

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

THE TRUTH

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INTRODUCTION.

The word "rapture" means:

"*The taking of the church of Christ from this earth to meet the Lord in the air.*"

The event is clearly taught in the Bible and is not an invention of some clever Professor. The doctrine of the Rapture has been taught since the time of the Apostles and did not appear on the scene until later. The unbiblical teachings that prevail today that there is no rapture originated about 300 years after Christ. The reason why it is now increasingly believed that there is no rapture is because the preachers of the Rapture over the years have made the mistake of predicting the day and date on which the Rapture would occur. However, it did not work out that way, because we cannot determine the day and date. However, the mistakes that these teachers made do not make the teaching of the Rapture unbiblical. The word of the Lord stands firm, regardless of the views and distortions of man. I believe that the next event on the church calendar is the Rapture. We as believers must now prepare ourselves thoroughly for it and ensure that our jars are full of oil. The reason for writing this booklet is to prepare the church of the Lord for the coming of the Lord.

We read of this joyful event in the following verses.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-17.

But I would not have you ignorant, brothers, concerning those who are asleep, that you be not grieved, even as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will also bring with Him all those who have fallen

asleep through Jesus. For we say this to you by the Word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall not go before those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so we shall ever be with the Lord.

PREACHER'S HOMILETICAL

1Th_4: 17. Shall be caught up. -The idea conveyed by the word is the sudden or violent snatching away, as when the fiery messengers took away the prophet Elijah, or as when Paul was caught up to the third heaven.

We refer to this "caught up" as the rapture.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-58.

"Behold, I speak a mystery to you; we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in a glance of an eye, at the last trumpet. For a trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and when this mortal shall put on immortality, then will take place the word that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. So that, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not without fruit in the Lord."

PHILIPPIANS 3:20-21.

"For our citizenship is in Heaven, from which also we are looking for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our body of humiliation so that it may be fashioned like His glorious body, according to the working of His power, even to subdue all things to Himself."

LUKE 21:34-36.

"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly. For it will come on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

When we look honestly at these Scriptures and many others, we must admit that there must definitely be an event like the Rapture. There will definitely be a moment in time when the Lord will descend to gather the dead and the living who believe in Him and take them to where He is. Someone who does not believe in the rapture does not have a biblical view of the Second Coming. This also affects his view of the rest of the Bible. Those who do not believe in the rapture have a spiritual view of the Bible. In other words, they believe that one should interpret the Bible spiritually and not take it literally. Such a view usually leads to erroneous and strange views. One can read anything into the Bible that suits one's taste through the spiritual view. However, when one takes the Bible literally - **in other words, what is written is what is meant** - one cannot go wrong. **This is the only method of interpreting the Bible.**

One takes the Bible literally wherever possible. When it is not possible to take the Bible literally, only then does it become spiritualized. The rapture is referred to as the "[coming of the Lord](#)," but never as the second coming. The rapture is also not the first phase of the second coming. With the rapture, Christ comes for His church, but only to the clouds, not to the earth. With the second coming, Christ comes with His saints to the earth where He will set His foot on the Mount of Olives. One must study the Bible thoroughly and allow it to explain itself. When scriptures are connected to each other that have nothing to do with each other, then everything is thrown into confusion and thus wrong and sometimes ridiculous views arise. The rapture is exclusively a New Testament doctrine and does not occur in the Old Testament. In contrast, the Second Coming is a clear doctrine of both the Old and New Testaments. It is one of the main themes of the Old Testament. The Old Testament prophets did not see the Church Age. They only saw what had to do with the Jewish people up to the Second Coming. If we see the clear distinction between the Second Coming and the Rapture in the Bible and do not confuse the scriptures of the two events, each will become clear and understandable to all. Furthermore, we must understand that the saints who are caught up to meet the Lord in the air will not remain in the air. It is clear from various scriptures that the saints of the Rapture will be in heaven with Christ for a period of 7 years. Many preachers scoff when 1 Thessalonians 4 is used to prove the rapture. They say it can't refer to the rapture because we are only going up into the air. It only reveals a superficial knowledge of Scripture. One cannot build a doctrine on just one Scripture, it must be proven and supported by other scriptures in the Bible.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:9-10.

"Therefore we also strive, whether at home or away, to be pleasing to him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

During the period after the rapture, the Judgment Seat takes place in heaven. This is clear evidence that we are not hanging somewhere in the air like ghosts, but have been taken to heaven.

Furthermore, the Lord returns to earth from heaven and not from the air.

REVELATION 19:11-21.

"Then I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him is called Faithful and True: and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And his eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he hath a name written, which no man knoweth 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 are 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 God Almighty. 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 birds that fly in midheaven, Come here, gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God, that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the

flesh of strong men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and I saw 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 in his presence, by which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. And these two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone. And the rest were slain with the sword of him that sat on the horse, which proceedeth out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

It is clear from the scriptures that the rapture occurs before the great tribulation and the second coming after the great tribulation. First Christ comes for His saints and then Christ comes with His saints. To understand this doctrine and its place in the end times, it is essential that we understand the terminology of the Bible surrounding this event. When we know what the Bible means by the terms used, then we cannot misunderstand the events. It is when we give our own interpretation to these words and ignore the pronunciation of the word that we begin to wander and come up with all sorts of strange theories. As soon as we spiritualize these terms we move away from the truth of the word of the Lord.

1. TERMINOLOGY OF THE BIBLE.

1. THE RAPTURE.

The word “**rapture**” simply means the moving of something or someone from one place to another. The word does not appear in the Bible, but there are several words used that have the same meaning as the word rapture.

In the following scripture, the word “caught up” is used.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:17.

“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.”

KING JAMES WITH STRONGS.

17 Then *G1899* we *G2249* which *G3588* are alive *G2198* and remain *G4035* shall be caught up *G726* together *G260* with *G4862* them *G846* in *G1722* the clouds *G3507* , to *G1519* meet *G529* the Lord *G2962* in *G1519* the air *G109* : and *G2532* so *G3779* shall we *G2071* ever *G3842* be *G2071* with *G4862* the Lord *G2962*

STRONGS HEBREW AND GREEK DICTIONARIES.

G1519 *eīçeis* (*eis*) prep. to or in (indicating the point reached or entered), of place, time (figuratively) to or into a purpose (result, etc.) {Also in adverbial phrases; Often used in compound with the same general import, but only with verbs (etc.) expressing motion (literally or figuratively)} [a primary preposition] KJV: (abundant) suffer against, as,) depart before, by, with respect to + continuous, + much more exceed,

for (purpose, aim), before, + further, in (under, to, to, as much as that, to), with the intention that , + of one mind, + never, from (on-) to, + perish, + again set upon (so) that, thus (to), throughout to, to be the end), (here-) to (- to), ... depart, (where-) before, with (freely translated).

The "Lexham English Bible" uses the words "snatched away".

17"Then we who are alive, who remain, will be snatched away at the same time together with them in the clouds for a meeting with the Lord in the air, and thus we will be together with the Lord always."

The word "caught up" is used in 2 Corinthians 12:4.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:4.

"how he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

The words "come up here" are also used.

REVELATION 4:1.

"After these things I looked, and, behold, a door stood open in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as of a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up hither, and I will shew thee what things must be after this."

REVELATION 11:12.

"And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them."

BARNES COMMENTARY.

Shall be caught - The word here used implies that there will be the application of external force or power which will do this. It will not be by any upward force which they themselves will have; or by any tendency of their raised or changed bodies to climb of themselves or even by any effort of their own will, but by a force applied to them which will cause them to rise. Compare the use of the word ἀπτάζω harpazo in Mat_11:12, "the violent man takes it by force;" Mat.13:19, "then the wicked cometh and snatcheth it away" John 6:15, "that they might come and take him away. power; John 10:12, "the wolf catcheth them;" Acts 8:39, "the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away; 2Co 12:2, "such a one caught him up to the third heaven;" also John 11:11, "the wicked man snatcheth him up to the third heaven;" 12:28-29; Act_23:10;Jud_1:23;Rev_12:5. The verb does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. In all these cases there is the idea that either some strange power or force will effect the effects. What power or force is to be applied to cause the living and the dead to rise is not expressed. Whether it is to be by the ministry of angels or by the direct power of the Son of God is not suggested, though the latter is probably the most probable. The word, however, is not to be interpreted. As implicit there will be any reluctance on the part of the saints to appear before the Saviour, but merely with reference to the physical fact that power will be necessary to raise them to meet him in the air. Will their bodies then be such as to have the power of locomotion from place to place?

Therefore, when we use the term "**rapture**," it simply means that the church will move from the earth to the air to meet Jesus Christ.

From there they go with Him to the planet Heaven to take their place in heaven. When we use the word rapture it does not refer to the second coming of Christ. The rapture is an independent event and not the first phase of the second coming. The two events are separated by a seven-year period called the great tribulation.

2. SECOND COMING.

The first coming of Christ was when He came to earth for a specific mission. That was over two thousand years ago to die on the cross to pay for our sins. The "second coming" is when He will come back to earth - **literally** - to live here again to fulfill another mission.

That is to come and rule as King of the earth.

MATTHEW 25:31 -46.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then the righteous will answer him, saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or when did we see you a stranger and take you in, or naked and clothe you?

And when did we see you sick or in prison and come to you? And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' Then he will also say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you did not give me food; I was thirsty and you did not give me drink; I was a stranger and you did not take me in; naked and you did not clothe me; sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to you?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me. And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'"

The second coming is approximately seven years after the rapture where Christ will literally set His feet on the Mount of Olives and take over the government of this earth.

ZECHARIAH 14:4-5.

"And in that day his feet shall stand upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof from the east even unto the west, and a very great valley: and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee into the valley of my mountains: for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: and ye shall flee, as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then shall the LORD my God come, and all the saints with you."

DANIEL 2:44-45.

"And in the days of those kings the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people: it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever: forasmuch as thou sawest that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold. The great God hath made known unto the king what shall be hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

Christ does not come to earth during the rapture, He only comes to the air. During the second coming He comes to earth. Between the rapture and the second coming, the 70th week of Daniel is fulfilled.

DANIEL 9:24-27.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks: and it shall be restored and built threescore and two weeks, with streets and with trenches, but in times of trouble. And after the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for him: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and his end shall be with an overflowing flood: and unto the end shall be war, and desolations determined.

And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease: and upon the wing of abominations shall be one that maketh desolate, even unto the end; and that which is determined shall be poured out upon that which is desolate.

All the various prophetic words in Daniel (discussed in a later chapter) must first be fulfilled before the Second Coming can occur. The rapture can occur at any moment, the Second Coming cannot.

3. THE MILLENNIUM.

The terms mean a "thousand years." This is the first thousand years of all the years yet to come under God's rule. This is the period that Christ will rule on earth over the nations of the earth.

REVELATION 11:15.

"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."

REVELATION 20:1-10.

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years: and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years were ended. After these things he must be loosed a little season.

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to 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, nor in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. And the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; over 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. And when the thousand years are ended, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them to battle; and the number of them is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

ZECHARIAH 14:1-21.

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem: for I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle: and the city shall be taken, and the houses shall be pillaged, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go out into captivity: but the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. And the LORD shall go out and fight against those nations, as in the day of his battle, in the day of battle.

And in that day his feet shall stand upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof from the east even unto the west, into a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee into the valley of my mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal; and ye shall flee, as ye fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then shall the LORD my God come, and all the saints with you. And in that day there shall be no light, the stars shall be dark. And it shall be one day known unto the LORD, not day, nor night: but at even it shall be light. And in that day shall living waters go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea: summer and winter shall be the same. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall the LORD be one, and his name one. The whole land shall be as the plain, from Geba even to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: but Jerusalem shall be high, and shall dwell in her place, from the gate of Benjamin unto the place of the first gate, even to the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. And they shall dwell therein, and there shall be no more any more curse: and Jerusalem shall dwell safely. And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that come up against Jerusalem to battle: their flesh shall consume away while they stand on their feet; and their eyes shall consume away in their sockets, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouths. And in that day shall there be a great confusion of the LORD among them; so that they shall seize the hand of one another, and the hand of one shall exalt itself against the hand of another.

And Judah shall fight in Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And as this plague shall be, so shall the plague be of the horses, of the mules, of the camels, and of the asses, and of all the beasts that are in those camps. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall come to pass, that whoever of the families of the earth will not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, shall have no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, upon whom no rain shall fall, then shall the plague of the LORD smite the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles be upon them. And it shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day there will be on the bells of the horses, 'Holy to the LORD!' And the pots in the house of the LORD will be like the bowls before the altar."

5. THE CHOSEN ONES.

The word simply means that someone or something is chosen. Any person or group called by God is "**chosen**." We find various statements in the Bible that refer to someone or a group being chosen. The word "**chosen**" does not tell us specifically who is being spoken of. We have to infer it from the context in which the word is used.

6. NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.

When speaking of the "New Testament Church," it refers to all born-again persons from the moment the church began until the rapture.

MATTHEW 16:18.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

EPHESIANS 2:19-21.

"Therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone: in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God in the Spirit."

7. OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS.

This term refers to all the saved of all times from Abel to the founding of the New Testament Church at the beginning of the first coming of Jesus Christ.

PSALM 16:3.

"But as for the saints who are on the earth, I say, 'They are the glorious ones in whom I delight.'"

DANIEL 4:7.

"The decree is by the decree of the messengers, and the word of the holy ones is the matter, to the intent that the living may know that the Most High rules over the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever he will, and sets over it the humble of men."

(SEE ALSO HEBREWS 11:1-40.)

8. THE FUTURE OPPRESSION.

This term refers to a future 7-year period on earth where the antichrist will rule and God will visit the world with His judgments. A period where the higher one of Revelation 17 will kill the children of the Lord who were saved after the rapture. This will happen during the first three and a half years of the 7 years. In the second half of the 7 years the antichrist will persecute and kill the saints.

This period is also called Daniel's 70th week.

DANIEL 9:27.

"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease: and upon the wing of abominations shall he make desolate, even unto the end: and that which is determined shall be poured out upon that which is desolate."

During the first half of the 7 years, the antichrist will rise to power over the ten kingdoms within the old Roman Empire. During the last half of the 7 years, he will rule over these ten kingdoms. We call this period the Great Tribulation because it will be the darkest part of the world's history.

9. THE SAINTS OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

These "saints" are the group who missed the rapture and accepted the Lord during the tribulation. They are the ones who will die, without exception, during the period between the rapture and the second coming.

REVELATION 6:9-11.

"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 a little season, until the number of their fellowservants and of their brethren, which should be slain as they were, should be filled. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, behold, there was a great earthquake: and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a great wind: And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places; and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the generals, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

REVELATION 7:9-17.

"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. And they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." Then one of the elders answered and said to me, "These who are clothed in white robes, who are they, and where did they come from?" And I said to him, "My lord, you know." 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 spread his tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light upon 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."

10. THE 144,000 JEWS.

The 144,000 Jews are a group of believers from the nation of Israel who missed the rapture and were saved in the tribulation. They are sealed for protection from the 7 trumpet judgments. They will be raptured to God's throne as the child of Revelation 12:5.

They are in heaven during the last half of the 7 years.

REVELATION 7:1-8.

"And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: an hundred and forty and four thousand sealed out of all the tribes of the children of Israel: of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand sealed. thousand sealed; from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand sealed; from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand sealed; from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand sealed; from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand sealed; from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand sealed; from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand sealed; from the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand sealed."

REVELATION 9:4.

"And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only them which have not the seal of God in their foreheads."

"REVELATION 12:5.

And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne."

REVELATION 14:1-5.

"And I looked, and, behold, the Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound from heaven as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of loud thunder, and I heard the sound of harpers playing on their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins: these follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: these were bought from among men, as firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit; for they are without fault before the throne of God."

11. END OF THE WORLD.

This refers to the end of the age we now live in. This age ends with the second coming of Christ.

MATTHEW 13:39-50.

"and the enemy that sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. Just as the tares are gathered and burned with fire, so it will be at the end of the world: the Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and those who do iniquity, and will throw them into the furnace

of fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls; and when he has found one pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that is cast into the sea and gathers of every kind; and when it is full, they draw it up on the shore and sit down and gather the good into vessels, but throw the bad away. So it will be at the end of the world: the angels will come out and separate the wicked from among the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

12. THE HORROR OF THE DESTRUCTION.

These terms are better known as the "["Abomination of Desolation."](#)" This will happen when the antichrist breaks his 7 year covenant with Israel and does away with the sacrifices of Israel and then enters the temple and declares that he is God.

MATTHEW 24:15-22.

"When you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days!

And pray that your flight may not be in winter or in the summer. The Sabbath shall not be fulfilled. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever will be. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."

REVELATION 11:1-2.

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not: for it is given unto the Gentiles: and they shall tread the holy city under foot forty and two months."

2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-4.

"Now we ask you, brothers, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, not to be quickly shaken from your reason or alarmed, either by spirit or by word or by letter as if from us, as if the day of Christ had already come. Let no one deceive you in any way, for that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition. He opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

13. JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS.

This is the gathering of the natural nations at the second coming of Christ to judge who is worthy to enter the kingdom of Christ on earth.

The nations that stood against Israel will not enter the kingdom on earth. Those who stood with Israel will enter.

MATTHEW 25:31-46.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then the righteous will answer him, saying, *Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or when did we see you a stranger and take you in, or naked and clothe you? Or when did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?* And the King will answer them, saying, *Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.* Then he will say to those on his left hand, *Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.* For I was hungry and you did not give me food, I was thirsty and you did not give me drink, I was a stranger and you did not take me in, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me. Then they also will answer him, saying, *'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not serve you?'*

Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me. And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

DANIEL 7:9-14.

"I beheld till thrones were cast, and the Ancient of Days did sit: his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool: his throne was as flames of fire, and the wheels thereof as burning fire: a stream of fire issued and went out before him: a thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld therefore because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld till the beast was slain, and his body was destroyed, and given to the burning with fire. And the rest of the beasts were taken away from their dominion, and their lives were prolonged for a season and an hour. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, with the clouds of heaven one like the Son of man came, and came unto the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom; and all peoples, nations and languages worship Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom one which shall not be destroyed."

ZECHARIAH 14:16-21.

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall not go up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, shall have no rain.

And if the family of Egypt will not go up and will not come, on whom no rain will fall, then the plague with which the Lord will strike the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles will strike them. This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. In that day there will be on the bells of the horses, "Holy to the Lord!" And the pots in the house of the Lord will be like the bowls before the altar. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the Lord of hosts; and everyone who offers sacrifices will come and take some and boil in them; and in that day there will be no more Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts."

REVELATION 11:15.

"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."

14. DANIEL'S SEVENTY-SEVENTH WEEK.

This refers to the last 7 years on earth during which the antichrist will be on earth and the great tribulation will occur.

DANIEL 9:24-27.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Now therefore know and understand, that from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed,

A prince is seven weeks; and for sixty-two weeks it shall be restored and built up, with streets and ditches, but in times of trouble. And after the sixty-two weeks shall an anointed one be cut off, but not for him; and the people of a prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and his end shall be with an overflowing flood, and unto the end shall be war, and determined desolations. And he shall confirm a strong covenant with many for one week, and in the middle of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and on the wing of abominations shall be a desolator, even unto the end; and that which is determined shall be poured out upon that which is desolate."

15. THE ANTICHRIST.

This term refers to the man who will soon rise to power and rule over the ten kingdoms within the old Roman borders during the last 7 years on earth. He will be called the antichrist because he will be the open opponent of Christ. He will be present during all the events that will precede the coming of Christ.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:3-4.

"Let no one deceive you by any means, for that day will come, and the man of sin will be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

16. THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH.

This refers to the literal kingdom of Christ for 1000 years on earth after the second coming.

17. ISRAEL AND JEWS.

The terms Israel and Jews refer to the literal descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They now form the new nation of Israel. They were brought together there and fulfilled various prophecies in the Bible. There are hundreds of scriptures that prove that Israel and the Jews are the same people today. The terms Israel and Jew are both used for the same people.

18. THE WRATH OF GOD.

When we speak of the wrath of God, we are referring to the wrath that will be poured out on humanity with the beginning of the sixth seal of Revelation 6:12-17. This wrath runs throughout the great tribulation and up to the last seven plagues.

19. THE DAY OF THE LORD.

This refers to the literal day that Jesus Christ will come to reign on earth with His saints. It will be His day of government and no longer man's government.

ZECHARIAH 14:1-9.

"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, that thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem: for I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle: and the city shall be taken, and the houses spoiled, and the women ravished, and half of the

city shall go into captivity: but the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. And the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as in the day of his battle, in the day of battle. And in that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in the middle from east to west into a very great valley; and half of the mountain will move toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And you will flee to the valley of my mountains—for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azal—and you will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, all the saints with you! And in that day there will be no light, the stars will be dark. And it will be one day known to the LORD—not day and not night; but at evening it will be light. And in that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea; it shall be in summer and in winter. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall the LORD be one, and his name one."

The day of the Lord is a day of wrath for living sinners.

ISAIAH 1:24-31.

"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel: Alas, I will take vengeance on my adversaries, and take vengeance on my enemies! And I will stretch out my hand against you, and will purge away your dross as with lye, and will take away all your lead. And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning; afterward you will be called the city of righteousness, the faithful fortress. Zion will be redeemed by judgment, and those who return by righteousness.

But the transgressors and sinners shall be destroyed together; and they that forsake the LORD shall perish. For they shall be ashamed because of the turpentine trees which ye have desired, and ye shall be ashamed because of the gardens which ye have chosen. For ye shall be as a turpentine tree whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water. And the strong shall be as flax, and his work as a spark; and they shall burn both together, with none to quench it."

The day of the Lord begins with the return of Christ and continues until the end of the 1000 years when the new heaven and earth will replace the old.

2 PETER 3:10-13.

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein will be burned up. Since all these things are to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in holy conversation and godliness? Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, through which the heavens being on fire will be dissolved, and the elements being on fire will melt. But we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

2. THE HISTORY OF THE RAPTURE.

The opponents of the rapture doctrine of the Bible come up with the following argument. It is said that the theory of the rapture was created and developed by John Darby in the mid-1800s and that we do not read about it at all before this time. So this means that this teaching or theory is not even 200 years old, and therefore not Biblical. If it were Biblical, Christians would have known about it before this date. The opponents of the rapture pretend that there is no evidence of the teaching before the time of Darby. The above reasoning testifies that the opponents of the rapture are ignorant of what church history really has to say on this subject. The truth is that there is enough evidence before Darby's time to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt the authenticity of the teaching of the rapture.

1. WHAT DO THE CHURCH FATHERS SAY?

The earliest documents of the early church, including the New Testament, reflect a clear pre-millennialism. This means that there was an expectation of a 1,000-year reign of peace.

A kingdom of peace that still lies in the future.

Although the above is clear, the place of the rapture in relation to the tribulation is not very clear. What we must remember is that at the beginning of the church of Jesus Christ, theology was not yet properly developed. The followers of Jesus only had the law and the prophets and what Jesus left for them. Shortly after that the gospels came into being, and later the other letters of the other writers were added and over time the theological doctrines began to develop.

This was especially true of the prophetic parts of what was still new to the growing church. It is not easy to find clear statements on this subject (pre-tribulation rapture) in the church fathers, although there are signs of this doctrine present in them. When we examine the works of the following church fathers carefully, we see that they are predominantly chiliastic (premillennialist).

