditional Promise

Notice the promise to “keep thee from” the hour of temptation is conditional upon keeping Jesus’ Word with patient endurance. The Greek word “patience” in this verse is found seven times in Revelation (1:9, 2:2, 2:3, 2:19, 3:10, 13:10, 14:12). The last two are referring to believers in the tribulation patiently enduring the persecution of the Antichrist. Jesus’ promise to the local church of Philadelphia was because they had kept His Word with patient endurance thus far. Jesus did not make this promise to the other six local churches in Revelation. The promise is limited to one local church among many, and in response to their faithfulness. Of course, we can and should make broader application just as we do with all of the Epistles, written to local churches. However, we must also keep in mind the conditional nature of the promise, for those who have patiently kept Jesus’ Word. To assume a guarantee for all believers from this verse is a huge mistake. That goes far beyond what is stated or implied, and enters the realm of presumption. Remember Jesus’ statement at the end of His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7)? He likened believers who keep His Word to one who builds his house on the rock. He said that whoever keeps His sayings in that sermon would stand firm when the storm comes. Not all believers keep Jesus’ Word with patient endurance. If we are going to make a broader application of this promise than what is literally stated, at best it can be seen as a promise to SOME believers who take Jesus’ advice in the Sermon on the Mount. It is certainly not a blanket promise for the Church at large.

### A Promise of Immunity? Or a Promise of Preservation?

Much of the meaning of this verse hangs on the phrase “keep thee from.” It is pretty obvious that the “hour of temptation” refers to the events in the future. But, does “keep thee from” mean removal or preservation? This is the key question.

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## **The Meaning of “From”**

People who believe in the rapture claim the word “from” in the Greek [ek] means “out of.” Therefore, they claim we will be physically kept “out of” the tribulation.

It is true the Greek word “ek” means “out of.” However, as we will see later, they misinterpret the word “keep.” They also misunderstand this little Greek preposition “ek.” “Ek” normally requires a previous presence within the object, in this case, the tribulation. In the multitude of occurrences of “ek” in the Bible, in virtually all of them “ek” implies a previous connection to the object, usually within it. Rather than denoting a stationary position, “ek” implies a movement or emerging from within the object. The meaning of “ek” would more accurately be translated “out from among,” or “out of the midst of.” This is how it is defined in the Greek lexicons. In Rev. 3:10, the object is the tribulation. In order to come “out from among” the tribulation you must first be IN the tribulation. This usage can be demonstrated from the following verse.

“...These are they which came OUT OF great tribulation...” (Rev 7:14).

The words “out of” are also translated from the Greek word “ek.” In this case, it is clear these saints were in the tribulation first, and emerged from it.

There are three Greek prepositions which could be translated “from” in English, with different meanings. The Greek words “para” and “apo” mean motion away from, or a fixed position outside the object. Had either of these been used in Rev. 3:10, the implication would be that believers would be kept out of, and remain outside, the tribulation. However, “ek” in contrast, means, motion from the interior of the object. *That is, emerging from within the tribulation.* Based on the meaning of “ek” alone, the implication strongly favors a post-trib view of the saints emerging from within the tribulation.

## **The Meaning of “Keep”**

Our English word “keep” can have a variety of meanings, including to prevent, restrain, obey, hold, preserve, etc. Because of this, it is confusing in Rev. 3:10. They interpret the phrase “keep thee from” to mean “prevent from entering.” That is, “keep thee from” would mean to restrain or prevent from entering or experiencing the tribulation. But, “preventing” is not the meaning of the word “keep” in this verse. “Keep,” is translated from the Greek word “tereo” which literally means “to keep an eye upon” in the sense of putting your full attention on someone or something. It does not mean to prevent or restrain. “Tereo” implies a kind of giving one’s full attention to something or someone. It often implies preservation, but does not require that meaning. The most common usage of “tereo” in the New Testament is in regards to “keeping” God’s commandments or words. That is, observing them.

## **The Meaning of “Keep...from”**

Thayer’s Greek Lexicon says that when “keep”[tereo] is used with “from” [ek], it means: “by guarding, to cause one to escape in safety out of.” That is, to keep full attention on them so as to assure their final emergence. Therefore, Rev. 3:10 cannot mean removal before the tribulation

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begins, but safely emerging from within the tribulation. They misunderstand both the word “ek” and the word “keep.”