We find clear examples in:

1. **Barnabas** = 100-105.
2. **Papias** = 60 - 130.
3. **Justin Martyr** = 110-165.
4. **Irenaeus** = 120-202
5. **Tertullian** = 145-220.
6. **Hippolytus** = 185-236.
7. **Cyprian** = 200-250.
8. **Lactantius** = 260-330.

The early church fathers all believed in the soon return of Christ and that the tribulation of Christians would precede the return. The belief in the soon return of Christ is a central part of the doctrine of the "pre-tribulation rapture." The early Apostolic Fathers also believed in the soon return of Jesus Christ.

1. **Clement of Rome** = 90-100.
2. **Ignatius of Antioch** = 98-117.
3. **Die Didache** = 100-160.
4. **Die Evangelie van Barnabas** = 117-138.
5. **Die Herder van Hermas** = 96-150.

The **Shepherd of Hermas** writes the following.

"You have escaped great tribulation because of your faith and because you do not doubt the presence of such a beast. Go then to the elect of the Lord his mighty acts and tell them that this beast is a type of great tribulation that is coming.

If then you prepare yourselves and repent with all your heart and turn to the Lord, it will be possible for you to escape it if your heart is pure and blameless and you spend the rest of your days before the Lord blameless." (1.4.2).

However, no clear evidence can be found from the works of the church fathers regarding the rapture, but we can draw the following conclusions from these works.

1. They expected a literal second coming with the 1000 year reign of peace that would immediately follow.
2. They believed in the soon return of Christ with occasional references to pre-tribulation theology.
3. They were oppressed by the Roman government, but never referred to it as the Great Tribulation.

Larry Crutchfield says the following:

"This view of the fathers in the near future, and in some references to escaping the time of the Tribulation, forms what might be called, to quote Erickson, "seeds from which the doctrine of the pretribulational rapture could be developed..." had it not been for the drought in sound exegesis, brought about by Alexandrian allegorism and later by Augustine, we wonder what kind of harvest those seeds might have yielded - long before J.N. Darby and the nineteenth century." (p.77)

2. THE DARK AGES CHURCH.

The period between Augustine and the Reformation was dominated by the theology and views of Augustine. His views on the church and his spiritualization of future events such as the kingdom of peace meant that little can be read about the literal interpretation of events, except for sporadic revivals.

Ephraem of Nisibis.

Ephraem was a tremendously important writer of that time. He was also known as Pseudo Ephraem. He was one of the great theologians of his time in the early Eastern (Byzantine) church. His important message "**On the Last Times, the Antichrist and the End of the World**" (373) declare the following: "*All the saints and elect of God are gathered before the tribulation that is coming, and are taken to the Lord so that they cannot see the confusion that overwhelms the world because of our sins.*"

In this message he develops a clear biblical eschatology, including a clear distinction between the rapture and the second coming of Christ. It describes the imminent rapture followed by the tribulation and reign of the antichrist, followed by the coming of Christ and the destruction of the antichrist. His view includes a discussion of Daniel's 70th week.

Codex Amiatinus. (690-716).

This important Latin manuscript from England was recommended by Abbot Ceolfrid to the monasteries of Jarrow and Wearmouth in Northumberland. In the title of Psalm 22 (23 in the Vulgate) appears the following.

"Psalm of David, the voice of the Church after being raptured."

The Latin phrase "**post ratismum**" contains a word from the base "**rapio**" meaning "**to snatch, or hurry away.**" The title is not carried over from Jerome's Vulgate and is therefore possibly a product of Jarrow Monastery. It therefore seems as if this medieval manuscript bears signs of pre-tribulation theological thought.

Brother Dolcino. (1307).

A recent study of this 14th century text, "**The History of Brother Dolcino**," compiled by an unknown source in 1316, reveals another important pre-tribulation passage. As a leader of the Apostolic Brethren in northern Italy, Brother Dolcino led his followers through very difficult times during the Roman persecution. One of the group wrote the following interesting passage.

"The Antichrist came into this world within the limits of the said three and a half years; And after he came, he (Dolcino) and his followers would be changed into Paradise, in which Enoch and Elijah are. And in this way they will remain unharmed from the persecution of the Antichrist."

It is clear that the author of this passage believed that Brother Dolcino and his followers would be transferred from this earth to paradise. He expresses his belief with the words "**transferrentur**" (translation).

A synonym for the word "**rapture**".

Dolcino and his followers went into the mountains to await their removal from this world at the coming of the Antichrist. It is believed that groups such as the "**Albigenses**" and the "**Lombards**" and the "**Waldenses**" had a pre-millennial expectation. However, very little is known about them because all their works were destroyed by the Catholic Church.

Francis Gumerlock write the following about **Broer Dolcino**. "**The Dolcinites believed in a pre-tribulation rapture theory similar to modern dispensationalism.**"

The value of these preceding quotations is that they prove that those who believe that the theory of the rapture did not exist before 1830 are wrong. Long before Darby and 1830 there was already strong evidence of the doctrine of the rapture.

Gumerlock (p. 361) continues to say:

"This passage from the history of Brother Dolcino indicates that in the early fourteenth century in northern Italy a doctrine very similar to modern pretribulationalism was being preached. He was responding to disturbing political and ecclesiastical conditions. Dolcino was engaged in detailed speculations on eschatology and believed that the coming of the Antichrist was approaching. He also believed that the way in which the Lord would preserve the saints from the persecution of the Antichrist was by a transference of the saints from earth to paradise."

3. THE REFORMATION.

After more than 1000 years of suppression, premillennialism resurfaced due to various factors. First, the breakaway of the reformers from the Roman Church forced them to move back to the Bible and the writings of the church fathers. This exposed them to an orthodox premillennial view. Of particular importance was the reappearance of the complete manuscript of Irenaeus "**Against Heresies**" including the last five chapters, which indicates a consistent "**futurist**" view and places the 70th week of Daniel in the future. Furthermore, they refuted most of the allegorical views and accepted a more literal division with the Bible, especially regarding the grammatical and historical explanations. With this move away from the Roman Church, many of these Protestants came into contact with Jews and Hebrew scholars. This helped them understand which scriptures regarding Israel should be taken literally and which allegorically. What further helped with understanding this view was the translation of the Bible in the late 15th century.

This caused a reading explosion of the Bible. It caused a general understanding of the Bible. Especially the understanding of the Old Testament for the first time in the history of the church.

Joseph Mede (1586-1638).

He is generally considered the father of English premillennialism. He was the author of the work "*Clavis Apocalyptic (Key of the Revelation)* in 1627. In this he attempts to give an interpretation of the Apocalypse, purely on internal considerations. In this work he presents premillennialism in such a pure and correct manner that his work has inspired great theologians throughout the ages.

Increase Mather (1639-1723).

He was the president of Harvard College in 1685. He was also a prominent Puritan. In reference to the return of Christ, he wrote about the saints, "**being caught up in the air**".

It is essential that the following also be quoted.

Paul Benware (pp.197-98). The French reformer, Peter Jurieu, in his book *Approaching Deliverance of the Church* (1687), taught that Christ would come in the air to take the saints away and return to heaven before the battle of Armageddon. He spoke of a secret rapture before his return at Armageddon. *Philip Doddridge's Commentary on the New Testament (1738)* and *John Gills' Commentary on the New Testament (1748)* both use the term rapture and speak of it as imminent. It is clear that these men believed that this coming would precede Christ's coming to earth and the time of judgment. The goal is to preserve believers from the time of judgment. *James Macknight (1763)* and *Thomas Scott (1792)* taught that the righteous would be carried to heaven where they will be safe until the judgment is over.

Gill's New Testament Commentary.

1Th 4:17 And we which are alive and remain, See Gill on 1Th4:15. shall be caught up; Suddenly, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and with power and might; by the power of Christ, and by the ministering and agency of the holy angels; and which rapture shall add, to the unity which the bodies both of the risen and changed saints shall have: and this rapture of the living saints shall be with them; with the dead in Christ shall it then be raised; so that the one shall not be before the other, or the one shall be with Christ before the other; but the one that is risen, and the other that is changed, shall be gathered together in one company and in the general assembly, and shall be caught up in the clouds; The same clouds perhaps in which Christ will come, they will be taken up; These will be the chariots in which they will be taken up for him; and so we received a cloud like a cloud of heaven, and thereby he was taken up from the sight of men, and at this time all the saints will be taken up in the clouds of heaven;

The clearest expression of this view is found in the works of Morgan Edwards (1722-1795). He preached and wrote about a clear rapture at least three and a half years before the 1000 years of peace on earth. Edwards was a Baptist preacher, evangelist, historian, and lecturer. He was also the founder of Rhode Island College (Brown University). During his student years at the Bristol Baptist Seminary in England, he wrote a piece on Biblical prophecy. The piece was published in Philadelphia in 1788 as

"Two Academical Exercises on Subjects Bearing the Following Titles; Millennium, Last-Novelties."

He writes; The distance between the first and second resurrections will be somewhat more than a thousand years. I say, somewhat more; because the dead saints will be raised and the living changed at Christ's "appearance in the air" (1 Thess. iv, 17); and that will be about three and a half years before the millennium, as we shall see hereafter; but will he and they remain in the air all the time? No: they will ascend to paradise, or to one of those many "mansions in the house of God" (John xiv: 2), and to disappear during the period mentioned. The design of this return and disappearance will be to judge the risen and changed saints; for "now is the time come that judgment must begin," and it shall be at the house of God" (1 Pet. iv. 17): to this refers that part of my text, "and I saw thrones; and judgment was given," viz. "the saints were judged, and their rewards were specified; of. -Which, note hereafter. Knowing all this, the devil will follow to accuse the brethren to the judge; and they will be day and night continue in the hope of preventing their acquaintance; their pleas against him will be those borrowed from "the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony." and their accuser will be cast down to the earth by the strong arm of Michael; and with him will come that remarkable voice; "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time, namely, three years and a half, as before (Rev. xii. 7- 11). Add to the above, that between the end of the millennium and the second resurrection the devil must be loosed, and the army of Gog and Magog will be destroyed, which will require a considerable time, as John calls it. a little season." (Rev. xx. 3.)

We see the following in his writing.

1. He believed that more than a 1000 years passed between the two resurrections.
2. He associated the first resurrection with the rapture of 2 Thessalonians 4:17.
3. He associated the meeting of the believers and Christ in the air with John 14:2.
4. He saw believers disappearing to heaven during the time of the great tribulation.

So we see clearly that Morgan Edwards already believed and preached a 100 years before Darby that there would be a rapture.

4. THE MODERN CHURCH.

As early as 1818, important proponents of premillennialism emerged. In 1818, William Witherby published a book containing virtually all the ingredients of modern futurism.

John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) strongly promoted this doctrine. He claimed that it was the result of personal Bible study. The doctrine of the rapture spread throughout the world through the Brethren movement with which Darby was associated. Two other individuals who strongly proclaimed this view were the Presbyterian James H. Brookes (1830-1897) and the Baptist J.R. Graves (1820-1889). This view was also further spread during the Niagara Bible Conference era (New York 1878-1909). It also received wide publicity in the following publications. *The Truth, Our Hope, The Watchword and Maranatha.*

The following people were strong proponents of the rapture doctrine.

- 1. Arno C. Gaebelain = 1861-1945.*
- 2. A. J. Gordan = 1836-1895.*
- 3. James M. Gray = 1851-1935.*
- 4. R. A. Torrey = 1856 - 1928.*
- 5. Harry Ironside = 1876-1951.*
- 6. John F. Strombeck = 1881-1959.*
- 7. J. Dwight Pentecost*
- 8. Charles Ryrie.*
- 9. Tim LaHaye.*
- 10. Hilton Sutton.*

I could mention many others, but this will suffice, otherwise there would be no room in the book to write anything else. I believe that the foregoing from history is clear enough that the doctrine of the rapture was already taught long before the time of Darby. It is not a new doctrine invented by man, but one that comes directly from the pages of the Bible.

3. THE EARTH JUST BEFORE THE RAPTURE.

One of the special scriptures in the Bible is the statement in both Matthew and Luke that the coming of the Lord will be as in the days of Noah.

MATTHEW 24:37-39.

"And as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as they were in the days that were before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah 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."

In a verse in Luke we see that there will be buying and selling and planting and harvesting.

LUKE 17:28.

"Just as it also happened in the days of Lot: they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built."

Since there will be food, clothing, and social opportunities and an economy right before the coming of Jesus, we see that it will be business as usual until the end of the age. Thus, the rapture will catch the world off guard on a grand scale just as the flood took the people of Noah's day by complete surprise. The events leading up to the return of Christ are truly devastating and earth-shaking, certainly not "**business as usual.**" War, famine, disease, and an earthquake so great that it shook all the mountains of the earth. Clearly, this cannot refer to the days of Noah.

So this means that the "days of Noah" verses must definitely refer unmistakably to the coming of Jesus called the rapture. Times on earth will be basically normal just before the rapture.

The model that Jesus gives here is as follows.

1. God reveals His plan to His chosen ones.
2. God closes the door.
3. The ark rises and floats above the flood.
4. The ark returns to the earth.
5. A new dispensation begins.

So we can draw the following conclusion.

1. God reveals His plan to the church.
2. God closes the door with the rapture.
3. The church is taken up above the tribulation.
4. The church returns to the earth.
5. A new dispensation begins.

We also see that Noah entered the ark before the flood, not in the middle or after. Before the flood, Noah had been building the ark for over 100 years. Far from the sea, he built a boat. Up to that point, no rain had ever fallen on the earth, let alone a flood of water?

GENESIS 2:5-6.

"and no shrub of the field was yet on the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprung up; for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground. But a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground."

That's why Noah is mentioned in Hebrews 11.

HEBREWS 11:7.

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his household; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."

Noah trusted God by faith and knew that God's promises are eternal. He did not understand it, but by faith he did what God asked him to do.

2 PETER 2:5.

"and spared not the old world, but saved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;"

Noah faithfully preached for over a hundred years about the coming flood. The people of the earth at that time saw the ark completed and the animals moving into the ark as God had commanded. They saw all this but did not listen to Noah's warnings. They blatantly ridiculed the idea of a flood.

We are also warned that in the last days people will ridicule us for what we believe.

2 PETER 3:3-6.

"Knowing this, that in the last days scoffers will come, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. For this they willingly forget, that there were heavens of old, and an earth standing out of water and in water by the word of God, through which the world that then was, being deluged with water, perished."

Today we see more attacks on the Bible and the Christian faith than ever before in history. Anyone who believes in the Biblical account of creation and the flood of Noah is mocked. However, we can be assured that just as God closed the door of the ark in Noah's day, so He will close the door of the church dispensation at the rapture.

The door of the ark is a type of Christ.

JOHN 10:7.

"Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep."

After God closed the door of the ark, it was too late for the unbelievers to enter the ark. When God closes the door through the rapture, it is too late for the unbelievers to miss the tribulation. Noah floats with the ark above the flood, protected by God, returns to the earth and begins a new dispensation. The church will leave the earth through the rapture and above the tribulation participate in judgment seat of Christ and then return to the earth and then a new dispensation will begin. However, there is one other characteristic of Noah's time that few people talk about and that is the "**Nephilim**". The "**Nephilim**" were half human and half devil. The world was so unholy in the days of Noah that fallen angels came to earth and interbred with humans. This created the so-called "**super race.**"

Only Noah and his family were saved by God from the flood.

GENESIS 6:4.

"The giants were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men who were of old, men of renown."

GOD'S WORD.

"The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, as well as later, when the sons of God slept with the daughters of other humans and had children by them. These children were famous long ago."

YOUNG'S LITERAL TRANSLATION.

"The fallen ones were in the earth in those days, and even afterwards when sons of God come in unto daughters of men, and they have borne to them—they are the heroes, who, from of old, are the men of name."

Angels are interesting creatures. The Bible teaches us that even today there are people on earth who are actually angels.

HEBREWS 13:2.

"Do not forget to show hospitality, for through it some have entertained angels without knowing it."

One third of the angels rebelled with Satan. From those fallen angels came those who came to earth and had sexual relations with man. These were the worst of the worst. At the time of the flood, God locked them in the center of the earth or the so-called "**bottomless pit.**" When Jesus spoke to the demon-possessed man of Gaddar, the demons begged him not to send them into the bottomless pit.

LUKE 8:30-31.

"Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Legion,' because many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to command them to go down to the grave."

It is these demons that will be released in the tribulation.

REVELATION 9:1-2.

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace: and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit."

The Bible warns that we are not fighting against people in this life, but our battle is against the spiritual world of darkness.

EPHESIANS 6:12.

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

4. DANIEL'S 70 WEEKS.

Before we delve into this topic, it is essential that we know that the book of Daniel, as part of the Old Testament, was translated into Greek before 270 BC. About three centuries before the birth of Christ. This is a well-documented fact in secular history. After the conquest of the Babylonian Empire, Alexander the Great propagated the Greek language throughout the known world, including the Jews. Almost everyone then spoke Greek. Among the Jews, Hebrew had fallen into disuse and was used almost only at ceremonial events. So in order to make the Jewish Scriptures, which we know as the Old Testament, understandable to the general Jewish user, a project arose and was undertaken under the auspices of **"Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 AD)"** to translate the Scriptures into Greek. 70 scholars were appointed to do this work and it was called the **"Septuagint (70)"** translation. It is sometimes referred to as the "LXX." The book of Daniel is one of the most authenticated books of the Old Testament, both historically and archaeologically. It is therefore critical that we realize that the book of Daniel dates back almost three centuries before the birth of Christ. Daniel was originally reading the book of Jeremiah as a teenager, near the end of the Babylonian captivity. He understood that the 70 years of captivity were almost over and began to pray for his people. The angel Gabriel interrupted Daniel's prayer and gave him a prophecy that is undoubtedly the most special passage in the entire Bible.

DANIEL 9:24-27.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks: and it shall be restored and built threescore and two weeks, with streets and with trenches, but in times of trouble. And after the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for him: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and his end shall be with an overflowing flood: and unto the end shall be war, and desolations determined. And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease: and upon the wing of abominations shall be one that maketh desolate, even unto the end; and that which is determined shall be poured out upon that which is desolate.

These four verses include the following segments.

Verse 24 = The scope of the entire prophecy.

Verse 25 = The 69 weeks.

Verse 26 = The break between the 69th week and the 70th week.

Verse 27 = The 70th week.

1. The scope of the total prophecy.

VERSE 24.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy."

The idiom of a "**week**" of years was common in Israel as a "**Sabbath of the land**" in which the land was to lie dormant for seven years. It was their failure to obey these laws that led to their captivity in Babylon. The emphasis of this passage is on "**your people and your holy city**" which applies to Israel and Jerusalem and not the church. The focus of this prophecy is on a number of events that have not yet been fulfilled.

VERSE 25.

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks: and for threescore and two weeks it shall be restored and built, with streets and with trenches, but in times of trouble."

KJV.

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

A very specific prediction is in verse 25. It includes a mathematical prophecy. The Jewish and Babylonian calendars use a 360 year cycle; 69 weeks of 360 years total 173,880 days. In effect, Gabriel tells Daniel that the interval between the command to rebuild the temple and the presentation of the Messiah as King would be exactly 173,880 days.

The "Messiah the Prince" in the King James version is actually Meshiach Nagid "The Messiah the King" (Nagid was first used for King Saul.) The command to rebuild Jerusalem was given by Artaxerxes Longimanus on March 14, 445 BC. The emphasis in the verse is on the words in the KJV "street" and "wall" to ensure that there is no confusion as to where the temple should be. During the ministry of Jesus Christ there were several opportunities to promote Him to King, but He carefully avoided them by saying, "My hour has not yet come." Then suddenly one day He carefully arranged it Himself.

On this particular day He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and deliberately fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah.

ZECHARIAH 9:9.

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King comes to you: righteous and having salvation is He, lowly and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

The Pharisees felt that the over-eager and exuberant crowd was blaspheming by declaring that Jesus was the Messiah the King.

However, this was confirmed by Jesus himself.

LUKE 19:40.

"And he answered and said unto them, I say unto you, If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

This is the only occasion on which Jesus presented Himself as King. It occurred on April 6, 32 AD. When we take the period between March 14, 445 BC and April 6, 32 AD and correct for leap years, we discover that it is exactly 173,880 days.

How could Daniel have known this without God revealing it to him?

VERSE 26.

"And after the sixty-two weeks shall the Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end shall be war, and desolations determined."

There seems to be a break between the 69th week and the 70th week. Verse 26 deals with the events after the 69th week, but before the 70th week. These events include the killing of the Messiah and the destruction of the city and Holy Place.

As Jesus approached the city on the donkey, He also foretold the destruction of Jerusalem.

LUKE 19:43-44.

"For the days will come upon you when your enemies will build a rampart around you and surround you and hem you in on every side.

They will dash you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

The Messiah was executed on the cross "**but without anything for Himself**". The city and the Sanctuary were destroyed 38 years later when the Roman legions under "**Titus Vespasian**" destroyed the city of Jerusalem to the ground exactly as Daniel and Jesus had predicted. On the contrary, when we examine Jesus' exact words it seems as if He expected them to know this incredible prediction in **Daniel 9**.

"because you did not notice the favorable time when God visited you"

After these events, there is still a remaining seven years to be fulfilled. This period is the most documented period in the entire Bible. The book of Revelation from chapter 6 to chapter 19 is the exact description of that seventh week. The interruption between the 69th week and the 70th week is still ongoing but is rapidly passing.

5. EVIDENCE THAT THE RAPTURE IS TAKING PLACE IN REVELATION 4:1.

PROOF ONE.

REVELATION 4:1.

"After these things I looked, and behold, a door stood open in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as of a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee what must be after this."

Greek: μετά(GSN-3326) ταῦτα GSN-5023), after these things. The Greek phrase is used at the beginning of the verse as well as at the end. This is to make it clear that the emphasis has now shifted from earth to heaven. The first part of this vision is now over. The phrase "after these things" indicates something that will happen after the letters written to the churches in Asia. That is, "after the church dispensation". After the rapture of the church of Jesus Christ, this part of the vision now begins. This verse clearly indicates when the events of Revelation 4 to 22 will take place. They must take place after the rapture of the church, because after Revelation 4 to Revelation 22 we do not read about the church on earth. Only in heaven.

Jesus Christ says that the things of Revelation 4-22 must only happen after these things.

REVELATION 4:1.

"After these things I looked, and behold, a door stood open in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as of a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee what must be after this."

Now the question is; "**To what things?**" The answer is clear, to the things of the first three chapters, the dispensation of the church. If the three previous chapters refer to the church, then the chapters that follow must refer to that which is coming after the church. The church must be here during the fulfillment of the church dispensation and not be here during the fulfillment of the things that happen after this. That is, the church is caught up between what is and what is to happen. The word "**church**" is used 19 times in Revelation 1-3, but not once in Revelation 4:1 to Revelation 22:5. We read of the church again in Revelation 22:6-21. If the church had been on earth during chapters 4 and 22 we would have read about it.

PROOF TWO.

The 70th week of Daniel is the last seven years of the dispensation of the earth where both Revelation 4-19 and Matthew 24-25 will be fulfilled. This week deals with Israel and not the church. It is the church that must be raptured before the seven years begin.

PROOF THREE.

There is no place for the rapture of the church after Revelation 4:1. The male child and the tribulation saints are the only two groups that are saved and raptured during the great tribulation and they are different groups separate from the church. If the rapture did not occur before the 4th chapter, we would have read about it in the rest of the book, but we read nothing about it.

PROOF FOUR.

In Luke 21:34-36 we have the promise that those who are worthy will escape the great tribulation. A lot of the new English Bibles uses the words "**to escape from what is about to happen.**" This translation is based on the Roman manuscript called the "**Vulgate**". This is not the most reliable manuscript. Virtually 80% of all Bible translations are based on the manuscript that is outside the Roman church, namely the "**Textus Receptus**" which uses the word "**escape**".

KJV= 1611.

"Watch ye therefore, and pray alwayes, that ye may be accompted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to passe, and to stand before the sonne of man."

YOUNG'S LITERAL TRANSLATION 1898

"watch ye, then, in every season, praying that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are about to come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

GENEVA BIBLE 1587

"Wachte therefore, and pray continually, that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these thinges that shall come to passe, and that ye may stand before the Sonne of man."

I can also quote the following Bibles that say exactly the same as the above; **American Standard Version, Darby Bible 1889. Gods Word, International Standard Version, King James Version, Revised Version and the list goes on.** However, I just want to make one more quote and that is a quote from the Mickelson Enhanced Strong's Greek and Hebrew Dictionaries.

STRONGS HEBREW AND GREEK DICTIONARIES.

G1628 ἐκφεύγω (ek-fyoo'-go) v. 1. to flee out [from G1537 and G5343] KJV: escape, flee Root(s): G1537, G5343

Here we see clearly that the words used in the Textus Receptus can be clearly and strongly translated as "flee". This is a clear reference to the rapture of the church. The New English Bible translations use the words "to come through" which takes away the rapture and sends the church through the great tribulation. This is a Roman influence in the "Vulgate". It is clear that the church will flee certain things to stand before the Son of God. The things that the church will flee from are the things described in Matthew 24:4-26; Luke 21:4-19 and Revelation 6-19. So it is clear that the church will not go through the tribulation.

PROOF FIVE.

In **1 Thessalonians 5:1-11** we have another definitive promise that the church will escape the wrath of God on earth.

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye need not that any thing be written unto you: for ye know very well that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all children of light, and children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that are drunk are drunk in the night.

But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that, whether we wake or sleep, we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are also doing."

How can the saints encourage one another when tribulation awaits them?

PROOF SIX.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:6-8.

"And now ye know what restraineth, that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, until he that now restraineth be taken out of the way: and then shall that lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the brightness of his coming."

This scripture strongly indicates that the rapture will occur before the tribulation, namely in Revelation 4:1. This verse refers to the church of Christ. We are called the salt of the earth and the light of the world. When we are gone it will be extremely tasteless and very dark. Until we are gone, the antichrist cannot be revealed.

PROOF SEVEN.

There is a clear and noticeable change in God's attitude toward man - **from grace to judgment**. We see God's grace in chapters 1-3 and we see God's judgment in chapters 4-19.

The church does not go through God's wrath on earth, so with the closing of the period of grace at the end of chapter 3 just before the beginning of the 7 years at the beginning of chapter 4, the church is taken out of this world.

PROOF EIGHT.

A person or group of people is identified by character traits and personal habits. If the church is to go through the tribulation (Revelation 4-19) then we should see the church's character and personal habits in these chapters. However, this is not the case. We see everything from the church up to the end of chapter 3. After that we only see Israel from chapters 4 to 19.

A NUMBER OF CHARACTERISTICS OF ISRAEL ACCORDING TO REVELATION 4:1.

1. In Matthew, the Hebrew Gospel, there are 92 references to the Old Testament. In Hebrews there are 102 references to the Old Testament. In the book of Revelation there are 285 references to the Old Testament. This strongly indicates the Jewish character of the book.
2. The word "Lamb" is used 27 times in Revelation chapters 4-22. The word "Lamb" is not used once in the church section of the book.
3. The word is also never used in the letters of Paul. It is used only 4 times in the New Testament and each time refers to Israel. (John 1:29,36; Acts 8:32; 1 Peter 1:19). 3. The terms "the Lion of Judah" and "the Root of David" are Jewish expressions. Revelation 5:5.

4. The 144,000 of Rev. 7:1-8; Rev. 14:1-5 are Jews. They are saved during the events after the rapture.

5. All the events surrounding the seals, the trumpets and the scales are partly a repetition of the plagues of Egypt with more or less the same purpose - **the judgment of the Gentiles.**

These events are the fulfillment of many of the Old Testament prophecies.

ISAIAH 26:20-21.

"Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself for a little moment, until the indignation has passed by. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: and the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

ISAIAH 29:6-8.

"From the LORD of hosts you will be visited with mercy, with thunder and earthquake and great noise, wind and tempest and the flame of a devouring fire. And the multitude of all the nations that come against Ariel shall be as a dream, a vision of the night, that come against her, and against her fortress, and distress her. And as when a hungry man dreameth, and eateth, and awaketh, and his soul is empty; and as when a thirsty man dreameth, and drinketh, and awaketh, and his soul is faint: so shall the multitude of all the nations that come against mount Zion be." (See also Jer.30:6-9; Ezek. 38-39; Daniel 12:1.)

None of these prophecies apply to the church.

6. The tribulation of Revelation 6-19 deals with Israel.

JEREMIAH 30:9.

"Ask now, and see, can a man bring forth? Why do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as one in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas, for the day is great, so that none is like it! It is the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and burst thy bonds; and strangers shall no more serve him: but they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them."

DANIEL 12:1

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

MATTHEW 24:15-22.

"When you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever will be. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."

7. Daniel's 70th week only concerns Israel and Jerusalem.

DANIEL 9:24-27.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks: and it shall be restored and built threescore and two weeks, with streets and with trenches, but in times of trouble. And after the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for him: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and his end shall be with an overflowing flood: and unto the end shall be war, and desolations determined. And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease: and upon the wing of abominations shall be one that maketh desolate, even unto the end; and that which is determined shall be poured out upon that which is desolate."

8. The church age comes between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel's prophecy. This alone proves that the 70th week deals only with Israel.

9. The only saved Gentiles in Rev. 4-19 are the tribulation saints and they are not part of the church.

REVELATION 6:9-11.

"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 a little season, until their fellowservants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

REVELATION 7:9-17.

"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands. And they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." Then one of the elders answered and said to me, "Who are these who are clothed in white robes? Where did they come from?"

And I said to him, My lord, you know. 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 spread his tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light upon 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."

REVELATION 15:2-4.

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels with the seven last plagues, for in them is finished the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire. And I saw them that had overcome the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having harps of God. And they sang the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints! Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest."

REVELATION 20:4-6.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat on 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: and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

And the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with him a thousand years."

10. The ministry of angels is typically part of Israel.

REVELATION 8:2-5.

"And I saw the seven angels which stand before God; and seven trumpets were given unto them. 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, with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."

The mystery of God foretold by the prophets is Jewish.

REVELATION 10:7.

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, then should the mystery of God be finished, as he hath declared unto his servants the prophets."

12. The temple altar, temple worship, temple courtyard, holy city, olive trees, ark of the covenant, all of this is Jewish not Christian.

13. The statements that the kingdoms of this earth become those of Christ are the fulfillment of the Jewish Prophets.

REVELATION 11:15.

"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."

DANIEL 7:13-14.

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom: and all peoples, nations, and languages shall serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

ZECHARIAH 14:1-21.

"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem: for I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle: and the city shall be taken, and the houses shall be plundered, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go out into captivity: but the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. And the LORD shall go out and fight against those nations, as in the day of his battle, in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof from east to west, and a very great valley: and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains—for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal—and you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah.

Then the LORD my God will come, all the saints with you! And in that day there shall be no light, the stars shall be dark. And it shall be one day known to the LORD—not day and not night; but at evening it shall be light. And in that day living waters shall flow out of Jerusalem, half of it toward the eastern sea, and half of it toward the western sea; it shall be so in summer and in winter. And the LORD shall be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD shall be one, and his name one. And the whole land shall be as the plain, from Geba even to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: but Jerusalem herself shall be exalted, and shall dwell in her place, from the gate of Benjamin unto the place of the first gate, even to the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. And they shall dwell therein, and there shall be no more any more curse; and Jerusalem shall dwell safely. And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will smite all the people that come up against Jerusalem to battle: He shall make their flesh to waste away, while they are yet standing on their feet; and their eyes shall consume away in their sockets, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouths. And in that day shall there be a great confusion from the LORD among them, so that one shall seize the hand of another, and one's hand shall lift up itself against the hand of another. And Judah also shall fight in Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And like this plague shall be the plague of the horses, of the mules, of the camels, and of the asses, and of all the beasts that are in those camps. And all that are left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall go up year by year to worship before the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

And whoever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, will have no rain. And if the family of Egypt does not go up and does not come, on whom no rain falls, then the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles will come upon them. This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. In that day there will be on the bells of the horses, "Holy to the LORD!" And the pots in the house of the LORD will be like the bowls before the altar. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD of hosts; and everyone who offers will come and take from it and boil in it; and in that day there will be no more Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts."

All the above evidence that Israel will be divided in the tribulation and that the church will not be there.

6. WITH WHOM DOES MATTHEW 24-25 DEAL? THE CHURCH OR ISRAEL?

To understand the whole question surrounding the rapture we need to look at Matthew 24 and 25. Was Jesus talking about the church or Israel here? Let's look at the third question the disciples asked Jesus.

MATTHEW 24:3.

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

"END OF THE WORLD"

The "end of the world" in this case means "the end of the age" and not the "end of humanity." The Greek word for "world" here is "aion." It refers to a period of time, long or short.

STRONGS HEBREW AND GREEK DICTIONARIES.

G165 aiwvaion (ai-own') n. 1. (properly) an age 2. (by extension) perpetuity (also past) 3. (by implication) the world 4. (specially, Jewish) a Messianic period (present or future) from an obsolete primary noun apparently meaning "continued duration" KJV: age, course, eternal, (for) ever(-more), (n-)ever, (beginning of the , while the) world (began, without end)

This refers to the end of the age in which we now live and the age in which Israel rejected Jesus as the messiah. This age will end with the return of Christ after the great tribulation.

ACTS 1:6-7.

"Then they, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power;"

REVELATION 11:15.

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

In Acts the question is asked and in Revelation it is answered. The church age will end with the rapture. Then the tribulation will come and then the second coming. That will then be the end of the age. (Or as the scripture in Matthew says "[world](#)".) There are several false views in these chapters that need to be cleared up in order to understand this wonderful prophecy.

1. There are apparently those who are convinced that we can set prophetic dates for the Second Coming.

This view is completely unbiblical. In several places in the Bible, Jesus warns that man should not go beyond the limits of his knowledge. He warns that no one can know or determine the time and hour of the Second Coming. No matter how much man might want to do so, it is simply not possible. In addition to the Bible saying so, history also teaches us this.

Over the years, various dates have been given. These dates have come and gone, and we are still here.

The Second Coming has not yet occurred.

MARK 13:32.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

All we know is that the second coming will occur sometime after the tribulation.

2. Another passage in scripture that has been misinterpreted over the years is the passage in Matthew 24:37-42.

MATTHEW 24:37-42.

"And as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as they were in the days that were before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah 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. Watch therefore, for ye know not at what hour your Lord cometh."

This is one of the most misunderstood passages in the Bible regarding the rapture. The scripture is generally linked to the rapture. The fact that the scripture here speaks of one being taken and one being left behind has created the idea that we are dealing with the rapture here.

However, this is not the case.

The rapture is a revelation given to Paul by the Lord and was first introduced to the church by him. Jesus did not speak about the rapture, but about the events surrounding the Second Coming. This passage refers to the events surrounding Armageddon. Many people will die, or be "taken away."

3. Another scripture that is misunderstood is the following.

Most of the exegetes and book writers and preachers about the end times declare that the fig tree represents the Jewish people. All Jesus did here was to refer to the nearness of His return. He had in mind a literal fig tree with which he illustrated something. He compared the fig tree to the signs of the times. Just as when the tree puts forth buds we know that summer is near. So also when we see the signs of the times, then we know that the return is near.

4. The parable of the ten virgins is also presented under various explanations that do not correspond to the truth of the scripture.

It is preached that this parable refers to the fact that we must have oil in our lamps and that the rapture will occur at midnight.

MATTHEW 25:1-13.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five foolish. And the foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. And while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came. And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Sir, sir, open unto us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour in which the Son of man cometh."

The truth in this parable is the importance of being ready for the second coming of Christ to the earth. Where He will set His foot on the Mount of Olives. As in any other story, the detail is necessary to tell the story in order to arrive at the real illustration. However, after the final point and illustration is reached, the detail of the story is no longer important. The parables of Matthew 24 and 25 are illustrations in connection with the second coming - nearness, readiness, faithfulness, watchfulness and constant patience.

5. It is also preached that the judgment of Matthew 25:31 - 46 is the same as the Judgment Seat judgment of Christ in 2 Cor. 5:10.

MATTHEW 25:31 - 46.

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. And before him will be gathered all the nations. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates his sheep from the

goats. And he will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' For I was hungry, and you gave me food; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you gave me shelter; I was naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you? Or thirsty, and give you something to drink? And when did we see you a stranger, and take you in? Or naked, and clothe you? And when did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you? And the King will answer them, saying, Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me. Then he will also say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you did not give me food; I was thirsty and you did not give me drink; I was a stranger and you did not take me in; naked and you did not clothe me; sick and in prison and you did not visit me. Then they also will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, saying, "Truly I tell you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me. And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

2 CORINTHIANS 5:10

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

The truth is, however, that this judgment of Matthew has nothing to do with the Judgment Seat of Christ in Corinthians. They are two completely different judgments. The judgment of Matthew refers to the judgment of living nations at the end of this age. This judgment will determine which of these nations that survived the tribulation will enter the thousand years of Christ's reign.

This judgment will end the tribulation and usher in the thousand years of peace.

DANIEL 7:9-14.

"I beheld till thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit: his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool: his throne was as flames of fire, and the wheels thereof as burning fire: a stream of fire issued and went forth before him: a thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld therefore because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld till the beast was slain, and his body was destroyed, and given to the burning with fire. And their dominion was taken away from the rest of the beasts, and they were given prolongation of life for a season and an hour. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, with the clouds of heaven One like the Son of man came, and He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

And to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom; and all peoples, nations and languages worshipped Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom one which shall not be destroyed."

Not a single word is spoken here about the church, the rapture, or anything to do with the church. The people at this judgment are only allowed to enter the kingdom of peace or go to the kingdom of hell. Those who enter the kingdom of peace will remain under the rule of Christ on earth. Let's look at some reasons why we believe that this section of Matthew is about the Jews and not about the church.

1. Jesus is speaking here to Jews and answering Jewish questions about the earthly and political events surrounding Israel. The questions surrounding the Jewish Messiah and His return to earth to redeem His people and the establishment of the earthly kingdom that has been foretold by the prophets for so long.

MATTHEW 24:3.

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

MATTHEW 25:34.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

ACTS 1:6.

"Then they, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

2. The deceptions of false Christs and Messiahs in Matt.24:5 have to do with the Jewish people, not the church. Jesus knew that they would rather follow the false than believe the true.

JOHN 5:43.

"I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, him you will receive."

MATTHEW 24:5.

"For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many."

3. The reference to those who will persecute and hate His followers refers to Israel alone.

MATTHEW 24:9.

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake."

4. The word "**pangs**" in Matthew 24:8 refers to "**pain, travail, and birth pangs.**" This refers to the suffering of Israel.

ISAIAH 66:7-8.

"Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came upon her, she was delivered of a male child. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Is a land born in a single day? Or is a nation brought forth at once? For Zion travailed, suddenly she brought forth her children."

DANIEL 12:1.

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

5. A reference to the Sabbath and the distance that can be traveled on this day is definitely Jewish, because the church was not bound by the travel restrictions of the Sabbath.

MATTHEW 24:20.

"And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath."

6. The battle of Armageddon only applies to Israel and not the church, because the church has several "**headquarters**" and the battle only takes place in Israel.

SAGARIA 14:1-9.

"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem: for I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle: and the city shall be taken, and the houses shall be plundered, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go out into captivity: but the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. And the LORD shall go out and fight against those nations, as in the day of his battle, in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof from east to west, and a very great valley: and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward

the south. And ye shall flee into the valley of my mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal; and ye shall flee, as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with you! And in that day there will be no light, the stars will be dark. And it will be one day known to the LORD—not day and not night; but at evening it will be light. And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them towards the eastern sea and half of them towards the western sea; summer and winter it will be the same. And the LORD will be King over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be one, and his name one."

REVELATION 19:17-21.

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in midheaven, Come here, gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God, that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of strong men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all, 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 in his presence, by which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of him who sat on the horse; and all the birds were filled with their flesh."

There are many more points that can be made that Matthew 24 deals with Israel and not the church. That is why Jesus does not deal with the rapture in this passage. The rapture has to do with the church of Jesus Christ and not with the Jews. The revelation of the rapture was given to Paul by the Lord Jesus Himself. Paul gave the revelation back to the church. When we mix the Gospels with the letters of Paul, we will not understand the clear teaching of the rapture. The four Gospels are part of the Old Testament and therefore part of Jewish history and prophecy. The new covenant only began with the cross of Jesus Christ. Just as the mystery of the gospel of grace was first explained by Paul, so was the mystery of the rapture also first explained by him. With the exception of a few verses in the gospels, there is no reference to the rapture. The relevant verses in the gospels that refer to this event are clear verses that clearly cannot refer to the people of Israel. That is why it is clear that Matthew 24 deals with the Jews and not with the church. Likewise, Revelation 4 to 19 deals only with the Jewish people and not with the church of Jesus Christ. The church age begins with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and will continue until the rapture.

7. VERSES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT REFER TO THE RAPTURE.

LUKE 21:36.

"Watch 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."

"all these things" refers to the events of the tribulation as described in Revelation 4:1 - 19:21. As well as in Matthew 24:4-28 and Luke 21:4-11 and Mark 13:4-27 and Thessalonians 2:1-12. These are all events that will occur after the rapture of the church has taken place. When it is said that we preach an "escape theology" then they are absolutely right. I believe in the "escape theology" because the Bible teaches it. We are going to escape the great tribulation and stand before the Son of Man. I have already explained this specific scripture earlier in the book, but it is necessary to repeat that most of the English Bibles that I have looked up translate this scripture with the word "escape". Here and there there are Roman-minded Bibles that use the words "go through". Among them is the New Translation of 1983. However, this is not the correct translation.

We go to meet the Lord Jesus in the air and then we go on to meet the Father in heaven.

JOHN 14:2-3.

"Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

This scripture does not refer to the “**bosom of the Father**.” There are several teachings that use this scripture to teach that Jesus came from the bosom of the Father and returned to the bosom to prepare a place for us there. This happened just after the cross and now we are also in the bosom of the Father with Jesus. This is not the meaning of this scripture. It is clear what Jesus is referring to here. “**To the dwelling place of God**.” Jesus uses the words “**In my Father’s house**” and this refers to the place where the Father lives. Jesus went to prepare a place and He assures us that when He is finished He will come and get us. This means that He is coming for the children of the Lord. This is going to happen with the rapture when He comes for His church. During the seven years of the tribulation, the Judgment Seat of Christ will take place in heaven and right after that the wedding of the Lamb.

Then the thousand years of peace on earth.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:23.

“But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at his coming.”

This verse refers to the fact that there will be different occasions where resurrections will occur. There are ten “**raptures**” in scripture, of which the rapture will be the second after that of Jesus Christ (more on this later, Chapter 8).

1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-54.

“Behold, I tell 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.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. And 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.*"

When we analyze this scripture, we cannot help but connect it with the scripture in **1 Thessalonians 4:16**. "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will always be with the Lord."

Here we are dealing with a sudden change that man undergoes. This change takes place at the rapture where we will be clothed with a new immortal body. Here reference is made to the "**last trumpet**" which is not the same as the trumpet (the seventh) in Revelation.

This last trumpet is the last trumpet of this dispensation where the dispensation of the church is concluded with the rapture.

EPHESIANS 5:27.

"That he might present the church to himself in splendor, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that she should be holy and without blemish."

When Jesus comes for His church, the church will be without blemish. Here it does not refer to the fact that the church's sins have been forgiven, but that the church is truly conformed to His image.

It is only with the rapture that this can happen when He comes for only His church and not to the world at the second coming.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18.

"But I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we tell you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words."

This is the main scripture about the rapture in the New Testament and I have already explained it and it is clear enough as it stands.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:7-8.

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, until he that now restraineth be taken out of the way: and then shall that lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the brightness of his coming."

Here it is clearly stated that the Antichrist cannot begin what he must do, because there is a "**factor**" that is holding him back. This "**factor**" is the church of Jesus Christ as well as the Holy Spirit.

The church is taken away and the Holy Spirit stands aside (He is not taken away) so that the revelation can take place. The Holy Spirit is God and omnipresent. He cannot be taken away. It is the church of Christ that is taken out of this world by the power of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit takes the church out of this world it does not mean that He is no longer here. Those whom the Lord will use during the tribulation here on earth will definitely need the help of the Holy Spirit. The church was told by Jesus to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. When this "salt" and "light" are taken away this world will fall into the hands of the devil, and the vengeance of God will begin.

This will occur during the rapture.

8. TEN DIFFERENT RAPTURES IN THE BIBLE.

The first "rapture" occurred with the taking away of Enoch.

The Bible says the following.

GENESIS 5:24.

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."

Nowhere in the Bible do we read that Enoch ever died.

God took him up to heaven. This is an example of the rapture that the church of Christ will experience. The church will walk with God and then one day it will no longer be there.

God then took them up to heaven.

We read of the second "rapture" in;

2 KINGS 2:11.

"And it came to pass, as they went on and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both: and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."

Nowhere do we read that Elijah tasted death.

This is the second rapture which is also an example of the rapture of the church of Christ. Elijah was taken up in a storm, so the rapture of the church will also leave a storm with them. Both Enoch and Elijah will return to earth as the two witnesses to then die and be clothed with glory.

The third "rapture" is the rapture of Christ where He ascended to heaven and back in one day.

JOHN 20:17-20.

"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. And when it was evening, that first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had said this, he shewed them his hands and his side. And the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord."

The fourth "rapture" is the rapture of Christ along with many Old Testament saints and the souls of the Old Testament saints who have not yet been resurrected.

MATTHEW 27:52-53.

"And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose: and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

EPHESIANS 4:8-10.

"Therefore saith he, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. But this, He ascended, what meaneth it, save that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same as he that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things by him."

The fifth "rapture" is that of Paul to the third heaven.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-4.

"It is not profitable for me to boast, for I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—how he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

The sixth "rapture" is that of John on Patmos to heaven.

REVELATION 4:1.

"After these things I looked, and behold, a door stood open in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as of a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee what must be after this."

There will be four more future raptures. The next general rapture is the rapture of all the dead and living saints who are in Christ. This is the seventh "rapture" This scripture does not refer to the "return" where Christ will set His foot on the Mount of Olives. All the English Bibles translate the word as "coming" and not with the words "second coming".