There is only one other time this Greek phrase appears in the entire Bible. And, as we shall see, Jesus’ statement in Rev. 3:10 is a reference to His High Priestly prayer in John 17, which also contains the phrase. The night before Jesus was crucified, He prayed in the garden for His disciples whom He was leaving in the world, and also all believers who would come after them. In this prayer, Jesus used the word “tereo” (keep) several times, but in two different ways. He spoke of His and the Father’s “keeping” (attentiveness and preservation) of believers, and also believers being attentive to, and “keeping,” Jesus’ words.

John 17:6

“I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of (ek) the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have KEPT (tereo) thy word.” (KJV)

John 17:11

“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, KEEP (tereo) through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” (KJV)

John 17:12

“While I was with them in the world, I KEPT (tereo) them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.” (KJV)

John 17:15

“I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest KEEP (tereo) them FROM (ek) the evil.” (KJV).

Notice the word “ek” in verse 6. Jesus considered His disciples as having come “out of” the world. He did not mean physical removal, nor did He mean they were never a part of this world. Rather, He meant they had emerged from the world system, being called out unto Christ. In verse 6, Jesus also used the word “keep” (tereo) in reference to His followers observing God’s Word, as delivered by Jesus. In response to their “keeping” His Word, Jesus prayed in verses 11 & 12 that the Father would “keep” (preserve, or be attentive to) believers. In verse 17, we have the only other occurrence of the phrase found in Rev. 3:10, “tereo...ek.” Jesus asked the Father NOT to take them out of the world. That is, not to physically remove them from the sphere of this present evil world. Jesus in effect prayed that the Father leave us here, in the midst of this evil world. But, He also prayed that He would “keep (tereo) them from (ek) the evil.

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Notice the exact parallel in Rev. 3:10. In both John 17 and Rev. 3:10, Jesus spoke of our “keeping” His Word. And in both He spoke of our being “kept” (preserved or given God’s full attention) in RESPONSE to our keeping His Word.

<u>Jesus’ Prayer &amp; Promise</u>	<u>John 17</u>	<u>Rev. 3:10</u>
Believers KEPT (tereo) His Word	thou gavest them me; and they have KEPT (tereo) thy word. (v.6)	because thou hast KEPT (tereo) the word of my patience I also will KEEP thee
He will KEEP (tereo) believers	And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, KEEP (tereo) through thine own name those whom thou hast given me (vs. 11)	I also will KEEP (tereo) thee FROM (ek)
“KEEP...FROM” (tereo...ek) Preservation from...	I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest KEEP (tereo) them FROM (ek)(vs. 15) “the evil” (vs. 15)	“the hour of temptation”

It is extremely important to understand that the exact phrase in Rev. 3:10 (tereo...ek) is put in contrast to the idea of removal from the world in John 17:15. In effect Jesus said, “Don’t take them out of the world, and instead keep attentive to them with a view to their safely emerging from among the evil.” **Therefore, not only was Jesus referring the Philadelphian believers back to His High Priestly prayer in John 17, but by doing so He was indicating they would NOT be removed from the world, but would be watched over attentively during the “hour of temptation,” having “kept” Jesus’ Word with patience.** Revelation 3:10 is not a promise of removal before the tribulation. It is a conditional promise for those who have been attentive to keep His Word. Jesus will be just as attentive to them until they emerge from the “hour of temptation.”

Some rapturists argue that Rev. 3:10 cannot mean preservation in the tribulation because Revelation 13:7 indicates the Antichrist will “overcome” the (tribulation) saints, making this just an empty promise. However, if we understand the time frame we will see that this does not contradict scripture. Jesus said, “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” Notice the whole world is going to be tried. God people are not subject to God’s wrath. We are promised protection from the plagues that are going to come on this world due to the wrath of God. The persecution of the saints is Satan’s wrath, not God wrath. The protection offered to us by God in this passage is from God’s wrath.