These verses refer to the coming of the Lord for His Saints and not to His coming with His saints.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:23.

"But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at his coming."

2 THESSALONIANS 4:15-18.

"For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will in no way precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words."

1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-54.

"Behold, I tell 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. And 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."

JOHN 14:1-3.

"Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

LUKE 21:34-36.

"But take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day come on you suddenly. For it will come on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

PHILIPPIANS 3:20-21.

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from where we also eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be conformed to his glorious body, according to the working by which he is able even to subject all things to himself."

The eighth "rapture" is that of the 144,000 Jewish believers who repented during the first three and a half years of the tribulation.

REVELATION 7:1-8.

"And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

And I heard the number of them which were sealed, an hundred forty and four thousand sealed out of all the tribes of the children of Israel: of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand sealed."

We see them standing with Christ on Mount Zion.

REVELATION 14:1-5.

"And I looked, and, behold, the Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of loud thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers playing on their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders: and no man could learn that song, save the hundred forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women: for they are virgins: these follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: these have been redeemed from among men, being firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without spot before the throne of God."

The ninth "rapture" is the tribulation's martyrs.

REVELATION 6:9-11.

"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 a little season, until their fellowservants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

REVELATION 20:4.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat on 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: and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

The tenth "rapture" is that of the two testimonies of Revelation 11.

REVELATION 11:7-12.

"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and overcome them, and kill them: 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 suffer not their dead bodies to be put in graves.

The inhabitants of the earth will rejoice and be glad over them and will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. And after the three and a half days a spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up into heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them."

9. ANSWERS TO VARIOUS QUESTIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS.

1. THE WORD "RAPTURE" DOES NOT APPEAR IN THE BIBLE.

Therefore, it is clearly not a Biblical doctrine.

That the actual word "**rapture**" does not appear in the Bible is true. However, this does not mean that there is no such doctrine. The words "**Bible; demons; omnipresent; trinity;**" and many others do not appear in the Bible either, and yet they are accepted as Biblical terms. Especially the word "**trinity**". The word is not there, but the doctrine is clearly there. If we want to say that there is no doctrine such as the rapture in the Bible only because the word is not there, we must also say that the doctrine of the trinity is not Biblical either, because the word does not appear in the Bible.

In the scripture 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 we read the word "**caught up**". It is very close to the word "**rapture**". Most English Bibles use the words "**caught up**" and "**taken up**".

The Strong's Concordance refers to the word as "**catch up**". It is clear that the word does appear in different forms. The word "**parousia**" is only used in relation to the second coming and not in relation to a so-called "**rapture**". The word "**parousia**" is used on both occasions. It literally means a personal appearance in someone else's presence. There are several ways in which the word "**parousia**" is used in the Bible.

Paul's presence before others.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:10.

"For letters, they say, are weighty and powerful, but physical presence is weak and speech is worthless."

STRONGS HEBREW AND GREEK DICTIONARIES.

G3952 παρουσίαparousia (par-ou-see'-ah) n. 1. a being near, i.e. advent 2. (often) return 3. (specially) return of Christ to punish Jerusalem, or finally the wicked 4. (by implication, physically) aspect [from the present participle of G3918] KJV: coming, presence Root(s): G3918

PHILIPPIANS 2:12.

"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;"

Other persons' presence before Paul.

1 CORINTHIANS 16:17.

"And I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied to you my want."

The word "**arrival**" in this verse is translated "**parousia**."

The word is also used for the arrival of a certain day.

2 PETER 3:12.

"looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, through which the heavens being on fire will be dissolved, and the elements will melt with fervent heat."

Here the word “**coming**” is also translated with the word “**parousia**”.

The word is also used for the meeting of persons with Christ during the rapture into the air.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:23.

“but each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at his coming.”

1 THESSALONIANS 2:19-20.

“For who is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For you are our glory and joy.”

The word in this verse translated “**return**” should be the word “**coming**” and is the Greek word “**parousia**”.

JAMES 5:7-8.

“Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”

It is just as much a “**parousia**” to meet Christ in the light as it is on earth. It does not matter where and how people meet each other it remains a “**parousia**”. Parousia is also not the only word used for the rapture or the second coming. e.Phaneroo. Used in Colosse 3:4; 1 Peter 5:4; 1 John 2:28.

STRONGS HEBREW AND GREEK DICTIONARIES.

G5319 φανερώωphaneroo (fan-er-oh'-o) v. 1. to render apparent {literally or figuratively} [from G5318] KJV: appear, manifestly declare, (make) manifest (forth), shew (self) Root(s): G5318
 2. Erchomai - word gebruiik in 1Korinthiers 15:35 en in Johannes 21:23.

STRONGS HEBREW AND GREEK DICTIONARIES.

G2064 ἔρχομαιerchomai (er'-khom-ai) v. 1. to come or go {in a great variety of applications, literally and figuratively}[middle voice of a primary verb (used only in the present and imperfect tenses, the others being supplied by a kindred (middle voice) eleuthomai el-yoo'-thomah, or (active) eltho el'-tho, which do not otherwise occur)] KJV: accompany, appear, bring, come, enter, fall out, go, grow, X light, X next, pass, resort, be set
 3. Epiphaneia - word gebruiik in 1 Timotheus 6:14; 2 Timotheus 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; 2 Thessalonicense 2:8,

STRONGS HEBREW AND GREEK DICTIONARIES.

G2015 ἐπιφάνειαepiphaneia (ep-if-an'-ei-ah) n. 1. a manifestation (specially) the advent of Christ (past or future) [from G2016] KJV: appearing, brightness Root(s): G2016 [?] f. Apokalupsis - word gebruiik in 1 Korinthiers 1:7; 1 Petrus 1:7; 2 Thessalonicense 1:7-10.

STRONGS HEBREW AND GREEK DICTIONARIES.

G602 ἀποκάλυψισαpokalupsis (ap-ok-al'-oop-sis) n. 1. disclosure [from G601] KJV: appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed, revelation Root(s): G601

It doesn't matter which word we use for the rapture or the second coming. The words only mean that He will come back and appear to us. Whether His appearance is in the air, in heaven, or on earth, it doesn't matter. So we can't use the word "**parousia**" to try to prove that there will be only one second coming and not a rapture. **The word is used for both.**

2. THE RAPTURE IS A "SECRET" EVENT.

The Bible does not teach that there is such a thing as a "**secret rapture**." Nor does it teach that God will come like a thief in the night and "**steal**" the church. The rapture will be a noisy event. The trumpet will sound and God will call with the voice of an Archangel. It will be a tremendous event that will be over in the blink of an eye. Even if one could refer to it as a secret rapture, it will not be one for very long. Immediately after the event, the world will know that something tremendous has occurred. Millions of people will already be gone. It is not something that one can keep a secret. Even the return of Christ will not be a secret. It will be unexpected like a thief in the night, but certainly not a secret.

3. JESUS SAID THAT THE CHURCH WILL BE RAPTURED "STRAIGHT AFTER" THE TRIBULATION AND THAT THE "CHOSEN ONES" IN MATTHEW 24:31 ARE THE CHURCH.

Jesus said nothing about the rapture, especially not that it would happen after the tribulation. No one will be raptured after the tribulation, because everyone will have already gone to heaven by then.

These raptured saints come back to earth with Christ from heaven at the Second Coming where He sets His foot on the Mount of Olives.

REVELATION 19:14.

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

The "elect" in Matthew 24:29-31 are the Jewish "elect" who are on earth while the raptured saints are in heaven. The Jewish "elect" are those who flee to the mountains just before the Second Coming.

ZECHARIAH 14:5.

"And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains—for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal—and you shall flee, as you fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with you!"

To say that the elect of Matthew 24:31 are the church is to say that the entire church of Christ must be in Judea before the Antichrist sits in the temple and claims to be God.

Whoever is the elect will then have to flee to the mountains.

MATTHEW 24:15-22.

"When you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his clothes.

But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever will be. And if those days had not been shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect."

We have no prophecy that the church will be in Judea at the end of the tribulation, but there are several prophecies that point to Israel being gathered to Judea at the end of time. Those who are part of this partial gathering of the Jews will be the elect of whom Matthew 24 speaks.

There are four different "elect" in the Bible.

1. THE MESSIAH.

ISAIAH 42:1.

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one, in whom my soul delights. I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles."

1 PETER 2:6.

"Therefore it is also written, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will never be put to shame.'"

2. ISRAEL.

ISAIAH 45:4.

"For the sake of Jacob my servant, and Israel my chosen, I have called you by your name; I have given you a name, though you have not known me."

3. THE CHURCH.

COLOSSIANS 3:12.

"Put on therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience."

TITUS 1:1.

"Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,"

EPHESIANS 1:4.

"According as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love,"

4. THE FAITHFUL ANGELS.

1 TIMOTHY 5:21.

"I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels to observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality."

We must therefore realize that when we see the word "**elect**" in the Bible, it does not automatically mean that the "**church**" is being spoken of. The context of the passage in which the word occurs must be taken into account.

It is said that God's purpose for the church is to send it through the tribulation before the rapture to protect them from death as He protected Noah during the flood. As He protected Daniel in the lions' den and as He protected the three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace.

Also as He protected Israel in Egypt during the plagues. Seeing that this was the pattern in the Old Testament, why would it change here?

Jesus promise that God will protect us!

JOHN 17:15.

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one."

This scripture is heavily used by those who do not believe in the rapture. They say that this scripture testifies that there is no way out of this world, but a stay until the end. If there is going to be a tribulation, then God will protect us in this tribulation and keep us safe. The truth is, however, that throughout the centuries - in the Old Testament and the New Testament times - there have been countless Christians killed in the most brutal ways imaginable and God did not protect them. If we just read the book Fox Martyrs we will realize that tribulation was and is part of the Christian experience in this world. When we read the book of Revelation we see that countless souls will be killed in the tribulation and most of them will be Christians. The saints who are killed in the tribulation are those who came to the Lord after the rapture as well as those who missed the rapture. It is only the 1,444,000 chosen Jews who will be protected during the tribulation.

The reason why God takes the church here with the rapture is not to avoid the oppression of the world against them, but to bring about the "**distress of Jacob.**" The time set aside to share with Israel and the vengeance of God on this earth.

4.NO ONE WILL BE SAVED AFTER THE RAPTURE.

This is definitely not the truth.

The Bible reveals that there will be a great revival during the tribulation.

ACTS 2:16-21.

"But this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. And I will show wonders in heaven above and signs on earth beneath, blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Millions will be saved and martyred during the tribulation.

REVELATION 12:17.

"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."

ZECHARIAH 12:10.

"But I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplications; and they will look on me whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son, and will be bitterly grieved for him as one is bitterly grieved for a firstborn."

REVELATION 7:1-9.

"And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: an hundred and forty and four thousand were sealed out of all the tribes of the children of Israel: of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed; twelve thousand sealed; from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand sealed; from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand sealed; from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand sealed; from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand sealed; from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand sealed; from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand sealed; from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand sealed; from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand sealed; from the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand sealed.

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands."

It is clear from the above scriptures that many people will come to salvation during the tribulation.

5. THERE WILL BE ONLY ONE GENERAL RAPTURE.

The truth is, however, that there have already been six historical raptures to heaven and that four more lie ahead in the future. (see chapter eight.)

6. THE FACT THAT THE WORD "SAINTS" IS USED IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION IS PROOF THAT THE CHURCH IS GOING THROUGH THE WHOLE TRIBULATION.

There will be "**saints**" during the tribulation, this is clearly taught from various scriptures. There have been many saints on this earth during the different dispensations since the time of Adam. The word "**saints**" is not a word that ties one to any group or event or dispensation. In particular, it is not exclusively the property of the church. The church was already raptured before the tribulation and the "**saints**" in this case of the tribulation are the 144,000 Jews and the fact that they are called "**saints**" is certainly not proof that the church is in the tribulation. The "**rapture**" occurs during the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15 and this trumpet is the same as the last trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

REVELATION 11:15.

"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."

1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-54.

"Behold, I tell 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. And 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."

There is not the slightest similarity between these two scriptures. It is impossible that these two scriptures refer to the same event, no matter how distorted it is. The trumpet of Revelation 11:15 is that of an ordinary Angel while the one in 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 is the trumpet of God. The trumpet of the angel of Revelation 11 sounded to announce judgements.

We read in Revelation 8 just after the fourth angel sounded the following words.

REVELATION 8:13.

"And I saw and heard an angel flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the remaining voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound!"

This scripture clearly indicates that the three angels who are yet to sound are still announcing judgments. This includes the angel of Revelation 11. In contrast, the trumpet of 1 Corinthians announces good news - **the resurrection from the dead**. The trumpet of Revelation 11 will sound about three and a half years after the rapture and three and a half years before the return of Christ. The trumpets of 1 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians will sound about three and a half years before the trumpet of Revelation 11. One trumpet sounds in the midst of the events that occur after Revelation 4 and the other trumpet sounds before the events of Revelation 4. One Trumpet announces an event that will happen in one day and the other trumpet announces an event that will happen in many days. If one understands the dispensations of the Bible correctly and knows that one should not confuse them with each other, then one understands the prophetic nature of the Bible better. The last of one dispensation is not the same as the last of another dispensation. Therefore, one cannot confuse the last trumpet of the church dispensation with the last of the seven trumpets of Revelation. When one confuses these with each other, all kinds of errors arise. We also see that although this is called the last trumpet, it is certainly not the last trumpet. During the Second Coming and after that, many more trumpets will be blown.

7. JESUS SAYS THAT THE WICKED WILL BE MADE TOGETHER AND DESTROYED BEFORE THE RAPTURE.

MATTHEW 13:24-43.

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. And when the stalks sprang up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. And the servants of the householder came, and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Where then hath it tares? And he answered them, An enemy hath done this. And the servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the harvest time I will say to the reapers, 'First gather the weeds and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.' Another parable he presented to them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is greater than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.' Another parable he told them, 'The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until it was all leavened. Jesus spoke all these things to the crowds in parables; and without a parable he did not speak to them; that what was spoken by the prophet might be fulfilled: I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world. After Jesus had sent the crowds away, he went home. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

He answered and said to them, "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world. The good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the weeds are the children of the wicked one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so it will be at the end of the world. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling and those who do lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

MATTHEW 24:40-45.

"Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and the other left. Watch, therefore, because you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Who then is the faithful and wise servant whom his master has appointed over his household to give them their food at the proper time?"

In these verses Jesus is not referring to the rapture. In Matthew 13 He is simply explaining that there will be unjust and righteous on earth until the end. After Armageddon there will be a gathering of both the wicked and the righteous to see who is worthy to enter the thousand year reign of Christ on earth.

There is no mention of the rapture here because all the raptures of scripture have already occurred by this time. Some believe that the church is not ready to meet the Lord, therefore it is necessary to go through the tribulation to be cleansed and purified by it. This idea is not only unscriptural, but also ridiculous. If we accept that God is no acceptor of the person, then He must bring back to life all who are already dead and part of His church and send them through the tribulation as well. Furthermore, it is also ridiculous. If one maintains this view then you are saying that the Holy Spirit has not done His work well, and must now use the Antichrist to get the church holy. Grace was not enough. How can the tribulation cause me to be more "in Christ" than grace can do?

8. EVERY EYE WILL SEE CHRIST DURING THE RAPTURE.

MATTHEW 24:30.

"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 on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

REVELATION 1:7.

"Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him: yea, amen!"

None of these scriptures deal with the rapture but with the second coming of Jesus Christ when He will return to the Mount of Olives. At the rapture, no one on earth will see Christ. The saints who are raptured will only see Christ in the clouds when they meet Him there. During the rapture, all the saints will see Him immediately.

During the second coming, more and more people will see Him as they come to Jerusalem.

ISAIAH 2:1-4.

"The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us of his ways, and that we may walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

The statement of **Matthew 24:13**; "But he who endures to the end, he will be saved."

Used to say that we must endure to the end of the ages to be saved. Therefore it is clear that the church will still be here on earth at the end of the tribulation. This statement does not refer to the church, but to Israel who will be here at the end of the tribulation.

This scripture also has nothing to do with salvation.

It refers to those who persevere in remaining on the Lord's side in tribulation and do not give in to the demands of the Antichrist, they will be saved.

ZECHARIAH 14:1-21.

"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem: for I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle: and the city shall be taken, and the houses shall be plundered, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go out into captivity: but the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. And the LORD shall go out and fight against those nations, as in the day of his battle, in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof from east to west, and a very great valley: and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains—for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal—and you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, all the saints with you! And in that day there shall be no light, the stars shall be dark. And it shall be one day known to the LORD—not day and not night; but at evening it shall be light. And in that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of it toward the eastern sea, and half of it toward the western sea; it shall be in summer and in winter. And the LORD shall be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD shall be one, and his name one. The whole land will be like the Arabah, from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem itself will be elevated and will live in its place, from the Benjamin Gate to the site of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses. And they will live in it, and there will be no more curse, and Jerusalem will live in safety.

And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will smite all the people that come against Jerusalem to battle: their flesh shall consume away while they stand on their feet; and their eyes shall consume away in their sockets, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouths. And in that day shall there be a great confusion from the LORD among them; so that one shall seize the hand of another, and one's hand shall lift up itself against the hand of another. And Judah also shall fight in Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And like this plague shall be the plague of the horses, of the mules, of the camels, and of the asses, and of all the beasts that are in those camps. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And whosoever of the families of the earth shall not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there shall be no rain upon them. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, upon whom there shall be no rain, then shall the plague be upon them, wherewith the LORD smiteth the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLY TO THE LORD: and the pots in the house of the LORD shall be like the bowls before the altar. And every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holy to the LORD of hosts; and all who offer sacrifices shall come and take of them and boil in them; and in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts."

MATTHEW 23:37-39.

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing! Look, your house is left to you desolate! For I tell you, you will not see me from now on until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

9.ISAIAH FOREWORDS THIS EVENT AND JESUS CONFIRMS IT.

Jesus did not say anything about a pre-tribulation rapture in Luke 21:34-36. In Luke 21:1-11 Jesus gives a number of signs of His return. The same signs that we find in Matthew 24:4-28. Then in Luke 21:12-24 He gives some signs of what will happen to Jerusalem in 70 AD. He uses the words "**before all these things.**" Then He goes on to discuss the things that are to come. Then He tells them how to escape these things. That escape is the rapture.

10.IT IS SAID THAT DANIEL 7:21 PROVES THAT THE ANTICHRIST IS WAGERING WAR AGAINST THE SAINTS AND THIS PROVES THAT THE CHURCH WILL BE IN THE TRIBULATION.

DANIEL 7:21.

"I saw this horn making war with the saints and prevailing over them,"

The church is not mentioned in the book of Daniel, much less a war between the church and the Antichrist. Daniel shares with Israel and reveals what will happen to them during the tribulation.

DANIEL 9:24-27.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks: and it shall be restored and built threescore and two weeks, with streets and with trenches, but in times of trouble. And after the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for him: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and his end shall be with an overflowing flood: and unto the end shall be war, and desolations determined. And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease: and upon the wing of abominations shall be one that maketh desolate, even unto the end; and that which is determined shall be poured out upon that which is desolate.

SCOFIELD COMMENTARY.

Dan 9:24 - *Seventy Weeks* These are "weeks" or more accurately, sevens of years; seventy weeks of seven years each. Within these "weeks" the national chastisement is to be ended and the nation restored to everlasting righteousness (Dan_9:24). The seventy weeks are divided into seven = 49 years; sixty-two = 434 years; one = 7 years (Dan_9:25-27). In the seven weeks = 49 years Jerusalem was to be rebuilt in "troubled times." This was fulfilled, as Ezra and Nehemiah record. Sixty-two weeks = 434 years, after which Messiah would come (Dan_9:25).

This was fulfilled in the birth and manifestation of Christ. (Dan_9:26); (Dan_9:26) is of course an indefinite period. The date of the crucifixion is not fixed. It is only said that it is "after" the sixty-two weeks. This is the first event in (Dan_9:26). The second event is the destruction of the city, fulfilled 70 A.D. Then, "until the end," a period not fixed, but which has already lasted nearly 2000 years. To Daniel it was only revealed that wars and devastations would continue (Compare (Mat_24:6-14)). The New Testament reveals what was hidden from the Old Testament prophets; (Mat_13:11-17); (Eph_3:1-10)) that during this period the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (Mat_13:1-50) and the calling out of the Church are to be accomplished; (Mat_16:18); (Rom_11:25) When the Church Age will end, and the seventieth week begin, is nowhere revealed. Its duration can only be seven years. To make it more, violates the principle of interpretation already confirmed by fulfillment. (Dan_9:27) deals with the last week. The "he" of (Dan_9:27) is the "prince that shall come" of (Dan_9:26); whose people (Rome) destroyed the temple, 70 A.D. He is the same as the "little horn" of chapter 7. He will make a covenant with the Jews to restore their temple sacrifices for one week (seven years), but in the midst of that time he will break the covenant and fulfill it; (Dan_12:11); (2Th_2:3); (2Th_2:4). Between the sixty-ninth week, after which Messiah was cut off, and the seventieth week, within which the "little horn" or Daniel 7 will run its horrible course, this entire Church Age will intervene. (Dan_9:27) deals with the last three and a half years of the seven, which is identical with the "great tribulation." (Mat_24:15-28) "time of trouble" (Dan_12:1) "hour of temptation" (Rev_3:10).

Nowhere do we read that the church has a teaching force with which they wage war, but we have scripture that proves that Israel will wage war against it.

ZECHARIAH 14:14.

"And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together: gold, and silver, and raiment, in great abundance."

There are several places in the Bible where Israel is called "holy ones." In most cases the word "favored ones" is used, but in the English Bibles the word "saints" is used.

STRONGS HEBREW AND GREEK DICTIONARIES.

H2623 חָסֵד chaciyd (khaw-seed') adj. 1. (properly) kind, i.e. (religiously) pious (a saint) [from H2616] KJV: godly (man), good, holy (one), merciful, saint, (un-)godly. Root(s): H2616

So it is clear that Daniel 7:21 is dealing with Israel and not with the church. The word "apantesis" which is translated "meet" in Thessalonians means "come back with" and implies that the same direction is followed after this meeting that was followed from the starting point. This refers to the meeting of Christ with the saints in the clouds and then He immediately returns with them to earth. The word does not mean a change of direction as we see in Matthew 25:1 and Acts 28:15. When Paul met the saints, he continued in the direction of Rome because that was his final destination. That was his original destination. He could have changed direction if that was his plan and gone to another destination. Both the Greek word "apantesis" and the word "meet" mean only one thing "meet"! Nothing else. The word does not oblige anyone to move in the same direction.

In Matthew 25:1 and 6 where the virgins go to meet the bridegroom there is nothing said that they move with the bridegroom in the same direction. Now there is also another question. It is said that the church goes to meet Christ during the rapture and then comes back to earth with Him. Why can it not be otherwise? Is it not Christ, after the cry and the sound of the trumpet, who comes to meet the church and then accompanies them to Heaven?

We are the ones who are called. Not Christ.

We go to meet the Father and He comes to get us. The fact that Jesus says in John 6:39-54 that the resurrection will take place on the last day proves that the rapture of the saints will only take place at the end of time, on the last day. The Greek word for "last" is "eschatos" meaning "farthest, set apart, end time".

STRONGS HEBREW AND GREEK DICTIONARIES.

G2078 ἐσχατοցεschatos (es'-khat-os) adj. 1. farthest, final (of place or time) [a superlative probably from G2192 (in the sense of contiguity)] KJV: ends of, last, latter end, lowest, uttermost Root(s): G219

This word does not refer to the last day of existence, for there will be no such thing, for we will continue to exist forever. This refers to the end of the dispensation, not a specific day. We know from Revelation 20:4-15 that there will be at least a thousand years between the resurrection of the good and the wicked. So there cannot be a single day for a general resurrection. In certain church groups and the thinking of individuals, the idea lives that after the rapture the Holy Spirit will no longer be on earth. The Holy Spirit goes with the church to heaven, and then remains there.

There is no indication that the ministry of the Holy Spirit on this earth will cease to function at any time in the history of the earth.

On the contrary, the ministry of the Holy Spirit is an eternal ministry and will never cease.

JOHN 14:16.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever:"

The "wedding" referred to in both Matthew 25:1-13 and Revelation 19:1-10. The story Jesus uses in Matthew is about an earthly marriage between a man and a woman and He uses it as an example to illustrate how alert we must be for His return. In contrast, the wedding in Revelation 19 is a heavenly wedding between Jesus and His bride. This wedding is also a wedding in heaven and that of Matthew is one on earth. Furthermore, the wedding in Matthew was accomplished over 2000 years ago but the one in Revelation is a prophetic wedding that has yet to take place.

11. JESUS DID NOT ONCE REFER TO THE RAPTURE AS AN EVENT SEPARATE FROM THE SECOND COMING.

On the contrary, Jesus made it very clear that before His coming to establish the kingdom on earth He would come and gather all the saints to be with Him.

We read this in the next verse.

JOHN 14:1-3.

"Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Furthermore, He also gave the assurance in Luke 21:34-36 that those who "watch and pray" will "escape" what is coming.

10. THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TIME OF THE GENTILES.

Certain preachers of the word and sincere Christians erroneously proclaim that the "times of the Gentiles" will be 2,520 years. This is from the time of Daniel until the Second Coming. However, what we must remember is that Daniel did not see the entire "times of the Gentiles." The 2,520 year theory about the length of "the times of the Gentiles" is based on the "seven times" of Leviticus 26. In this passage it is said that God will punish the people seven times more for their sins. It is believed that a prophetic year is 360 days long and that these 360 days actually refer to 360 years. So here we are dealing with the comparison of a day to a year. So if we do the sum like this then seven times 360 years is the number 2520. Various people have put forward dates as to when these 2520 years will end. None of these so-called dates have been correct. It was believed that the 2520 years began in the year 606BC, or 616BC. There are even references to other dates for the beginning of the 2520 years. It is understandable that the beginning of this period will determine when it will end. One cannot stretch 2520 years beyond 2520 years. As time went on, the "date setters" adjusted their dates, but they are now running out of dates. The explanation of "2520 years for the times of the Gentiles" is completely unscriptural for the following reasons. The expression "seven times" occurs 23 times in the Old Testament and not once does it refer to "2520 years." If the word "time" refers to a year of 360 days, then it must be understood as days as we know them of 24 hours each. **We cannot change it to 360 years.**

When the Bible uses a certain number of days to correspond to the same number of years, the statement is very clear.

NUMBER 14:33-34.

"And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and shall bear the consequences of your whoredom, until your carcases be consumed in the wilderness. According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day a year, you shall bear your iniquities forty years, and you shall experience my wrath."

In such cases a day is a day and a year is a year.

We have no right to change it. Furthermore, if "**sevenfold**" means 2520 years in Leviticus 26, then we have four periods of 2520 or a total of 10080 years to account for, because the passage uses the term four times concerning Israel. That is a long time to punish the people for their sins. If we had the authority to change the term "**sevenfold**" to years, then we would have to change all the places where the term is used to 2520 years. That would make many parts of the Bible ridiculous. For example, where Jacob bowed down to Esau seven times, it took him 2520 years to do so. Israel marched around Jericho on the seventh day for 2520 years. I could give many such examples, but these are enough. We must be consistent in the interpretation of the word of the Lord. So we see in Leviticus 26 that this "**sevenfold**" refers to the severity of the punishment and not to the number of literal years. It would also only be after the fourth time of this punishment that the people would repent. It is impossible to read 10080 years into Israel's history, seeing that not even 4000 years had passed.

In the "times of the Gentiles" that began during the Egyptian domination during the time of Moses up to our time, 4000 years have already passed. There will also be thousands of years added to this time until the Second Coming. The Antichrist will have been on earth for at least seven years before these times end. The term "the fullness of the Gentiles" means the same as "the times of the Gentiles" and not the cutting off of the Gentiles from the salvation and grace of God. There will never be a time when the Lord will save only Jews and not Gentiles. It is unscriptural to think that the salvation of the Gentiles will no longer be possible after the rapture. His purpose has always been to save both the Jew and the Gentile. After the rapture, he will save all who believe in him, regardless of whether they are Jews or Gentiles. The grace dispensation is not the dispensation of the Gentiles. The "times of the Gentiles" did not begin with the church and will not end with the rapture. The grace dispensation includes all who believe in the grace that is in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jew and Gentile alike.

11. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE RAPTURE.

An important aspect of the rapture is the relationship or connection that exists between the rapture and the Holy Spirit. This relationship has the foundation of the establishment of the body of Christ on earth with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit has always been present on earth throughout human history. The fact that Jesus said that He had to go away so that the Father could send the Comforter does not mean that the Holy Spirit was not here. However, He acted in a different way before the day of Pentecost.

We read about the Holy Spirit from the opening pages of the Bible.

GENESIS 1:2.

"And the earth was formless and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

Here we already see the first working of the Holy Spirit on earth. The beginning of the history of humanity on earth. Before the Holy Spirit had anything to do with any human being, He first had to prepare the earth for the coming of man in cooperation with the other two members of the Trinity. After man was created, the working of the Holy Spirit went hand in hand with that of man.

On several occasions the Holy Spirit became proficient on people and even filled them, but His presence on or in people was never permanent.

NUMBERS 24:2.

"And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and saw Israel encamped by their tribes: and the Spirit of God came upon him."

1 SAMUEL 16:13-14.

"Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose, and went to Ramah. But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him."

PSALM 51:13.

"Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me."

Before the day of Pentecost, John explained that the Holy Spirit could not come until Jesus was glorified. This may sound like a contradiction, but it is not. Before the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was here in an almost impersonal way, but after the day of Pentecost, the presence of the Holy Spirit became one of personal intimacy.

JOHN 7:39.

"But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

We read in **John 14:16** the following: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever:"

The Holy Spirit was on earth before the day of Pentecost and will be here forever, but on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit began a new ministry here on earth. A ministry that will be central to the believer's life.

This ministry of the Holy Spirit is to baptize believers into the body of Christ.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-13.

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of that one body, though many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and we were all made to drink into one Spirit."

This baptism by the Holy Spirit of the believer into the body of Christ is then also sealed by the Holy Spirit.

EPHESIANS 1:13.

"in whom also, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,"

EPHESIANS 4:30.

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

It is important to pay attention to two important aspects of this change of ministry that began on the Day of Pentecost. The difference between the ministry of the Holy Spirit before the birth of the church, and His ministry afterwards.

1. The Holy Spirit ministered on this earth before the beginning of the church and will continue that ministry after the rapture of the church.
2. The Holy Spirit never permanently resided in or with individuals before the church. The church that began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost has a unique relationship with the Holy Spirit. With the church, unlike with those before the time of the church, there is a permanent connection. The Holy Spirit came to the church to abide. He becomes a permanent resident of the temple of the Lord. The temple of the Lord is the body of Christ.

We therefore see that the two aspects of the Holy Spirit's ministry can be separated from each other.

1. He is the comforter of the church, the advocate of the church, the leader of the church, the one who reveals Jesus to us. He is an intimate Friend of the believer.
2. The ministry to the world is one of conviction of sin and not an intimate relationship.

When we look at the rapture of the church and the Holy Spirit, it is a reversal of Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came to dwell in the church, without detaching Himself from His other ministry on earth. At the rapture the Holy Spirit goes back to heaven with the church, without detaching Himself from His ministry on earth. During the tribulation period the Holy Spirit will function on earth in the same way that He functioned on earth before the day of Pentecost. We see therefore that His "**coming**" to earth at Pentecost and His "**departing**" at the rapture have nothing to do with His original ministry on earth.

The ministry concerning the church is a separate part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. His ministry during the rapture of the church has nothing to do with His ministry of salvation. Salvation throughout the Bible has always been linked to grace, and will continue to be linked to grace after the rapture. The Holy Spirit is involved in the world and in the church, although in two different ways.

12.WHO IS "HE" WHO IS HOLDING BACK NOW?

2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-6.

"Now we ask you, brothers, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, not to be quickly shaken from your reason or to be alarmed, either by spirit or by word or letter as if from us, as if the day of Christ had already come. Let no one deceive you in any way, for that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that I told you these things while I was still with you? And now you know what restrains him, so that he may be revealed in his time."

Here the power that restrains the "**man of sin**" is referred to as a "**what**". This does not mean that the "**what**" is an impersonal object. On the contrary, in the context of this verse the "**what**" cannot be an impersonal power, because the entire context refers to living persons who are resisted and who do the resisting. Furthermore, we also know that the "**man of sin**" has not yet been revealed, so the "**restrainer**" is still here.

In this verse there are several points of interest.

1. The "**restrainer**" has restrained this "**man of sin**" very effectively.
2. The "**restrainer**" is powerful enough to restrain the kingdom of darkness, of which the "**man of sin**" is a part, and cause their work to be curtailed.
3. The "**restrainer**" is worldwide.

There are various theories about who or what this "restrainer" is. Not all of these theories are necessarily spiritual. These theories include the Jewish state, the Roman Empire, and human governments. Other views can be summarized as supernatural events such as the devil, the false prophet, and other mysterious events. When we look at all these different theories, we get the idea that the "restrainer" must be a supernatural force, power, or personality. There is no earthly government that can restrain the influence of the devil, except the government of heaven. Therefore, the only one who can restrain the son of perdition is the Holy Spirit. When the church is raptured, the Holy Spirit will not leave the earth, but He will just stand aside so that evil can take over. During the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was on earth from the beginning and had a special ministry. During the Old Dispensation, the Holy Spirit came upon people and not into them. He also did not come upon everyone but upon a few people who were chosen by God. During the New Testament, with the dawn of the church dispensation, the Holy Spirit came to dwell in the body = the church = on the day of Pentecost. Now the Holy Spirit has a completely different ministry than in the old dispensation. When the rapture occurs, this ministry of the Holy Spirit will cease. After the rapture, the Holy Spirit will continue with His ministry on earth as it was during the old dispensation. It is right to say that it is the church and the Holy Spirit that are the "restrainers". The Holy Spirit in the born-again child of the Lord is the one who now restrains the powers of the devil and the revelation of the son of perdition. To understand the above and place it in the right relationship with the rest of Scripture, we must understand how people came to salvation before and after the "church dispensation."

During the old dispensation, people came to salvation by believing in the Messiah who was to come. They were saved by faith in the coming Christ. However, they were not "**baptized in the Holy Spirit.**" The special part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit only began with the dawn of the church dispensation on the day of Pentecost. During the period after the rapture, which is called the tribulation, the Holy Spirit will still be involved in the salvation of souls. However, He will no longer be here in the ministry of the "**baptism in the Holy Spirit.**" The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a unique part of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. So we see that the ministry of the Holy Spirit on earth before and after the church dispensation was different than during the church dispensation. During the rapture, the church leaves and the Holy Spirit stands aside and there is nothing left that can hold the aonde. The power of the Holy Spirit and the salt of the church are no longer here.

13. THE CHURCH AND THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

Although the word “church” does not appear in the book of Revelation between chapters 6 to 18, the word “saints” does appear there. As a result, it is claimed that this proves that the church does go through the tribulation. However, this is not true. The word “saints” can be applied to all believers throughout Bible history up to the end of history. We often refer to the saints of the Old Testament but this does not prove that the church existed in the Old Testament. The church only began on the day of Pentecost. The “saints” of the Old Testament were also not in the same class as the “saints” who are part of the body of Christ. The church as the elect of Christ are “saints” with a different status than those of previous centuries. It is this part of the whole known as “saints” that is not present in the tribulation. Yes, there will be various “saints” in the tribulation, but it will not be the church of Jesus. The church as the elect is not mentioned between chapters 6-18 in Revelation. **Not once!!!**

This is a strange occurrence considering that the church dominates most of the New Testament. The only reason why an important group of people is not referred to in Revelation 6-18 is because they are not there.

They are gone with the rapture in the beginning of chapter four.

14. WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE RAPTURE?

There are several conditions that a person must meet in order to go with the rapture. The most important is that a person must be "*in Christ*." In other words, you must be born again and part of the family of Jesus. In 1 Thessalonians we read the words "*in Christ*" as a condition for being raised from the dead and for the living to be able to change. To be "*in Christ*" means, according to 2 Corinthians 5:17, to be a "*new creature*." The old things have passed away and all things have become new. The person who is now in Christ no longer lives under "*the law*," but under "*grace*." We also see that in 1 Corinthians 15:23 it is required that we belong to Christ at His coming. Those who remain in grace and trust in God belong to Christ and will go with him when the trumpet sounds. We also read in John 5:28-29 that those who do good will be raised to the resurrection of life and will also be part of the rapture. In *Luke 21:6-11* we read that we must "watch and pray that we may be counted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of Man."

We remain worthy if we are anchored to His grace by faith. When we are in Christ and by faith in Him live holy and blameless lives and are part of the church of Christ, then we are assured that we will not be left behind when the trumpet sounds.

We will hear the trumpet!!!

15. JOHN NELSON DARBY AND THE RAPTURE.

Supporters of the “*pre-tribulation rapture*” generally believe that John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) revived the old biblical doctrine through intense study while in a convalescent home after an accident in December 1827 and January 1828. Evangelical opponents of the “*pre-tribulation rapture*” view have put forward various theories over the years to discredit Darby. For example, it is said that Darby borrowed this idea from Edward Irving (1792-1834), while others claim that the idea originated as a result of a prophetic word from a 15-year-old Scottish girl, Margaret Macdonald (1815-1840). It is believed that both of these origins of the so-called “*rapture*” were viewed as heretical and Macdonald’s prophetic word as demonic.

So the question is; what is the evidence that Darby came to this conclusion through his own studies.

John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) was born in his parents’ London home in Westminster on 18 November 1800. He was the youngest son of John Darby of Leap Castle, King’s Country, Ireland. He was the 8th of 9 children. Six sons and three daughters. Darby’s father was a wealthy merchant who married the daughter of an even wealthier man - Anne Vaughan in 1784. Fifteen weeks after his birth, he was baptised on 3 March 1801 in the Anglican church. His godfather was Lord Nelson and was not present at the baptism. J.N. Darby received his first name from his father and his middle name from his godfather. On 17 February 1812 Darby joined “*The Royal College of St. Peter*” in Westminster. Better known as the “*Westminster School*” in London. Despite living only a few blocks from the school, he went home from school.

All his brothers also attended school there. Only sons of wealthy parents attended school there because the fees were too high for the poor. The education was given by ministers, and the subjects were mainly in Latin and Greek with occasional English. There is no record of Darby's academic status, but in 1815 he graduated from Westminster. He was then sent by his father to Ireland for the first time in his life to attend Trinity College on 3 July 1815. Trinity College Dublin was an Anglican college founded as a Christian school in 1592. It was the leading academic institution in Ireland and equal to the top English universities such as Oxford and Cambridge. Darby took various classes in science and classical studies. He won a gold medal in classical studies in July 1819. At that time, that award meant that you were the top student in the class. Darby did not take classes in theology, but was urged to study the Bible as well. In 1808 the college made the study of the Bible compulsory for all academic students. Richard Graves (1763-1829) taught the classes mainly on Saturdays. Graves' influence on Darby was significant, instilling in him ideas and thoughts that would later become central to Darby's thinking and writing.

I quote Nebeker:

"A key element of Graves's eschatology was the literal interpretation of prophetic Scripture." "Graduates of Trinity College, Dublin," notes Ernest Sandeen, "were among the earliest and most able defenders of futurism."

This was the case because of a more literal hermanuistic view at the institution. The more literally one takes the Bible the closer one comes to the teaching of future events in biblical prophecy.

After graduating from Trinity College, Darby began to study law and was admitted to Lincoln's Inn, Dublin on November 9, 1819. Darby experienced a personal conversion around 1820 or 1821.

I quote Darby:

"I have loved Christ, I doubt not, sincerely and growingly since June or July 1820, or 21, I forget which."

The fact that he became a believer around the age of 20, having just finished college and advanced in the study of the law, indicates that he had a remarkable intellect, as well as good spiritual influence. Shortly after his conversion, while studying the law, he felt a call to the ministry. On January 21, 1822, Darby was called to the **"Irish bar"**. There is no evidence, however, that he practiced law at all. There are indications that he read many theological works before his ordination, which prepared him for the ministry. His change of career did not please his father and he disinherited him. Darby received a very large sum from his uncle and after his father's death various financial privileges. Darby's career in the Church of Ireland began on 7 August 1825. Bishop William Bissett ordained him as an Anglican deacon in Raphoe Cathedral. The Archbishop of Dublin, William Magee (1766-1831), ordained Darby as a priest on 19 February 1826 and appointed him to a large local parish of Calary in County Wicklow. **One of the poorest areas in Dublin.**

Of this commission **Darby** said the following:

I quote; *"As soon as I was ordained, I went among the poor Irish mountaineers, into a wild and uncultivated district, where I remained two years and three months, working as well as I could."*

The people of the area had great respect for Darby. Archbishop Magee was working hard to bring about a so-called "**Irish Reformation**" and Darby was a key component in the work. During Darby's ministry in 1826-27 it is estimated that approximately 600 to 800 people a week were coming over to the Protestant side from the Catholic church. Although the conversion rate soon began to decline to zero. The reason for this was Archbishop Magee's issuance of a petition expecting the people to take an oath of allegiance to the British Crown and to acknowledge the King as the head of the church. This action by Magee thwarted the evangelistic efforts and deeply discouraged Darby. Darby was searching for both dogma and experience of the true church which he believed was not in the Roman Catholic church or the Church of Ireland. He believed that neither could be the true church because their head was not Christ. Neither the state nor the Bishop of Rome could be the head of the church. Referring to Jesus' words in John 18:36 to Pilate - *My kingdom is not of this world*; - he was convinced that Magee's actions compromised the Divine mandate to the church.

I quote Paul Wilkinson:

"Since spiritual supremacy belonged to Christ, whose rule was of a heavenly rather than earthly nature, Darby argued that Christ's ministers should not meddle in civil matters."

The view of "**non-involvement**" in political and civil affairs later became a strong social and civic position among Darby's followers as well as the "**Brethren**" movement. According to Grayson Carter, there were two events during 1826 and early 1827 that led to the "**rapid development of Darby's anti-Erastianism**" shortly after his ordination.

The first was Archbishop Magee's strong words and actions in defence of a state church under the authority of the state, together with a "petition to the House of Commons for protection against the 'hostility and calumny with which they and their religion have been systematically assailed for a long time.'"

The second event was Darby's reaction and strong objection to Magee's decision in 1826 to compel all new members to take the oath of allegiance and unity to the English state. At this time Darby was experiencing a disappointment of a failed spiritual and physical sobriety in his life. The reality of a state church in ruins and no different from the world outside and his search for assurance of salvation changed his life dramatically. Darby's Christian understanding and experience were about to change drastically. As one who began his ministry as a strong churchman, Darby was on the verge of becoming the head of evangelism when he was involved in an accident.

I quote Darby:

"As soon as I was ordained, I went among the poor Irish mountaineers, in a wild and uncultivated district, where I remained two years and three months, working as well as I could. I felt, however, that the style of work did not agree with what I read in the Bible concerning the church and Christianity; nor did it agree with the effect of the working of the Spirit of God. These considerations pressed upon me from a scriptural and practical point of view; while I was diligently trying to discharge the duties of the ministry entrusted to me, I labored day and night among the people, who were almost as wild as the mountains which they inhabited. An accident occurred which set me aside for a time; my horse was frightened and threw me against a doorpost."

This period in Darby's life is known as the "*recovery*" where he experienced "*salvation*". After the accident, Darby was taken to the home of Susannah Pennefather (1785-1862), his older sister, in Dublin to recover. Darby's "*recovery*" time was also an opportunity where the questions in his mind began to sort themselves out.

He writes the following:

"I was troubled in the same way as a minister, but never had the smallest shadow of it since."

He states:

"I judge it to be Satan: but going from cabin to cabin talking of Christ, and with souls, these thoughts arose, and when I tried to quote a text to myself, it seemed a shadow and not real. I should never have been there, but do not think that was the cause, but simply that I was not released according to Romans 8. As I said, I have never had it since."

The three or more months Darby spent recovering were undoubtedly the most formative period in his life.

Of this period he said:

I quote: "I am daily more struck by the connection of the great principles upon which my thoughts were exercised by and with God, when I found salvation and peace, and the questions which stir and trouble the world in the present day: the absolute, divine authority and certainty of the Word, as a divine link between us and God, if all (church and world) were to pass; personal assurance of salvation in a new state by being in Christ; the church has His body; Christ comes to receive us to Himself; and at the same time there was the establishment of a new earthly dispensation thereafter.

It was a vague fact that long afterwards took shape in my mind, that there must be an entirely new order of things, if God would have His way, and the desire of the heart for it I had long before felt; but the church and salvation I did not know until the time of which I have spoken; but eight years before universal sorrow and sin had pressed upon my spirit. I did not think of saying so much of myself; but it is all well. The truth remains the truth, and that is where we must go; but the Lord's dealings with the soul, connected with the use of truth, must be noted."

Further identification of the date and what Darby believed happened to him spiritually during that time is found in the following quote.

"I believe at my deliverance from slavery in 1827-8, God revealed certain truths that were necessary for the church."

What did Darby claim he began to understand during the recovery period?

He refers to 5 things.

First: "the absolute, divine authority and certainty of the Word, as a divine link between us and God,"

"the Scriptures to obtain complete dominion over me."

Second: "I realized that I was united with Christ in heaven, and that my place before God was consequently represented by His own." "personal assurance of salvation in a new state by being in Christ; the church as His body."

Third: Darby began to understand his standing with Christ.

"I was in Christ, adopted into the Beloved, and seated in heavenly places in Him.

This led me directly to the realization of what the true church of God was, those who were united with Christ in heaven."

Fourth: "At the same time I saw that the Christian, who has his place in Christ in heaven, has nothing to wait for but the coming of the Saviour, to be in reality in the glory which is already his portion 'in Christ.'" "I saw in that word the coming of Christ to take the church to Himself in glory." "to be in Christ; the church as His body; Christ coming to receive us to Himself; . . . all this was when it was laid aside by E. P. in 1827." "The coming of the Lord was the other truth brought to my mind from the word, as that which, if I am set in heavenly places in Christ, was alone to wait for, that I may be set with Him in heavenly places."