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### 10) “The last trump” The Dating argument

One argument Rapturists come up with is that “the last trump” in Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul near 59 A.D. and John wrote of the trumpets in 96 A.D. in Revelation, so because of this time span the last trump and the 7th trumpet doesn’t mean they are one and the same trumpet. The argument goes like this:

“The trumpet judgments of Revelation were written by the Apostle John near 96 A.D. Nearly 37 years after Paul mentioned the Last trump!!! Why didn’t Paul give any kind of explanation of what the last trump was!!! Because everyone knew already what the last trump was; it had nothing to do with the trumpet judgments of Revelation which was written 37 years afterward. The early Church was predominately Jewish and they understood what he was referring to:

“In Numbers chapter 10, Moses is told to make two trumpets of silver (Redemption). One trumpet caused the people to arise and stand (compare 2 Thess 2:1; Eph 1:10; John 11:52; Luke 13:34) at the tent door (compare Rev 4:1) and the other could cause them to march. The “Last trump” is the Tekeha-HaGodola, which is the last of a series of trumpets blown on Rosh Hashanah, (or the Feast of Trumpets)...” Perry Stone is an advocate of this theory.

Let’s deal first with the argument that because the dates are so far apart, the trumpets in Revelation and the last trump in 1 Corinthians cannot be the same because the Jews understood it to mean the Feast of Trumpets, whereas the book of Revelation, the trumpets in that book mean something else.

Why do rapturists reason like this? Is it because they are so desperate to justify a rapture they’ll try any excuse? There are many scriptures in the bible that were revealed earlier that line up exactly with the book of Revelation and even the rapturists have no problem with it. In 2 Thessalonians 2, written in 51 A.D., speaks of the false prophet who does signs and wonders after the working of Satan which is the same individual in Revelation 13:11. He also spoke of God’s vengeance on them who don’t obey in 2 Thessalonians 1 coming down with his army of angels and being glorified in the saints. This is parallel to Revelation 19. Are they the same events? Yes! Written 45 years apart? Yes! Disputes? No! So why is the scripture in 1 Corinthians disputed? Because it knocks the theory of the rapture into oblivion, and they’ll do anything to protect the doctrine of the rapture with illogical theories.

Second. The Corinthian church was a predominantly A GENTILE CHURCH, not a Jewish church, and its interesting that no explanation is given about the trumpets because the gentiles knew about the feast of trumpets and the other holy days of Leviticus 23. Colossians 2:16, written in 60 A.D. shows the Colossians, who were gentiles, keeping these feasts and people were judging them on HOW they were keeping them, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:” They knew about the feast of Trumpets. Interesting, “These three terms occur in similar or reverse sequence, five times in the Septuagint and several times in other literature (See Septuagint, 2 Chon 2:4; 31:33; Neh 10:33. See also Jubilees 1:14). In these passages, these terms designate the sequential order of the sacred times of the Jewish calendar. But Paul’s use of the specific term ‘new moon’ (neomenia) in Colossians 2:16 instead of the generic name ‘month’ (men) as used in Galatians

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4:10, clearly shows he is thinking about the sacred days of the Jewish and not the pagan calendar. The mention of the 'new moon' is connected with the Feast of Trumpets because the blowing of the trumpets every month was a reminder 'of the forthcoming Feast of Trumpets on which the trumpets were blown in a massive way to call people to stand trial before God during the ten days preceding the Day of Atonement...' (God's Festivals in Scripture & History, Bacchiocchi, p.95). So this theory that the Jews knew about the Feast of Trumpets and the gentiles did not is totally false.

Are the trumpets in Revelation connected with the Feast of Trumpets? Absolutely!

The Feast of Trumpets was a call for repentance, warning people about the Judgment of God preparing them for the awesome day of Judgment.

The blowing of the trumpet in the bible was a call for repentance: "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:" (Joel 2:15).

"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." (Isaiah 58:1).

In *What Christians Should Know About Jews and Judaism*, Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein explains that the shofar [Trumpet]: "is sounded on Rosh Hashanah to arouse us from our moral reverie, to call us to spiritual regeneration, and to alert us to the need to engage in Teshuvah (repentance). The shofar is the clarion call to perform Teshuvah-to search our deeds and mend our ways before the awesome day of Judgment" (p.119, emphasis added).

In the New Testament, many scholars and Bible students recognize this with the 7 Trumpets of Revelation: "The Feast of Trumpets is closely associated in Jewish thought with the new moon festivals that were celebrated at the beginning of each month....[Then] the Feast of trumpets comes as the climax of a seven month series of mini Feast of Trumpets....If John is familiar with Jewish thinking in these matters, as we have already seen abundant evidence that HE IS [like Paul and the Gentiles and the Jewish Christians are], the seven trumpets of Revelation probably represent the ongoing sequence of seven months with the seventh trumpet representing the Feast of Trumpets itself. It is interesting, within the seventh trumpet (Rev 11:18) that we find the first explicit use of the Judgment terminology in Revelation. In Jewish thought the seventh-month feast of Trumpets ushered in the time of Judgment that led up to the Day of Atonement (cf. 11:18, 19).