Such a group of beliefs formulated during this time provides the foundation for the "**pre-tribulation rapture.**" Darby saw the importance of a sudden return of Christ for His church.

Fifth: He saw a change in the dispensation.

"Christ coming to receive us unto Himself; and in addition to that, the institution of a new earthly dispensation, all this was set aside by E. P. in 1827." "Isaiah 32. brought me to the earthly consequences of the same truth, though other passages may now seem more striking to me; but I saw a distinct change of dispensation in that chapter, when the Spirit would be poured out upon the Jewish nation, and a king would reign in righteousness."

Isaiah was a strong influence on his studies and changed his views during this time.

"In my refuge the 32nd chapter of Isaiah taught me plainly, on behalf of God, that there was yet an economy to come, according to His order; a state of affairs by no means yet fixed. The consciousness of my union with Christ gave me the present heavenly part of the glory, while this chapter clearly sets forth the corresponding earthly part. I was not able to place these things in their respective places, or to arrange them in order, as I now can; but the truths themselves were then revealed by God by the operation of his Spirit through the reading of his word."

Francis Newman, who served as a private tutor to the Pennefather children for 15 months during 1827 and 1828, confirms the time of Darby's textual and dogmatic discoveries. As a tutor he was involved in the household during Darby's time there. He refers to the influence Darby had on him while he was employed by the Pennefathers. During this time Darby also came to realize that the promises to Israel were not also to the church. This is confirmed by Newman's letter to B.W. Newton on April 17, 1828. These letters were written after Darby's recovery period. It is advantageous to have a witness to confirm what Darby claims. Such a witness supports the general credibility of Darby. Benjamin Wills Newton (1807-99), writing of his Oxford mentor and friend Frank Newman, the following;

"While I was at Oxford and we were friends, F. Newman went to Ireland (1827) and there became acquainted with John Darby."

So Newton says that Newman returned from Ireland, under the influence of Darby in relation to the prophetic word and eager to share it with his friend.

This is a second source that confirms what Darby claims. A third source is John Gifford Bellett (1795-1864) who also interacted with Darby during his recovery period.

He wrote the following regarding Darby:

I quote:

"In the beginning of 1828 I had occasion to go to London, and then I met privately and heard publicly those who were warm and lively about prophetic truth, their minds having been freshly enlightened by it. In my letters to J. N. D. at this time I told him that I had heard things which he and I had never spoken of before, and I further told him on my return to Dublin what they were. Full of this subject as I then was, I found him also very prepared for it, and his mind and soul travelled rapidly in the direction thus given to it."

Bellet states that he discussed "**prophetic truth**" with Darby. The five biblical discoveries mentioned were the basis upon which Darby established his new theological paradigm which included "**dispensationalism**" and the "**pre-tribulation rapture**" view. From the beginning of his exodus from the established church, these items were the core upon which he established his unique theology. These items are important because "**pre-tribulation**" theology is built on the view one has of a certain eschatological outlook. Darby saw a clear distinction between Israel and the church.

I quote Weremchuk:

"It is important to note here that Darby came to the realization of these points alone, without the influence of other men."

"Darby's views, when later fully developed, would prove to be in many respects contrary to those normally held by the church at large."

It was during Darby's recovery period that the original idea emerged during his personal Bible study. It has spread like wildfire over the next decade and up to the present. It is safe to say that the view of a "**pre-tribulation rapture**" rests on a specific definition of the church and any consideration of the "**pre-tribulation rapture**" that does not take this core factor into account will miss the point.

Weremchuk further states:

"Darby, as we have noted, was very much concerned with the early church as described in Acts. He did not like what he saw around him. His views, which were then developing, were 'new'—that is, different from those of his contemporaries. He defended his views as the 'original' ones that the church had lost sight of very early in its history." Weremchuk, Darby, 63-4.

61 John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question*, Revised and Enlarged Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979),

Darby was concerned about what was happening in the church he was involved with in Ireland and sought answers in the Bible. Darby's revelation of the assurance that he and all other Christians were united with Christ in heavenly places formed the heart of his theology. He realized that we were the church in Christ. This ecclesiastical view formed the core of his hope throughout his life. The first two treatises he wrote were both on ecclesiastical issues, further demonstrating his understanding of the church.

The first, which was published only later, was the one in which he strongly disagreed with Archbishop Magee's petition. The second was from Dublin in 1828.

"Considerations on the Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ."

Darby clearly saw the difference between the church and Israel because he saw that there was a thousand-year reign awaiting Israel on earth. On the other hand, he clearly saw that he was positionally united with Christ in heaven—a heavenly destiny. A leading figure of the dispensational position.

Charles Ryrie, said: "A dispensationalist keeps Israel and the church separate."

Ryrie explains: "This is probably the most basic theological test of whether a person is a dispensationalist or not, and it is undoubtedly the most practical and conclusive. The one who fails to consistently distinguish Israel and the church will inevitably not hold to dispensational distinctions; and one who does will."

Darby understood that the church is a heavenly assembly and not of the earth. He realized that our position was the same as Christ who is in heaven. The church is therefore heaven-bound and not earth-bound. Israel was earth-bound and God has a plan for Israel at the end of the church dispensation. Darby understood that the church could be taken to heaven at any time without any signs having to be fulfilled. This view later became known as the "**pre-tribulation rapture**" of the church. Darby's understanding of the change in the dispensation laid the foundation for dispensationalism. By this time, Darby had also developed a pessimistic view of the visible church and Christianity as a whole.

He believed that the church was in shambles. From the above information it is clear that Darby's "**pre-tribulation rapture**" view is the view that the church has held throughout the centuries. Anyone who claims that the view began with Darby is grossly ignorant of history. Darby did not begin the view, he merely brought it to the forefront. There are various theories, mostly by opponents of the "**pre-tribulation rapture**". They argue that Darby was primarily influenced by other sources.

The first is: Edward Irving (1792-1834) and the Irvingite movement were the first to develop the "**pre-tribulation rapture**" and Darby got his ideas from them.

Second: It is claimed that Darby's view was taken from the writings of a Jesuit Priest Manual de Lacunza (1731-1801), who wrote under the influence of Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, a converted Jew.

Third: The so-called "**pre-tribulation rapture**" was the product of a woman in Irving's church in London.

Fourth: The "**pre-tribulation rapture**" view comes from a prophetic word of a 15 year old Scottish girl named Margaret Macdonald (1815-1840) in Port Glasgow, Scotland in April 1830. The two main views are the Edward Irving view and the Margaret Macdonald view.

The Manual de Lacunza view and the woman in Irving's London church view are not strongly supported.

The Edward Irving view.

This view argues that Darby was influenced by Edward Irving or someone in the movement. Recently, a scholarly effort has been made by an American, Mark Patterson, to prove that Irving's eschatology was a precursor to Darby and his views.

Patterson points out that Irving's writings in the "*Morning Watch*" reveal that he was, among other things, a "*pre-tribulation, pre-millennial*" theologian. Patterson believes that this cannot be overemphasized. From his meeting with Hately Frere in 1825 until his death in December 1834, Irving's thought and writing were shaped by the conviction of his distinct "*pre-millennial*" views.

Patterson states in an article:

"Ultimately, and at the very least, Irving must be considered the paladin of pre-tribulation pre-millennialism and the chief architect of its cardinal formulas."

He adds:

"In addition to the a priori dismissal of Irving, there are two fundamental errors common among those who uncritically accept Darby as the source of the pre-tribulation rapture. First, few recognize the extent to which Darby's theology reflects the very millennial tradition in which he was immersed. The core tenets of his theology—literal hermeneutics, apostasy in the Church, the restoration of the Jews to their homeland, details of Christ's coming, and his belief that biblical prophecy speaks uniquely to his day—were concepts held, discussed, and propagated by a large body of prophecy students. Second, the development of Darby's own theology, despite how he remembers it, was in a largely formative stage from 1827 to even as late as 1843."

There are several problems that arise when one tries to see too much similarity between the "*historical*" view of the Irvinites and the "*future*" view of the Brethren.

It is clear that Patterson made such mistakes.

The core principle of Darby's theology as seen by Patterson is too broad and general. Patterson describes Irving and Albury's hermeneutics as not merely literal because it only tells half the story, but one that follows the "[literaltypological methodology](#)." This is typical of the semi-literality of historicism. Darby was known for being consistently literal. He did not try to convert days into years, nor did he try to see historical events in the seals, trumpets, or any other parts of Revelation. He read nothing in them as judgments of the past. He saw the events of Revelation as literal events yet to occur. Also, Irving and Albury believed that many of these passages that speak of a future Jewish tribulation were already happening before their eyes. For example; Babylon referred to the decline of the church in their day. David Bebbington distinguishes between a historian and a hermeticist and a futurist's forms of literalism: Historians find it difficult to be thorough advocates of a literal interpretation. There is too great a gap between the detail of biblical imagery and their supposed historical fulfillment to make such a claim.

Futurists do not suffer from this deficiency.

They clamor for the literal interpretation, especially the dispensational group. Darby was convinced as early as 1829 that prophecy concerning Israel would be literally fulfilled. As this idea developed during the 1830s it became the backbone of his system. Since Darby's opinions were based on the literal interpretation of the Bible, his distinctive exposition enjoyed the advantage of the most acceptable view of the Bible. Thus, Irving and Albury had no common hermeneutical ground with Darby as Patterson claims. Irving and Albury were basically in the historical camp while Darby was definitely a clear futurist.

There is no doubt that both were troubled by the apostasy of the church of their day, but even this similarity points to the differences between Albury's historical view and that of a futurist. Albury's view of the apostasy of the church was because the church had just completed the 1260 days, (which actually refers to the 1260 years ending with the victory of the Antichrist, (the Roman Church) in 1789 by the French Revolution. These events point to the coming rise of the whore of Babylon which is the apostate church. On the other hand, Darby with his futurism believed that the apostasy of the church was predicted in the New Testament epistles and would happen more and more as the end of the church age drew near. It is also completely different from what will happen in Revelation after the rapture and during the tribulation. Albury saw the apostasy of the church as a precursor to the Second Coming, while Darby saw the decline of the church as part of the end times that precedes the rapture and is followed by the events of Revelation. Both of these views see a restoration of Israel but from different perspectives. Darby believed that the Jews would return to their land in unbelief but would repent during the tribulation.

I quote him:

"At the close of the age the same fact will be repeated: the Jews - who have returned to their own country, though without being converted - will find themselves in connection with the fourth beast."

Irving says the following:

"when the Lord has finished testifying against the Gentiles, . . . his Holy Spirit will turn to his ancient people, the Jews."

Shortly thereafter, the Second Coming will occur.

The last two items that Patterson refers to are the so-called details of Christ's return and his belief that biblical prophecy speaks uniquely of his day. However, this is so broadly stated that it could mean almost anything. It will fit any of the many views. Each view has details of Christ's return and each view believes that their version speaks uniquely of their time. More important are the differences regarding the details of Christ's return as seen by the different systems and also there will be various differences in how each prophetic writing speaks uniquely of their time. So it is clear that Irving and Albury are certainly not the predecessors of Darby's view. On the contrary, it is Irving and Albury against whom Darby was reacting. It is clear that Darby took about 15 years to develop this view into a mature system, it is also clear that the idea of a "**pre-tribulation rapture**" would have been immediately acceptable. However, it would have taken some time to work out the implications of this theology. This is also a scenario that fits with what we know of Darby. Anyone who studies the facts surrounding Darby properly will have to admit that he could have put this theology together on his own with his Bible study. An intensive study of Irving's theology clearly shows that they were overwhelmingly historical while Darby and the Brethren became futuristic. Flegg, a student of Irving who grew up in the church, notes that the differences between the two movements were very large. The later "**Powerscourt**" conference was dominated by this group. The Brethren took the futuristic position as opposed to the view of the Catholic Apostolic. It was the adoption of futurist eschatology by a group of Christians that gave it the strength to become a strong competitor to the historical view.

Darby presented the concept of a rapture that could occur at any moment. A view that became one of the main views of Brethren theology. Darby also taught that the invisible church was the true church of Jesus Christ. Both of these ideas were in sharp contrast to the Catholic Apostolic view. There were therefore clear differences between these two end-time views and to attempt to suggest that the two views influenced each other would fail. When we read the full message of Irving's eschatology it is clear that they were very strongly attached to the historical view that the entire church dispensation saw as the tribulation. The main point of Irving's eschatology was that Babylon (false Christianity) was soon to be destroyed and that the Second Coming would then take place.

This is classic historicism!

He also taught that the second coming was synonymous with the rapture. Irving believed in a single imminent return of Christ. This is certainly not a "**pre-tribulation**" view, since he believed that the tribulation began at least 1500 years earlier. Nor did he preach a separate rapture following the tribulation and then the second coming.

Ernest Sandeen says the following:

"Darby's view of the premillennial coming contrasted with that of the historicist millenarian school in two ways. First, Darby taught that the second coming would be secret, an event meaningful only to those who participated in it. . . . There were, in effect, two "second comings" in Darby's eschatology. The church is first secretly taken from the earth and then, at a later time, Christ returns in a public second coming as described in Matthew 24. . . . Second, Darby taught that the secret rapture could occur at any moment.

In fact, the secret rapture is also often referred to as the doctrine of the one moment to come. Unlike the historicist millenarians, Darby taught that the prophetic timetable was interrupted with the founding of the church and that the unfulfilled biblical prophecies must all await the rapture of the church. . . . Darby avoided the pitfalls of trying to predict a time for Christ's second coming and of trying to make sense of the contemporary alarms of European politics with Revelation as a guide."

Although Irving and Albury's followers spoke of the translation of the saints to heaven, they clearly did not believe in the "pre-tribulation rapture."

Fleggs says the following:

"that the translation may not be merely a single event at the time of the first resurrection, but spread over a short period before that."

That doesn't sound like the "pre-tribulation rapture"!

Flegg further explains:

"This period of great tribulation was inevitable, but would be escaped by an elect body (the one referred to by St. Paul in I Thess. 4:16-17) who would be raised or translated (caught up in the clouds) by Christ. by the working of the Holy Spirit at the beginning (morning) of the Second Coming. This was the first resurrection—the gathering of the "firstfruits," the resurrection from/out of death spoken of in the New Testament and signified by the woman in travail (Apoc. 12:1-2).

The Old Testament "saints" would participate in it, and both the resurrected and the translated would receive their resurrection bodies and stand with Christ on Mount Zion."

We see from the above quote that the Irving rapture is part of the second coming. Their theology teaches a short break between the rapture and the second coming, not a rapture followed by a seven-year tribulation and then a new event, the second coming. Patterson cites 74 examples of what he calls the "pre-tribulation rapture" although, after looking at each reference, it rather refers to the second coming which includes the translation of the saints. This is not the "pre-tribulation rapture" as taught by Darby and the Brethren and the modern dispensationalists.

The Margaret Macdonald view.

This view holds that the popular view of the "pre-tribulation rapture" of today was started by a teenager in Scotland in the early 1800s. This teenager was part of the broader Irving movement.

I quote MacPherson on the beginning of the doctrine of the rapture: "If Christians had known [this] all along, the state of Christianity today might have been quite different."

He believes that this ignorance was not just due to a historical oversight, but rather due to a well-organized "cover up" that was carefully and thoroughly managed by the clever "pre-tribulation" leaders.

MacPherson opines:

"During the first 18 centuries of the Christian era, believers were never 'Rapture Separators' [sic]; they never separated the little Rapture aspect of the Second Coming of Christ from the Second Coming itself."

In 1983, MacPherson stated:

"Fifteen years ago I knew nothing of the" "Pre-Trib beginnings."

He began his research by writing to his father and received a reply that indicated a lack of unity among the experts. He then decided to conduct his own investigation. His investigation gained momentum when he discovered a very rare book by Robert Norton. The book was called **"The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; In the Catholic Apostolic Church (1861)."**

The important part of the book, MacPherson claims, is the personal revelation that Margaret Macdonald had throughout the 1830s. He uses this background to create the idea that the teaching of the pre-tribulation rapture is demonic in origin. That it came through a 15-year-old girl from Scotland named Margaret Macdonald. Since the 1970s in America it has become the custom of writers of articles and books against the **"pre-tribulation"** view to somehow use the argument that Darby borrowed several key elements from Irving. Marvin Rosenthal is typical of this approach. He wrote that the pre-tribulation rapture was of Satanic origin and was not heard of before the 1800s.

I quote him:

"To thwart the Lord's warning to His children, Satan, the 'father of lies,' gave a long vision to a fifteen-year-old girl named Margaret McDonald in 1830."

Many examples can be cited.

Robert Norton includes in his book a handwritten account of Margaret Macdonald's "**prophecy**" which MacPherson claims is the main source for Darby's development of the pre-tribulation rapture. He does not say that she gave a clear account of the rapture, but that she separated the rapture from the second coming before anyone else did. According to him, Darby adopted this two-part teaching from Macdonald and systematically developed it and then passed it on as his own.

MacPherson states:

"Margaret dramatically separated the sign of the Son of Man from the coming of the Son of Man,"

He argues:

"she equated the sign with the Rapture—a Rapture that would occur before the revelation of Antichrist."

He bases this on her statement:

"I saw it only the Lord himself descending from heaven with a shout, only the glorified man, even Jesus."

MacPherson's mistakes:

He makes two major mistakes in his attempt to prove that Macdonald is the creation of the pre-tribulation rapture.

First, it is very doubtful that her "**prophecy**" refers at all to a two-part second coming.

So it is impossible that this source can be used to prove that her prophecy is the basis of the pre-tribulation rapture, if it does not contain those elements.

Timothy Stunt states the following:

"that the text of Margaret Macdonald's prophecy (published by Robert Norton, in 1840) is so much confused as to provide hardly a basis for the construction of a coherent eschatology and there is no evidence that this particular prophecy was characteristic of all her utterances."

MacPherson misinterpreted Macdonald's words by seeing her use of the word "**sign**" as referring to the rapture. In reality, she was saying that only those who are spiritual will see the secret sign of the Son of Man that will occur just before the Second Coming. In other words, only those who have the light of the Holy Spirit within them will know when the Second Coming will occur because this spiritual illumination will enable them to have a spiritual perception and see the secret sign (not the rapture). Her revelation was first published in a book by Robert Norton, who later married Margaret. Norton republished the account in the "**The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets: In the Catholic Apostolic Church (London: Bosworth & Harrison, 1861)**."

These two accounts show clear and important differences. Norton's "**Memoirs**" version is longer than the later "**Restoration**" version. The early version has at least 19 instances of words that are not in the more economical edition of Margaret Macdonald's revelation.

I quote Macdonald:

". . . all must, as Stephen was, be filled with the Holy Ghost, that they may look up and behold the brightness of the Father's glory. I have seen the error of men thinking that it will be something seen by the natural eye; but it is spiritual discernment that is needed, the eye of God in his people. . . . Only those who have the light of God in them will see the sign of his appearing. It is not necessary to follow those who say, look here or look there, for his day will be like the lightning to those in whom the living Christ is. 'It is Christ in us who will lift us up—He is the light—' it is only those who live in Him who will be caught up to meet Him in the air. I saw that we must be in the Spirit, that we may see spiritual things. John was in the Spirit, when he saw a throne set in Heaven. . . . it is not knowledge of God that it contains, but it is to be in God in to go — . . . I felt that those who were filled with the Spirit could see spiritual things, and felt that they were walking in their midst, while those who did not have the Spirit could see nothing."

She was clearly connected to spiritual insights for several reasons.

1. Stephen saw heaven, he was not caught up.
2. The sign will only be seen by those who are spiritually enlightened. It will not be a natural or physical sign, but a spiritual discernment.
3. She is discussing the "sign" of His coming, not the physical appearance.
4. When a person was so spiritually enlightened, he would not need direction from others. He would be led directly by the Living Christ.

5. The emphasis is on "seeing." "John was in the spirit and he saw." Those who are filled with the Holy Spirit will be able to see.

D.H. Kromminga notes that Macdonald's prophecies make it clear that the second coming of Christ depends on the proper spiritual preparation of the church. John Bray agrees that Macdonald advocated a single coming and not a dual coming.

I quote him:

"The only thing that is new in her revelation itself seems to be that only Spirit-filled Christians are caught up at the second coming of Christ after severe trials and tribulation by the Antichrist."

In other words, it seems as if she advocated a "post-tribulation partial rapture."

Bray further states:

"It seems to me that Margaret MacDonald was saying that Christians WILL face the temptation of the false Christ (antichrist) and will be in "a terribly dangerous situation," and that only the Spirit IN US will enable us to be kept from being deceived; and that as the Spirit works, so will the antichrist; but the outpouring of the Spirit will "fit us to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb," and those who are filled with the Spirit would be taken while the others remain. . . Margaret MacDonald taught a partial rapture, of course, but that did not necessarily mean that the teaching included a tribulation period AFTER THAT for the other Christians. . . It would not be right to take for granted that Margaret MacDonald believed in a tribulation period after the appearance of Christ, unless she definitely said so."

Another point McPherson makes to support his opinion is; "Macdonald was the first person to teach a coming of Christ that would precede the days of Antichrist."

This must mean, according to MacPherson, that Macdonald taught a two-part second coming. Although it is highly unlikely that Macdonald was referring to the rapture. Also, Macdonald was still a historian. She believed that the church had already been in the tribulation for hundreds of years. So the revelation of the antichrist was imminent, but before the second coming. She says that believers need spiritual discernment to avoid being deceived. Otherwise, why should believers, including herself, be filled with the Holy Spirit? She included herself as one who needed the special ministry of the Holy Spirit.

I quote her:

"... now the awful face of a false Christ will be seen on this earth, and nothing but the living Christ in us can detect this awful attempt of the enemy to deceive. . . . The Spirit must and will be purged in the church, that she may be cleansed and filled with God. . . . There will also be outward trial, but it is chiefly temptation. It is caused by the outpouring of the Spirit, and will only increase in proportion as the Spirit is poured out. The trial of the Church is of the Antichrist. It is by being filled with the Spirit that we shall be preserved. I have often said, Oh, be filled with the Spirit - have the light of God in you, that you may detect Satan - be full of eyes within - be clay in the hands of the potter - be submissive to be filled, filled with God. . . . This is what we must pray for much for at present, that we may all be soon prepared to meet our Lord in the air - and it shall be. Jesus wants his bride. His desire is for us."

Charles Ryrie also points out another misunderstanding of Macdonald's prophecy. "She saw the church ("us") being purified by the Antichrist. MacPherson reads this as the church being raptured before the Antichrist and ignores the "us." In reality, she saw the church enduring the Antichrist's persecution of the Tribulation Period."

Macdonald was therefore a "post-tribulation" believer. She believed that the church would go through the tribulation. This is hardly a "pre-tribulation" view.

John Walvoord states:

"Readers of MacPherson's *Incredible Cover-Up* will no doubt be impressed by the very long quotations, most of which are merely window dressing for what he is trying to prove. When it comes to proving that either MacDonald or Irving were pretribulationists, the evidence becomes very muddy. The quotations MacPherson cites do not support his conclusions."

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Second, despite MacPherson's extensive research and writing, he has been unable to provide any hard evidence that Darby was influenced by Macdonald's prophecies, whatever that means. MacPherson simply assumes this connection.