"Correspondingly, from Revelation 11:19 to near the end of the book there is an increasing focus on Judgment" (Jon Paulien, (note 22) pp.259-260), emphasis added). So the first six trumpets blown on the new moons leading up to the Feast of Trumpets, are warning and calling on people to repent, and its like a day of judgment "in MINIATURE, warning people to prepare for the final judgment ushered in by Feast of Trumpets," (ibid, p.103 Bacchiocchi, p.103). It's interesting that the first six trumpets (*typified by the new moons leading up to Feast of Trumpets; the miniature Judgments*) in Revelation, the plagues are limited territorially because they fall on thirds of the earth (Rev 8:7, 9, 11, 13). And the time span was limited for only "five months" (Rev 9:5). By Contrast, the seven bowl plagues, typified by the Feast of trumpets, fall on all the



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earth (Rev 16:1-4, 8). They are called the “seven last plagues” because they represent the final, end time manifestation of God’s wrath, the final Judgment that Took place on the FEAST OF TRUMPETS!

After that, when the seventh trumpet sounds, “And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail” (Rev 11:19). This is “a clear allusion to the Day of Atonement which finds its antitypical fulfillment in the coming of Christ as indicated by the manifestation of the cosmic signs of the end (Rev 11:19)” (ibid, p.105). So to say that the Feast of Trumpets and the Trumpets of Revelation are not associated with each other is ludicrous and totally unbiblical and unhistorical. Not to mention as we have proved above, John, Paul, the gentiles, all were familiar with Jewish thought and all knew that this was a type of the Feast of Trumpets that takes place after the tribulation!

### 11) “Church” Not Mentioned?

Some argue that “the church” isn’t mentioned in Revelation after Revelation 4:1, until Revelation 19. I’m glad we may agree that the 24 elders in Revelation 4-5 aren’t the church, but aren’t they Christians mentioned throughout Revelation (6:11, 7:14, 9:4, 12:17, 13:7-10, 14:12-13, 15:2, 16:15, 18:4, 20:4), and aren’t all Christians part of the church (Ephesians 4:4-5)?

First of all what is God’s church?

Jesus said, “I will build my church!” (Matthew 16:18). The Greek word is ekklesia, which you will recognize as the root of our English word “ecclesiastical.” It merely means “assembly,” or “called-out ones.” It comes from a root word which means to call out, separate, set apart, or assemble. These are people who are God’s “called out ones” out of this world and into his assembly of people. This is not a political organization, but a spiritual organism. His body of believers begotten of the Holy Spirit scattered all over the world.

Note that the word “church” isn’t used in Chapters 19-21 of Revelation, or anywhere in the books of 2 Timothy, Titus, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, and Jude. Do some then believe that these chapters and books don’t refer to the church?

If we look at all the myriad descriptions of Christians in all the NT books, how many of these descriptions don’t use the specific word “church,” but do use other key words and phrases such as “in the Lord,” “the faith of Jesus,” “saints,” and “brethren,” the same key words and phrases used to describe those Christians who will face the coming tribulation?

Why should those “in the Lord” in Revelation 14:13 not be considered to be the church, but those “in the Lord” in Romans 16:11-13, 1 Corinthians 4:17, Ephesians 2:21, Colossians 4:7, and 1 Thessalonians 3:8 should be?

Aren’t the Christians “in the Lord” in the tribulation, New Covenant saints, after the cross and after Pentecost, and not Old Covenant saints?

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Why should those who have “the faith of Jesus” in Revelation 14:12 not be considered to be the church, but those who have “the faith of Jesus” in Romans 3:22, Galatians 2:16, Galatians 3:22, Philippians 3:9, and James 2:1 should be?

Why should the “saints” in Revelation 13:10 and Revelation 14:12 not be considered to be the church, but the “saints” in Revelation 19:8, 1 Corinthians 14:33, Ephesians 5:3, Colossians 1:12, Jude 3 should be?

Does it say the church ends in Revelation 6 and then resumes again in Revelation 19?

Why should the “brethren” in Revelation 6:11 not be considered to be the church, but the “brethren” in Revelation 19:10, Revelation 22:9, Romans 1:13, 1 Corinthians 1:10, and 1 Thessalonians 4:13 should be?

The Entire Book Of Revelation Is For The Church!

From beginning to end, the Lord Jesus Christ gave the church the book of Revelation that the church might understand what it must face before he comes (Revelation 1:1-7; 22:7-16). This is why we Christians are referred to throughout Revelation (6:11, 7:14, 9:4, 12:17, 13:7-10, 14:12-13, 15:2, 16:15, 18:4, 20:4).

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass... Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand... Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him” (Revelation 1:1, 3, 7).

“Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book... Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand... I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches” (Revelation 22:7, 10, 16).

Here are some quotes in Revelation about God’s church.

And at the time of the seventh seal we see the prayers of the saints again: “And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

“And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

“And the smoke of the incense, which came with the *prayers of the saints*, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.” (Rev 8:1-4). Now if the saints were in Heaven there is no need for them to pray because they are saved.

What is the reason for the praying of the saints? Because of persecutions on the earth because of the beast: “And it was given unto him [the beast] to *make war with the saints*, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” (Rev 13:7).

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“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw *under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:*

“And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

“And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, *until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*” (Rev 6:9-11). Here we see the saints of God being persecuted for their faith.

Here are some more passages of God’s church being persecuted, “And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

“And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, *These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

“Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

“For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Rev 7:13-17).

“And it was given unto him to *make war with the saints*, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” (Rev 13:7).

“Here is *the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth:* Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” (Rev 14:12-13).

During God’s vial judgments, his wrath on the wicked the angel shouts: “Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

“For they have shed the *blood of saints and prophets*, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy” (Rev 16:5-6).

In Rev 17, we see a great fallen church called a woman”... *drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus:* and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.” (v.6).

And in end time Babylon, “was found *the blood of prophets, and of saints*, and of all that were slain upon the earth.” (Rev 18:24). The saints are all over the book of Revelation!

### 12) The “Yo-Yo” Argument

People who believe in the rapture frequently mock people who believe in the resurrection after the tribulation by saying that this view believes in an up and down rapture, thus the yo-yo simile.

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They say that it ridiculous for the Lord to call Christians to himself in mid-air only to come right back down. Why not have the Lord just come down to the earth and meet us down here?

This is a silly man-made argument. First of all, the Lord can do whatever he wants—He is sovereign. If he wants to rapture the Church in this manner, He can do so. Who are we to question his methods?

Secondly, we can use the same silly argument to refute Pre tribulationism. Why does the Lord have to meet us halfway? Why have him come in the skies, only to go back up to heaven? Why not have him just wait in heaven for us to meet him? So long as there is a meeting in mid-air, someone has to turn around and go back. See how ridiculous that sounds?

By the way, it was common in New Testament days for a representative portion of citizens to go out of their city a distance, meet a dignitary, and give him honor by escorting him back into the city. A similar escorting of Christians coming with our Lord certainly would fit into a Post Tribulation resurrection view.

Anyway, you can see the extent that they go to defend their position. They use silly arguments which try to put God in a man-made theological box. God is God and will do whatever he pleases, however he pleases!

### **Other Doctrines Considered**

Some others make the excuse that “Christ could return tonight!” What does the bible say about that theory?

“Now we beseech you brethren by (concerning) the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by (concerning) our gathering together unto Him that ye be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled, neither by spirit nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand (at any moment), let no man deceive you, for that day shall not come except there come, a falling away first and the Man of Sin be revealed.” (II Thess. 2:13). Paul wrote to watch out for this deception. Jesus cannot come at any moment. There are events that have to happen first and when we witness these events come to pass; we can expect the Lord at any moment. It was this very doctrine which had come into the Church at Thessalonica and made it necessary for Paul to write this passage.

Another excuse people use to justify the rapture is the “elect” of God. They say the elect of God in Matthew 24:31 is Israel and not the church. Where does it say that all Israel will be resurrected to eternal life at his second coming? Nowhere! The ones who are resurrected at his coming are his church. Besides the 144,000, the prophecies of Israel show Israel to be brought back to the Promised Land, not resurrected to eternal life, see Isaiah 11.

The first resurrection is for the saints and the saints only, “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his

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image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years [see Rev 5:9-10; Rev 15:1-3]” (Rev 20:4-6). These are the saints of God persecuted for the faith and for obeying God’s law and not the Beast’s mark or law.