Throughout MacPherson's writing, he continues to present information about issues, developments, and beliefs in Great Britain during the early 1800s, apparently thinking that he is adding evidence to his thesis that the popular view of the pre-tribulation rapture of Darby can be traced back to the teenager from Scotland's revelation. Much of the information is useful and interesting, but it does not provide any evidence for his thesis. Even if Darby developed the pre-tribulation rapture theology long after Macdonald had her revelation, specific evidence would have to be provided to prove a connection. Instead, MacPherson offers speculative guesses about how Darby used his training in the law to manipulate Christians into believing that the rapture was the true origin of the rapture.

Summary.

Although Irving and Albury had a number of eschatological ideas that were unique, the pre-tribulation rapture was not one of them. It is impossible for one who follows the historical view to believe that the rapture will occur before the tribulation. The historical view believes that the tribulation began hundreds of years ago. It is also true that the Irvinites speak of a sudden coming of Christ to take the believers to heaven. This view was part of the second advent view they took from the writings of Manuel Lacunza which was not the product of futurism at that time. Such a view has similar elements as seen in Robert Gundry's version of the pre-tribulation view. Gundry believed in a rapture to meet the Lord in the air "**to form a welcoming party that will escort the Lord on the last leg of his descent to earth.**"

Darby found an eschatological basis in Scripture for his view of a pre-tribulation rapture. As a careful student of the Bible, Darby had no need to reconsider his views. The baseless and foul-mouthed accusations of MacPherson and his sympathizers violate the very essence of John Nelson. Darby as a man of truth. A man of integrity for whom the word of God was the highest authority. Tim LaHaye believes that whether Darby was influenced by the Bible or not, that the "**pre-tribulation rapture**" cannot be found in the pages of the Bible. John Darby derived his views primarily from his studies of the Bible, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the influence of emerging literalists who had moved away from the Historical view. Most proponents of the "**pre-tribulation rapture**" believe that Darby derived his views as a result of his studies of the Bible.

For example, **Charles C. Ryrie**, *Come Quickly, Lord Jesus: What You Need to Know About The Rapture* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1996), 75-82; **Gerald B. Stanton**, *Kept From The Hour: Biblical Evidence for the Pretribulational Return of Christ*, 4th. ed. (Miami Springs, FL: Schoettle Publishing Company, 1991), 326-31; **John F. Walvoord**, *The Rapture Question*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 150-58; **Hal Lindsey**, *The Rapture: Truth or Consequences* (New York: Bantam Books, 1983), 168-74; *Vanished Into Thin Air: The Hope of Every Believer* (Beverly Hills, CA: Western Front, 1999), 112-35; **Tim LaHaye**, *No Fear of The Storm: Why Christians Will Escape All The Tribulation* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1992), 95-184; *The Rapture: Who Will Face the Tribulation?* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2002), 145-87, 245-8;

Thomas D. Ice, "Why the Doctrine of the Pretribulational Rapture Did Not Begin with Margaret Macdonald," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 147, no. 586 (April-June 1990); **Timothy C. F. Stunt**, "The Tribulation on Controversy: A Review Article," *Brethren Archivists & Historians Network Review* 2, no. 2 (Autumn 2003): 91-8; **Paul Richard Wilkinson**, "John Nelson Darby and the Origins of Christian Zionism" (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2006), 172-97, 291-331, 436-8; *For Zion's Sake: Christian Zionism and the Role of John Nelson Darby* (Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2007), 119-32, 177-201, 262-3; **Max. S. Weremchuk**, *John Nelson Darby* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1992), 111-35; **Larry V. Crutchfield**, *The Origins of Dispensationalism: The Darby Factor* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992), 188-92; **Daniel Payton Fuller**, "The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism" (ThD diss., Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1957), 36-54; **George L. Murray**, *Millennial Studies: A Search for Truth*, 2nd. ed. (Swengel PA: Bible Truth Depot, 1951), 132; **Ian S. Rennie**, "Nineteenth-Century Roots" in **Carl E. Armerding and W. Ward Gasque, editors**, *A Guide to Biblical Prophecy: A Balanced and Biblical Assessment of the Nature of Prophecy in the Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), 49-54;

16. THE RAPTURE VERSUS THE DOMINION DOCTRINE.

There are those who scoff at the rapture and reject it outright. It doesn't matter if it is before or after the tribulation, it is vehemently denied. They believe that no believer will be taken from the earth. Jay Grimstead, the founder and director of COR, stated the following in a letter dated March 11, 1988.

"There are 'good, scholarly pastors' who still naively believe that the solution to our present problems is the return of Christ" (quoted Whatever Happened to Heaven by Dave Hunt).

Another quote on this subject comes from Gerald Coates.

"The Rapture idea is ridiculous... One must conclude that the secret rapture theory may be evangelical, but it is nevertheless unbiblical. It is a grotesque idea - the rapture may be a very pleasant doctrine for cowards, but it is nothing better than wishful thinking and should be relegated to the realm of myth and fantasy." (Gerald Coates "What On Earth Is This Kingdom" p. 36).

The common view among these preachers is that the wicked will be taken from this world and the holy will remain behind.

In a recording titled "The Coming Glory" John Bevere says the following: "Listen...the biggest...uh...uh...I get so frustrated when people start talking about "well, we're going to be raptured" and they kind of have the attitude of; "I can't wait to get out of this mess." Look, do you think God brought us through all this wilderness just to get us out?"

Do you think He put us through all this training just so He could fly us away? There was a reason. A reason. And we're on the verge of it. I believe we're on, we're on the verge of it. (John Bevere, Videotaped message: "The Coming Glory", (Orlando, Fla.: John Bevere Ministries found [onwww.deceptioninthechurch.com](http://www.deceptioninthechurch.com))

Bevere, like many others in the so-called "**dominion**" camp, believes that the greatest revival of God's Glory will take place very soon. Clearly contrary to the word which teaches that there will be a great falling away. After that, the "**son of perdition**" the man of sin will appear on the scene who will "**be a Christ for many.**" There will be a real revival in the great tribulation, in which we are not yet.

Let's look at different thoughts on the rapture.

There are different ways in which the rapture/resurrection can occur.

One is that it will be a world wide event that everyone will be aware of. The Holy Spirit does not indicate what this event will be like. It may or may not be a loud event. The Trumpet sounds and normally the trumpet is used to indicate something clearly. There are many events that are announced by God through a voice from heaven. The law from Mount Sinai was a deafening trumpet. The Father speaking to Jesus at His baptism and on the Mount of Transfiguration from heaven. This does not mean, however, that everyone will hear this voice or trumpet. It may be that only those for whom it is intended will hear it.

Another way is that the event will happen in secret and no one will be aware of it. For example, when it occurs in the midst of some crisis on earth such as a world war. This may allow the event to pass unnoticed. No one will notice that millions of people are gone because there are other more important things happening at that time. In such circumstances, various reasons can be given for this event. Many believe that if it were a globally visible event it would cause global fear. Many would then come to the realization that the Bible was true about future events. If cars and planes crashed all over the world because the drivers and pilots suddenly disappeared, it would certainly be world news. If this were to happen, the media would have to come up with an explanation that is more convincing than the Bible. Especially if all those who disappeared were Christians. The "New Age" already has an excuse ready. They believe that humans are going to undergo a so-called "quantum leap" in their thinking and a new species will be formed, namely "Homonoeticus". Extraterrestrial beings will take the people of a lower "thinking", the so-called Christians, away from the world. Yet it may also be that the rapture will have no real impact when it occurs. The rapture will take place in the midst of the apostasy from the truth that the Bible refers to.

The Bible says that He comes for those who expect Him.

PHILIPPIANS 3:20.

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from where we also eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,"

PHILIPPIANS 3:14.

"Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these things, be diligent to be found by him in peace, spotless and blameless."

When a person lives without expectation, what you should expect happens without you being aware of it. When the eye is no longer fixed on a Christ who is going to return, then the heart is filled with everything that stands against heaven. Those who no longer have their eye on the return will be busy building what they think is the kingdom of God but is not. The church world will be in a false "revival" when the rapture occurs. It is the minority that will be ready for the rapture, not the majority claimed by the false preachers. The current New Order refers to Christians who hold to clear Biblical teaching as those who bring division.

Jesus warns against this in the next verse.

JOHN 16:2.

"They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think that he is offering a service to God."

He was not referring to the slaughter of Christians by dictators like the Roman Emperors and Mao, Stalin or Hitler. They did not believe they were doing God a favor by killing Christians. He was definitely referring to a "religion" at the end of time that would kill people in the name of God. At this time, the main religion that is killing Christians is the Muslim faith. Revelation also refers to such a religion.

REVELATION 13:7-15.

"And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority was given to him over every tribe and tongue and nation. And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world. If anyone has an ear, let him hear. If anyone leads astray, into captivity he will go; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the patience and faith of the saints. And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his sight, and he causes the earth and those who dwell on it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by the signs which he was given to do in the sight of the beast, saying to those who dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast who had the wound by a sword and yet lived. And he was given power to give life to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed."

There are many who believe that we are now experiencing the outpouring of God's Spirit upon all flesh and that a great revival is at hand. One of the scriptures most often used out of context by the so-called "**restoration**" movement is the following.

ACTS 3:18-21.

"But God has thus fulfilled what he announced beforehand through the mouth of all his prophets, that his Christ would suffer. Repent therefore and be converted, so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and he will send the one who was preached to you, Jesus Christ, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, about which God spoke long ago through the mouth of all his holy prophets."

The modern "**Kingdom Now**" preachers say that Jesus cannot return until we as Christians have restored everything that the church has lost over the centuries. We need to take it back by force. That is the reason for the false doctrine of "**war in heaven**" where we will force the demonic powers to surrender their authority to us. Nowhere in the Bible do we see any of the Apostles teaching this doctrine. The clear teaching of the apostles is ignored and despised by these preachers. They teach that money and authority must be placed in the hands of the church. Many of them have also removed Israel as part of God's end plan and transferred all the promises to Israel to the church.

Earl Paulk, one of the leaders in the movement writes the following: "*Some of the strongest fundamental churches still preach that Christ will return to gather national Israel to Himself, and I say this is deception and will prevent the Kingdom of God from happening!*" "*In almost any Christian bookstore, about 99% of the books will say that "God's time-clock is Israel" and that "God's covenant is still with Israel" ...*

[I say that] prophecies about Israel as a nation [are] now transferred to spiritual Israel, which is the people of God [i.e. the church]..." (Earl Paulk, the Handwriting on the Wall pp.17, 19-20)

However, the 70 weeks of Daniel indicate that there is still a place for Israel as a nation in the end. Before Jesus' ascension to heaven in Acts 1:6, the disciples ask if Jesus is now going to restore the kingdom of Israel. They expected that He would establish the kingdom on earth. The word "**restoration**" is a technical medical term that means "**complete restoration of health; restoring a dislocated joint to its place**" or "**to restore a thing to its former situation**". This is not about the restoration of the church but about the condition of the world and the fall of man. The general belief of the Jews was that when the Messiah appeared on the scene He would reign on earth for eternity.

They did not understand the two comings of Jesus.

JOHN 12:34.

"The crowd answered him, "We have heard out of the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"

Now the question was; He died and rose again, what is the delay? The Apostles were busy inquiring as to why He did not set up the kingdom now? He had done everything He had told them He would do. Jesus' last words before His ascension were that they should wait until they were baptized with the Holy Spirit and received power to be witnesses. These Apostles were the last to see Him and the majority of them were destined to die.

1 CORINTHIANS 4:9.

"For it seems to me that God has displayed us apostles last, condemned to death; for we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men."

As Paul, who was the last to see Jesus, puts it.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:8.

"and last of all he appeared also to me as to him that was born out of time."

That's when the light shone on him on the road to Damascus and Jesus spoke to him in the Hebrew language. When Jesus ascended, He sat down as our High Priest next to God the Father. His absence here on earth is a necessary element in God's plan. At this time the dispensation of the church arrived. The time of grace. Old Testament Judaism under the Mosaic covenant was set aside. The Apostle tells us here that it was necessary for Jesus to first ascend to heaven. If He had not done this, the Holy Spirit could not have come to do His work. We would not then have experienced the church age. This was all part of God's prophetic plan. He promised that He would come again, but He would remain in heaven until "**the times of restitution of all things.**" Jesus made the point that the time of restoration was in the hands of the Father. He will come again in His glory to carry out His divine order. It is during the Kingdom of Peace that we will experience a time when everything will be changed to be very much like the garden where Adam was. Be assured that none of this will happen without Jesus Christ!

One of the self-appointed apostle/prophet - **Bill Hamon writes the following in his book "The Eternal Church".**

"Jesus is waiting for the church. All that the fall and the fall of humanity have taken away, Jesus will restore through His church." "When the church has put all enemies of Christ under His feet...then Christ can be released from Heaven to return as the manifested Head of His physically resurrected and translated church." (Prophets and Personal Prophecy, Bill Hamon)

Hamon, along with many other **"Latter Rain"** proponents, believes that the church will develop into a powerful influence. The church will perfect itself and move in glory, honor and power without the literal return of Christ. There are many who look forward to the presence of glory that will descend upon the church to enable it to do the work in the world that will enable the church to reign here on earth. Then sometime in the future there will be a second coming.

So, however, a false expectation. Jesus clearly says that He will come with glory, not glory without Him.

MATTHEW 25:31.

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory;"

When you exchange the person of Christ for the visitation of the Holy Spirit, then you can teach that the Spirit will come into the church as the glory and then you have a different type of second coming, one without the presence of the person and then you have a glory that is separate from the person.

John Bevere's book "The Fear of the Lord," we read;

Hosea 6:1-2

"Come, let us return to the Lord; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; and on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight."

"This passage is a prophetic Scripture describing God's refining of His church in preparation for His glory. He has torn but He will heal. A day with the Lord is as a thousand years (2 Pet.3:8). It has been two full days (two thousand years) since the resurrection of the Lord. We stand on the brink of God's revival and restoration of His glory to His temple. The third day speaks of the thousand-year reign of Christ when He will live and reign before our eyes. Hosea gives further instructions on how to live and what to pursue as we prepare for His glory" (p.123)

Bevere has taken an idiom from Peter and given it a solid literal interpretation to make a scripture applicable to the church that actually applies to Israel. It is common practice to spiritualize this scripture and then connect it to those to whom it is not addressed. Ezekiel declares that there will be a literal peace-filled temple that has yet to be built. The Latter Rain adherents spiritualize the intent of the scripture and connect it to us today which makes us feel good about something greater than the past that is about to take place. The phrase "**until the times of restitution of all things**" in no way implies that this "**restitution**" is in the hands of the church. Peter does not mean here that "**He who is to receive heaven**" must remain there until all things are accomplished. Christ remains in heaven until the "**time**" for the restitution. The predetermined time.

It is His “**departure**” from heaven that causes this “**restoration**.” Christ does not return because everything has already been restored by the church. No, He comes back to cause the restoration Himself. It is His physical presence that will bring about the restoration, not the church that restores everything and then He comes back!!!!!! Christ does not return to earth because of the restoration that the church has done, but to do the restoration Himself.

This restoration will also include the redemption of nature.

ROMANS 8:18-23.

“*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to decay and have the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in birth pains together until now. And not only that, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*”

When we wait for the Christ who will take us to heaven, we cannot be deceived by a counterfeit “**Christ**” who will rule on earth, regardless of any powers he may have. We are supposed to wait for the Christ who will return in the same way that He left. In God’s glory and from heaven.

Just as the angels told the disciples.

ACTS 1:11.

"And he said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

The closer we get to the blessed hope of the church, the more people reject the idea altogether. The idea that Christ is coming back to remove His church from the earth is a "defeatist" mindset for the so-called "kingdom reconstructionism" and "dominion" guys. Many of those who do not accept the rapture believe that the Lord will preserve His church during the great tribulation just as He preserved Israel during the plagues of Egypt. There are several problems with this view. Israel lived in a separate part of Egypt called Goshen that was given to the Israelites alone. Revelation tells us that believers around the world will be overcome by the beast, and will lose their lives in the tribulation. They will not be supernaturally protected. The only ones who will be supernaturally protected are the 144,000. When we look at chapters 6-11 and 11-14 and 17-18 we see that the believers are being killed in a constant manner. There is no safety for the believers in the tribulation. Not everyone will be killed. Many will survive the tribulation, because they are the sheep who are in judgment at the end of the tribulation. But for those who will go through this time on earth, a rapture will be very welcome.

One of the proponents of the original Latter Rain movement that was founded in the 40's Bill Britton declared.

"It will be as in the days of Noah. What was it like in Noah's day? The flood of judgment came and took away all the wicked, and the righteous were left to inherit the earth. The wicked were taken away - yet man has invented a theology in which it is just the opposite; they claim that the righteous will be taken away. The Bible, my friend, teaches no such thing. Proverbs 3:26 - for the Lord will be their confidence and will keep their foot from being taken - it is clear here that the righteous are not taken. Well, if anyone is to be taken, who is it? Proverbs 11:6 says - the transgressors will be taken. Think of it - the transgressors will be taken. That is not what man has taught us, is it?" (Bill Britton, "A Closer Look At the Rapture," George Warnock, "Feast of Tabernacles" 1951)

This is the "**Kingdom supremacy doctrine**" that has become common in our time. It was brought to the forefront by the Latter Rain movement. No rapture but the righteous will remain on the earth. Every time there is a great judgment, God has removed His people from it. Although He has not lifted them up above the earth every time, the principle is the same. The fact is that during the flood of Noah the righteous did not remain on the earth but were lifted up above the water by the ark. The unrighteous were left on the earth to be judged. Just as in the rapture where the righteous are removed from the earth and return with Christ. **Arnold Murray of the Shepherds Chapel** claims that the teaching of the rapture is "**occult**" and condemns anyone who believes in it, saying that those who believe so do not have God's blessing upon them. The Jehovah's Witnesses say that there will only be 144,000 in heaven and they will get there through death.

They also deny the rapture. The Roman Catholic church does not believe in the rapture either. The Seventh-day Adventists also deny the rapture, and believe that when you die you sleep in the grave. Some deny the rapture for no reason other than that they do not want to believe anything the Bible teaches. Others have a strong reason for denying the rapture because they want to promote a new view and have decided that the old view prevents us from doing the work of the Lord.

They have an agenda to promote.

In his 1989/1990 booklet "**The Harvest**" **Rick Joyner** who is a so-called "visionary prophet" said the following;

"the doctrine of the Rapture has been a great and effective ploy of the enemy to implant a retreat mentality in the Church ... already this yoke has been thrown off by the majority in the advancing church, and will soon be thrown off by all."
(THE HARVEST, Rick Joyner (1989 /1990 revised booklet on pg.121)

Is this a good thing? The rapture is a promise from Jesus to take us to where He is.

This is not a deception, it is a promise. **Joyner** also promotes the "Kingdom reign". Later he also said the following; "**The doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture has been effective in developing a retreat mentality in the church.**"

Why does he see it this way? It is because he and others see the church in the end times as an emerging and militant miracle-working army taking over the country. The belief in the rapture that can happen at any time should encourage the Christian to show more zeal in the work of the Lord.

When we clearly see that the time to work is getting shorter, we should work harder, not less.

Gerald Coates, one of the leaders of the "March For Jesus" explains his view as follows. "The Rapture idea is ridiculous... One must conclude that the secret rapture theory may be evangelical, but it is nevertheless unbiblical. It is a grotesque idea - the rapture may be a very pleasant doctrine for cowards, but it is nothing better than wishful thinking and should be relegated to the realm of myth and fantasy." (Gerald Coates, *What On Earth Is This Kingdom* p. 36)

Is it possible that someone in the church ranks could refer contemptuously to what the Bible clearly teaches? And see it as a teaching of cowards? There are certainly those who think so, because they want to build a kingdom on earth and be leaders in it. **Coates** sees the "March for Jesus" as a "prophetic action" that claims the ground for God by "shifting the spiritual powers that have been assigned in the structures of the nations." (Gerald Coates, *March For Jesus*, p. 131)

This is an unbiblical teaching and has a hidden agenda.

In **2 TIMOTHY 2:17-18** Paul was forced to write about the fact that some were speaking as if the resurrection had already taken place. They were causing shipwreck of the faith of some. Not everyone subscribed to this idea but some did. Paul mentions two names of those who had turned away from the truth and who were blasphemers, "**Hymenaeus and Philetus**".

"Do your best to present yourself approved to God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But avoid profane and foolish babblings, for they will advance from ungodliness to more and more ungodliness, and their word will spread like a gangrene.

Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have erred from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already occurred, and they are subverting the faith of some."

Here Paul calls this false teaching of the rapture/resurrection that has already taken place as unholy, senseless babbling. He adds another name to these two, the name of "[Alexander](#)."

1 TIMOTHY 1:19-20.

"holding faith and a good conscience. Some have put it aside and have made shipwreck concerning the faith, among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme."

He did this by cutting them off from fellowship with the faithful and from participation in church meetings. It is no less serious to say that there is no rapture than to say that the saints are not going to heaven, but that the kingdom will be established here on earth. Jesus gives us the guarantee that He is going to prepare a place for us and when He is finished He will come and take us to be where He is. This does not sound like earth. Jesus is in heaven right now preparing a place. That is where we will be at the right time. Our names are written in a book in heaven, not on earth.

We are citizens of heaven and pilgrim travelers here on earth.

PHILIPPIANS 3:20.

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from where we also eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,"

Clearly, Paul taught the Thessalonian saints that the rapture and the resurrection were the same event. In 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul encourages believers who have lost loved ones to death that the dead will not miss the rapture. Rather, they will rise first, and then we who are alive will be changed. He did not want them to be ignorant of the correlation between dead believers and living believers. Paul uses the term "*sleep*." It means the suspension of physical activity of the body. When this term is used as a synonym for death, it is used exclusively for believers. It is never used for unbelievers. Only those who are "*in*" Christ will share in the rapture. Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum points out that the term "**those in Christ**" is a technical term used by Paul to describe those who have been baptized into the "body"—the church. This "**baptism**" is the baptism into Christ through faith in what He did for us on the cross.

This is then confirmed by water baptism and validated by the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:14.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

Jesus comes with His saints (those who have died come with Him), their bodies are raised from the dead and they go up with us to meet Him and be clothed with an immortal body. There is a coming of Christ "**with**" His saints who have died and there is a coming of Christ "**for**" His saints who are living.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:15-17.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede them which are asleep.

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."

During the rapture, the Lord comes with those who have already fallen asleep whose spirits were alive in heaven. Both the living and the dead will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. The Greek word "**harpazo**" means to take away, that is, a taking away by force.

(1 Thess.4:16; 1 Cor.15:50-52.)

Whether one disagrees about the time the rapture will occur is not the issue, the fact is that there will be a rapture and that the believers will be taken out of this world and changed. The rapture and the resurrection will occur together and are synonymous with the same event. The greater part of the church has already passed through death to the glory of God. However, there will be a generation on earth when Christ comes again that will not die, but will be changed in the twinkling of an eye. It is this group that will then be taken to heaven with the dead. The rapture is not just a New Testament teaching, the Bible refers to several raptures. Some of these raptures are indicated in detail. It is a constant concept throughout the Bible that God removes the believers just before a catastrophe. This teaching, which we call the "**chiliastic**" view, also referred to as the "**pre-tribulation**" events, is seen in the Bible as a result of a literal interpretation of the Bible.