In the Kingdom of God, the apostles who are resurrected to eternal life will be “upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19:28). When Israel, that is left, is brought back to the promise land, they will be judged meaning they will have there chance for salvation the way the church is being judged right now, see 1 Peter 4:17.

In the second resurrection, during the time of the great white throne Judgment, all Physical Israel will be resurrected and have a chance for salvation, see Ezekiel 37. So the elect that Jesus resurrects at his coming is his church. These are they that are dead and alive and meet Christ in the air. These could be Jew and Gentile, as long as they are converted to Christ; they are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise, Galatians 3:29.

### **Scriptures to Think About**

As we have shown you from the Bible, the rapture is a false theory that you cannot prove in the bible. There are so many scriptures that show that the church will remain here till the second coming Jesus Christ.

Again as noted Jesus says in John, “I pray ***not that thou shouldest take them out of the world,*** but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” (John 17:15). Why does Jesus pray to the Father that he should NOT take them out of the world but that he should protect them from Satan? Jesus does not want the church out of the world. God’s church is the only light of the world, why would he take them out when the world needs them the most, at the time of the tribulation?

Why does the apostle Paul say this in the book of Acts? “...***we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God***” (Acts 14:22). We have to go through the time called the tribulation period. We are not appointed to God’s wrath. But Satan’s wrath on the other hand is a different matter. Satan is after God’s church and wants to destroy it by all means necessary, as Revelation 12 says, “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (v.17). Satan hates God and his church, so he makes war with them until God comes back stops Satan the devil and locks him up for a thousand years.

Jesus said also, “In the world ye shall have ***tribulation:***” (John 16:33). Jesus says we will have tribulation including the great tribulation in the end time. Was it *just* for them? The disciples? No! When Jesus prayed it was not just for them, but also, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;” (John 17:20).

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And this last one in the book of Revelation. Why does it say in Revelation 20:4-6, that those who were persecuted for the word of God and who did not receive his mark on his forehead and hand takes part in the first resurrection? Notice the time setting is clear:

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; (see, Revelation 15:2) and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. *This is the first resurrection.*

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

Do you see, this is the FIRST resurrection! Not the second! There is only one resurrection of the saints, not two. This scripture means there are no other resurrections of the saints besides this one, which takes place *after* the tribulation, and it contains the saints that suffered during the tribulation.

Notice the word “first” in Thayer’s to confirm that “first” means the primary, first one and only resurrection of the followers of Jesus Christ:

The word is “protos.” Thayer Definition says: “1) **first in time or place** 1a) in any succession of things or persons 2) **first in rank** 2a) influence, honour 2b) chief 2c) principal 3) first, at the first.” (emphasis added). So there are no other resurrections besides this one of the saints which include the persecuted ones that went through the tribulation.

### **One last Question?**

If you are one who believes in the Rapture, how could you actually believe that you are in heaven having the “Marriage Feast” with Jesus, the LOVING GOD, knowing that your relatives and other people on the earth are going through the torment of the Great Tribulation? You Party while they are being tortured. Is that what a loving God does?

### **God’s Warning about False Prophets**

The rapture is based on the idea that Jesus will come down and take his own before all the events start. It is called a “Secret Rapture” and only the believers will be taken away. Jesus warns us of this type of deception in the end time.

“Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

“Behold, I have told you before.

“Wherefore if they shall say unto you, *Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not*” (Matthew 24:23-26). What is Jesus saying here? His coming

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is not going to be done in a corner of the world somewhere that YOU GO TO! Jesus comes to you, you don't go to him.

Jesus explains further:

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (v.27). The word “lightning” should read “lightening.” And what light goes “east, and shineth even unto the west” every single day? The Sun! And Jesus is called the “Sun of Righteousness” (Malachi 4:2). And his “his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” (Rev 1:16). He also called himself the “light of the world.” (John 9:5). Jesus compared himself to the physical sun that shines bright all over the world to give us light! So Jesus is saying that his coming is like the sun in the sky, THE WHOLE WORLD IS GOING TO SEE IT! IT'S NOT GOING TO BE A SECRET!

And we don't go to him, he comes to us as he says, “For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together” (v.28). The church is the carcass in the analogy. If you have a dead or dying sheep, and you can't find it, and you see buzzards circling a distance away, where are you going to look? Your backyard? No! You go straight to where the buzzards are, because you know that is where the sheep is. *Jesus is the shepherd, and he is coming to save his persecuted church. He is coming to us, we don't go to him.*