The so-called “**Preterism, Amillennialism**” and even some “**post-tribulation**” interpretations of the book of Revelation see it in a very narrow historical view, and many times large portions are spiritualized in the translation. Spiritual interpretations of the text take it away from the historical and literal context. They spiritualize the literal events in an attempt to harmonize scriptures that literally have nothing to do with each other. On the other hand, we find the “**future view supports**” which interpret the scripture with only a future fulfillment. We find that prophecy often tends to repeat itself until it is finally fulfilled. We find an example of this in history. 160 years before Christ the temple was profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes. The temple was also desecrated 70 years after Christ. However, these were only shadows of the full fulfillment of the prophecy that is yet to occur in the future. Each type that occurs gives us only more details of what it will be like.

One of the clearest passages in the Bible regarding the rapture is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:15-17.

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede them which are asleep. 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.”

The Rapture - taking away by force. The Bible says that we will meet the Lord in the air with the other saints who have been resurrected. The whole body of Christ throughout the ages will be gathered here. It is specifically said that it will take place in the air. Somewhere within the earth's atmosphere which is also called the first heaven. The order is that the dead will be resurrected first and then the living will also be changed. During the rapture Christ comes only for the believers. The rapture is a glorification for the living and a resurrection for the dead.

This is the event where the Lord will take the believers to His "Father's house".

JOHN 14:2-3.

"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

The phrase "caught up" NT:726 This the Greek word harpazo which means to seize (in various applications): KJV-catch (away, up), pluck, pull, take (by force). (New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary)

It is from the derivative of NT:138; haireomai; probably akin to NT:142; to take for oneself, i.e. to prefer: airo; a primary root; to lift up; by implication, to take up or away; it does have figurative meanings which have nothing to do with this event. KJV-away with, bear (up), carry, lift up, loose, make to doubt, put away, remove, take (away, up).

Paul describes it as a change from "mortal" to "immortal." With the emphasis on those who have fallen asleep, he writes of a "mystery" that was not known in the Old Testament.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-54.

"Behold, I shew 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. And 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."

Our bodies will be changed so that we can inherit the Kingdom of God because flesh and blood cannot enter it. This change will happen in the blink of an eye. Too fast to see. There are several physical raptures in the Bible. What God has done before He will do again.

The first one to experience this was Enoch.

GENESIS 5:24.

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."

לְקַחַת

lāqach law-kakh' A primitive root; to take (in the widest variety of applications): - accept, bring, buy, carry away, drawn, fetch, get, infold, X many, mingle, place, receive (-ing), reserve, seize, send for, take (away, -ing, up), use, win. Total KJV occurrences: 966

God took him alive from the earth. He was taken to where God is. Now Noah was no longer in the land of the living.

Paul uses the same word in.

HEBREWS 11:5.

"By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found, because God had taken him up; for before his taking up he had this testimony that he pleased God."

KJV.

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

The reason Enoch pleased God was because he had a testimony of righteousness. The writer of Hebrews clearly says that we can only please God by our faith. When we walk by faith in the Spirit then we please God. Jesus pleased the Father like no other. The only other time where "*lāqach law-kakh*" is used in line with a taking away from the earth is in a statement with the glorification of Elijah.

2 KINGS 2:3-5.

"Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; hold your peace." And Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, I pray you, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." And they came to Jericho.

Then the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; hold your peace."

In the "Targum" Genesis 5:24 is indicated as follows.

"And Enoch walked in the fear of the Lord, and was not, for the Lord did not put him to death."

When Christ comes for His church, those who have a testimony of righteousness will go with Him. If you are spiritually born again and follow Him with your heart then you have the assurance that you will be removed.

JUDE 14-15.

"And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, also prophesied of them, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

It seems as if he was a preacher who predicted the coming of the Lord to judge the world in a generation where sin reigns supreme at the end of time. Very interesting that the one who experienced the first "**rapture**" also predicted the coming of the Lord with His saints to this earth. After Enoch was taken away, his grandson also acted as a preacher of righteousness against the lawlessness of his time, before the judgment of the flood.

The prophet Elijah also experienced a "rapture."

2 KINGS 2:1-11.

"And it came to pass, when the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD will send me to Bethel. But Elisha said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they went down to Bethel. And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from off thy head to day? And he said, I know it also; hold thy peace. And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. But he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they came to Jericho. And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from off thy head to day? And he said, I know it also; hold thy peace. And Elijah said to him, "Stay here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So the two of them went. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood afar off, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the waters; and they were divided hither and thither, so that the two of them went over on dry ground. And it came to pass, when they were gone, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken from thee. And Elisha said, Let a double portion of thy spirit come upon me.

And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: if thou see me when I am taken from thee, so be it unto thee: but if not, it shall not be. And it came to pass, as they went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire appeared, and horses of fire, and parted between them both: and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."

Here we have an example of God's glory in the form of fire with a whirlwind that took Elijah to heaven. Similar to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the apostles on the day of Pentecost. The prophet who prayed fire from heaven on the false prophets of Baal is now taken to heaven by fire.

The fire could have been the glory of God or that of the Seraphim who were fiery angels.

PSALM 104:4.

"who makes his messengers winds, his ministers flames of fire."

PSALM 68:18.

"The chariots of God are ten thousand, even thousands of thousands: the Lord is among them; this is Sinai in holiness."

In *Antiquities*, b. ix., ch. ii., sec. 2) it says that Elijah disappeared from among the people, and no one knows of his death to this day. (from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary)

Elijah was taken from the earth like Enoch. This was a preview of our rapture to immortality and the glory that awaits believers. It is clear that Enoch and Elijah were taken from the earth without dying, so there is no reason not to believe that this can also happen to us. The script uses the same grammar.

Even Jesus was "raptured" in a slow way.

ACTS 1:9-11.

"And when he had thus spoken, he was taken up before their eyes; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

The term "received up" in the Greek is "epeirthei" and is in the passive voice and indicates to us that the Son was taken up by the Father into heaven.

He was received by the Father and sat down next to the Father.

MARK 16:19.

"So then the Lord, after he had spoken to them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God."

This is also described in Revelation.

REVELATION 12:5.

"And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne."

Just as Christ was taken up to heaven, so we who are part of His body will also be taken up to heaven.

The Two witnesses we read about in Revelation experienced a rapture.

REVELATION 11:3.

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."

They give a message of repentance and salvation. The sackcloth is always a sign of confession. John the Baptist wore clothes made of sackcloth when he came to Israel. Jonah delivered his message to Nineveh dressed in sackcloth.

These two testimonies were secured for a short time for God's purpose.

REVELATION 11:5.

"And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed."

They were protected until a specific time determined by God for the completion of their mission.

REVELATION 11:7.

"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and overcome them, and kill them;"

After three and a half days after their death, they were resurrected and raptured before the eyes of everyone.

REVELATION 11:11-12.

"And after the three and a half days the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet: and great fear fell upon them that saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in a cloud: and their enemies beheld them."

So we have several examples of people going to heaven and not experiencing death, as well as others who were dead and were resurrected. Revelation chapter 4 begins with the Greek term "*meta tauta*" - after these things. This raises the question; "*After what things?*"

With the clear answer;

"The things of chapters 1 to the end of 3."

The first three chapters deal with the things concerning the church of Christ.

Then chapter 4 begins.

REVELATION 4:1.

"After these things I looked, and behold, a door stood open in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as of a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee what must be after this."

Here John represents the church that is still alive at the time of the rapture. John is now experiencing this event. The same words are used as with the two witnesses. Clearly John wants to emphasize something here. He wants to point out the similarity between the events. He was not physically raptured, but it represents the rapture of the church. John was the last living Apostle still alive.

In the Spirit he was immediately in heaven, but not alone. Before him he saw the 24 elders who represent all the redeemed of the church and Israel.

In *2 Thessalonians 2:1* we find another description of the same event. "But we ask you, brothers, with a view to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,"

KJV.

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,"

The words in the KJV "*gathering together unto him*" could be better translated as "*our being gathered up into Him*". The Greek word for "*gathering together*" is "**EPI-SUNAGOGES**". The prefix "**EPI**" means "*above*" and "**SUNAGOGES**" means "*housed*" or "*gathered*".

This does not refer to our gathering with Christ at His second coming on the Mount of Olives, but to us being caught up with Him. We are, as it were, summoned from above by the Lord Himself to meet Him. This is an event that involves the entire body of Christ and not just an individual. Paul explains that we will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. - *eis apanteōsin tou Kuriou eis aera*. So to say that there will be no rapture is a clear sign that those who say so have not looked carefully at all the evidence in the Bible, or have another agenda, and therefore do not want to accept it. We advance the Kingdom of God by introducing people to the saving grace of Christ. As they accept this message and are born again, so the Kingdom grows.

This is clearly different from building the kingdom on earth, and then taking over and ruling on earth for Christ while we are still sinners. We must be ready for His coming at any moment. If we do not lay aside the things of the world, how can we be on the lookout for His coming. Jesus is separating those who are waiting for His coming from those who want to build on earth - as if they are doing it for Him. There is such a thing as patience. Jesus instructed His disciples to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would come because Jesus was going to send Him, not because the disciples had done anything on their part. They were just waiting.

They were not to leave Jerusalem either, but to wait for the promise of the Father.

ACTS 1:4.

"And while he was still with them, he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, you have heard from me."

This promise could not come about through anything they did, nor through unanimous prayer, but only through the perfect timing of God.

The difference between then and now is that the disciples did not know what they were waiting for, but we do.

ROMANS 8:23-25.

"And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body."

For we were saved in hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man sees, why does he hope for? But if we hope for what we do not see, then with patience we wait for it."

Today we must wait until He returns to take His church with the rapture.

HEBREWS 9:28.

"So Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time without sin to bring salvation to those who are eagerly waiting for him."

This salvation is a salvation, the end result of what we have believed from the beginning. Salvation from sin as well as from the judgement that is going to take place on the earth. A period of tribulation worse than anything this world has ever seen.

A period of time that is going to be so bad, if Jesus does not come back, no flesh will survive.

1 THESSALONIANS 1:10.

"and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come."

The Thessalonians were already experiencing tribulation at that time. So Paul is referring here to a tribulation in the future for which they needed to be encouraged. We need the same encouragement today because this tribulation is coming quickly. If we are not prepared for it, it will come upon us unexpectedly. Here are some thoughts to take seriously before we get involved with this "**kingdom rule restoration movement**".

Both John the Baptist and Jesus began their ministry with the proclamation.

MATTHEW 4:17.

"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The scripture indicates that the kingdom was present to a certain extent on earth where it was demonstrated by Jesus.

MATTHEW 12:28.

"But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come upon you."

These were prospects of what we will experience in the thousand-year reign of peace.

MATTHEW 4:23.

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."

At the same time, there was a battle going on.

MATTHEW 11:12.

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

The Pharisees who were in control wanted to maintain control by all means. However, John the Baptist sent the whole thing in a different direction.

MATTHEW 3:11-12.

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner: but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

When Jesus trained His disciples to go and preach the message, He gave them authority on earth.

MATTHEW 10:7-8.

"And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. You have received free, give free.'

With all that was happening around Jesus, something changed in His ministry. Jesus withdrew the offer of the kingdom that He had offered to Israel. Matthew 12. This offer of the kingdom was postponed and will come forward again during the thousand-year reign of peace. However, this coming reign of peace has a condition.

Israel and not the church must repent and call upon Him to come and save them.

MATTHEW 23:39.

"For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

ZECHARIAH 12:10.

"But I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplications; and they will look on me whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son, and will be bitterly grieved for him as one is bitterly grieved for a firstborn."

Now the kingdom is in the heart of the believer in a spiritual way. One day it will manifest in the literal when Christ returns. An important part of God's plan involves Israel. Until the church realizes this, we will not be as successful as we would like. Many want the "**kingdom rule**" here on earth. However, that is not going to happen, not until Christ returns in person. Then He will establish the kingdom on earth. The church will rule with and under Him during the kingdom. The "**kingdom rule**" proclaimers want to rule without Christ. Kingdom theology makes it our responsibility to take over rule on earth and establish the kingdom without Christ's personal presence. Even if we lay down Christian principles for people to live by in every nation as kingdom rule teaches, it still does not give forgiveness of sin and a hope for heaven. People can try to obey the law of God, but it does not bring salvation and cannot change the heart of man. The gospel is still the only way people can enter the kingdom of God. It is the only way we can become citizens of the kingdom while we wait for the literal kingdom to manifest on earth. There is no church government that has the mandate to rule over the earth. **Not now, not in the future.**

The idea of a church government on earth fits right in with the "**kingdom rule**" idea and even that of the "**New Agers**". Those who want to build a kingdom to rule over the nations on earth without Christ. This "**kingdom rule**" idea is not something new.

We have an example of this in the 2nd century in a movement started by "Montanus". He believed that prophetic revelations were still unfolding and he and his "prophets" spoke in the first person as the Holy Spirit. Prophets and prophetesses of the Montanist movement predicted that Jesus would return in his lifetime and that the New Jerusalem would descend to earth from heaven. The city would then be in Phrygia and the thousand-year reign would then begin. The "reign" proponents take scriptures that pertain to the second coming and apply them to themselves in the present age. These scriptures do not fit at all if the Bible is studied correctly. They expect all the blessings of the future thousand years to now take place in the restoration period. So there is no need for Jesus to come back, we already have everything we need. Now the body becomes the head and the head no longer controls the body.

SUMMARY.

The Pentecostal Lordship restoration teaching is that the wicked will be taken away, all sin and rebellion will be removed from the earth, and creation will be cleansed.

One of the proponents of the Latter Rain movement says: "The rapture is often thought to involve a physical removal of the saints. However, the Bible refers to a removal, not of the saints from among the wicked, but of the wicked from the saints at the time of Christ's coming..."

The Restorationists spiritualize the Bible and maintain an allegorical approach to the Bible. When Jesus returns to reign on earth for a thousand years, the wicked will be removed from the earth.

This is the “**harlot system**” of Revelation 17 that merges with other religions and then calls it “**Interfaith.**” The only organized church ever mentioned is the “**harlot system**” mentioned in Revelation. This system is not the focus of the attack, but the one that will persecute believers in the tribulation. This new view that has replaced the rapture tells believers that the church is the kingdom that is being set up and that God will rule on earth through His people before Christ comes. The biblical view is that there is no kingdom without the physical presence of the King. However, to them, anything less than a kingdom on earth before Christ returns is a defeat. However, Jesus never said that we will overcome the world, but rather that the gospel will bring people out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Light. Whatever kingdom is set up by man, even by the church, will be destroyed when Christ returns to earth.

He will set up His kingdom when He comes.

PSALM 22:29.

“For the kingdom is the LORD’S, and He rules over the nations.”

As we can see, it is not the church that will rule the nations but Christ. We may rule together, but it will not happen without Christ. When the kingdom comes, Christ will be present and we will serve Him.

DANIEL 7:27.

“Then the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions will serve and obey them.”

The only real hope is the Biblical model.

Jesus is going to physically return to earth to rule and we the believers have undergone a spiritual/physical change. With this change we have become immortal and we rule with Him under His leadership. Anything less than that has sinful people in a sinful state leading other sinful people. It will be no better than what we have now. No so-called church government can do better than what has already been attempted!!

Our hope is for Christ to come and reign in righteousness!!!

17. THE THIEF IN THE NIGHT.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:2-3.

"For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. For when they say, 'Peace and safety,' then sudden destruction will come on them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will by no means escape."

What is this "day of the Lord"?

It is an Old Testament term that refers to God's wrath that He will pour out shortly before His second coming. This day includes His coming in glory, the signs that precede it, and the kingdom that He will establish on earth after His return. Will believers experience the wrath of God during the day of the Lord?

No, they will not.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:9.

"For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ"

Paul promises that Christ will come for those who are in Christ before this day comes. The context indicates that the "wrath" here refers specifically to the day of the Lord and not to the punishment of sinners in hell.

Does the day of the Lord include the tribulation?

In Revelation 6-16, the Apostle John describes a series of events that will take place on earth during the tribulation; these judgements clearly reflect what the Old Testament prophets prophesied would happen on the "day of the Lord."

So the question now is: Is the church missing all the judgements of Revelation or not? Does 1 Thessalonians promise this or not? Does the passage provide any clues that will help us determine when the day of the Lord will begin? Let's see. Paul's comparison of the beginning of the day of the Lord to that of a thief breaking into our house is one of the clues. Just as catching a burglar in our house in the middle of the night is an unwelcome surprise, so will the sudden destruction surprise the world. This is the beginning of the "day of the Lord." Paul says that this will happen when everyone is saying, "Peace and security." There must be reason for people to think that they are in a time of peace and security to be surprised by the day of the Lord. It cannot be in the tribulation, for then there is no more "peace and security."

We see in Revelation 6:1-8 that about a quarter of the human population has been wiped out.

REVELATION 6:1-8.

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures say as with the voice of thunder, Come and see! And I looked, and behold a white horse. And he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, Come and see! And another horse came out, a fiery red horse: and it was given to him that sat on him to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, Come and see! And I looked, and behold a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of scales in his hand.

And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A quart of wheat for a penny, and three quarts of barley for a penny; and do not harm the oil and the wine. And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, Come and see! And I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And his name that sat on him was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and by the beasts of the earth."

The day of the Lord will not surprise anyone if it begins in the tribulation. For the day of the Lord to break in like a thief, it must begin with all the implications of Revelation 6-16, otherwise no one will be surprised, because there is still peace and security. No, with the dawn of the day of the Lord the "peace and security" is suddenly taken away. Since Paul promises that the Lord will come for us before the beginning of the day of the Lord, it must be before the "seal" judgements because they indicate the beginning of God's wrath. The rapture occurs before the day of the Lord which we call the tribulation.

What did the Thessalonians believe?

Did they see this promise in chapter 5:9 as proof that it would occur before the day of the Lord? Yes, they did! We see clearly in 2 Thessalonians that they thought that the day of the Lord had already occurred because someone claiming to be Paul told them that the day had already occurred.

Paul had to correct this.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-3.

"Now we ask you, brothers, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, not to be quickly shaken from your reason or alarmed, either by spirit or by word or by letter as if from us, as if the day of Christ had already come. Let no one deceive you in any way, for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition."

The thrust of these verses indicates that they were shaken by this news. It caused great fear. If Paul had told them earlier that they would pass through this day, they would not have been so afraid. So they believed that the promise indicated that they would not pass through the day. On the contrary, these saints were already under persecution among the Jews in that area, now they also received the shock that the day of the Lord is already here. Paul's second letter was to correct this rumor. The only reason for this action was that they believed based on what Paul said, that they would miss the day. Just like believers of that time, we as believers today have the same expectation. We wait for the coming of Christ not the day of the Lord, (tribulation). Yes, at a certain day in the future God will pour out His wrath on an unprepared world during the tribulation. We as believers will be safe with the Lord when this happens. *Jesus will take us to His Father's house.*

JOHN 14:2-3.

"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

18. THE SO-CALLED = "PRE-WRATH RAPTURE"

JOHN 8:44.

"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own, for he is a liar and the father of it."

There are many who believe that the rapture will occur in the middle of the 7 year tribulation. The so-called "**pre-wrath rapture**". They believe that the wrath of God only begins in the second half of the tribulation. Yet this view is not only erroneous but also dangerous.

The entire 7 years of tribulation are called "Jacob's trouble."

JEREMIAH 30:7.

"Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like it! It is also the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."

In the first half of the tribulation, there is a massive global economic collapse, massive famine, and one quarter of humanity is wiped out. It looks like God's wrath. The proponents of this view say that we should prepare for the inevitable, because if they are wrong, then it doesn't matter, but if they are right, then they are prepared. This is a terrible way to live. Living in constant fear. Instead of serving the Lord with boldness until He comes for us, we are watching for the appearance of the antichrist. One of the cornerstones of biblical prophecy is that we should look up with our eyes to heaven in anticipation of His coming.

We should be on the lookout for Jesus, not the antichrist.

COLOSSIANS 3:2.

"Set your mind on things above, not on things on earth."

NOAH KNEW.

The Bible declares that just before the rapture it will be as in the days of Noah just before the flood.

The scripture is very clear with the words "just as".

MATTHEW 24:37-39.

"And as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as they were in the days that were before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah 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."

Before the flood, everything was business as usual. There were parties, food processing, construction activities, until the Lord closed the door of the ark. This is the symbolic element of the rapture. This biblical truth is blatantly ignored by the proponents of the "**pre-wrath rapture**". To accept this view you have to believe that the first half of Daniel's 70th week is the same as now. Really?? In the first half of the tribulation, Revelation 6 says that the world was in chaos. The economy collapsed and it took a day's pay to buy food. Not to mention that a quarter of the people on earth died as a result of war and wild animals. Does this sound like what Jesus described in the days of Noah? Not at all! The biggest problem, if we do not accept the "**pre-tribulation rapture**," is that we must reject biblical dispensations to interpret the Bible.

Biblical dispensations are the purest way to interpret the Bible because they are based on a literal understanding of the Bible. The Bible must be read literally and in context. Jesus took the Old Testament literally when He spoke of Adam and Eve, Noah's ark, and Jonah being swallowed by a fish. Also, all prophecies of the past were fulfilled literally and not spiritually. So we must also take the Bible literally and in context. Dispensations give us that context.

For example: The Bible declares that Jesus will reign on earth for a 1000 years.

REVELATION 20:4-7.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat on 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: and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. And 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: over 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. And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison;"

It does not refer to the 1000 years as a symbolic idea of "a very long time." What it says is what it is - a thousand years. When it is seen as a symbolic number then you read into the scripture what is not there, and you falsify it with the sinful human understanding of the interpretation.

The Bible also states that during the 1000 years the wolf and the lamb will lie down side by side in the grass.

Things are definitely going to change during this period.

ISAIAH 11:6.

"Then the wolf will feed with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fattened calf together, and a little child will lead them."

This is another proof that we are not now in the 1000 years of peace. Yet the official view of the Presbyterian, Lutheran, Church of Christ, Dutch Reformed, Reformed, Reformed Church and others is that we are currently in the 1000 years. God does not change, but He changes the way He deals with people through the different dispensations or typologies in history. There is no argument about the fact that God has changed the way He deals with people on earth throughout history.

1. Before and after the fall of man.
2. Before and after the flood.
3. Before and after the Tower of Babel.
4. Before and after the Cross.
5. Before and after the Rapture.
6. Before and after the Second Coming.
7. Before and after the White Throne Judgment.

It is an absolute fact that God changes the method in which He deals with people. If we divide the Bible into biblical dispensations for the context and apply them to scriptural interpretation, then many so-called contradictory passages become clearly understood.

If you clearly understand the dispensation you will not have problems with the interpretation of the Bible. Dispensations help to understand in what time the verse fits and to whom it is intended.

Without properly applying the dispensations in understanding the Bible, you are like a ship without a rudder.

EPHESIANS 4:14.

"so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by the cunning craftiness of deceitful scheming;"

The Darby Bible says it this way:

"in order that we may be no longer babes, tossed and carried about by every wind of *that* teaching which is in the sleight of men, in unprincipled cunning with a view to systematized error;"

The church dispensation is the dispensation we are living in now and began after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection from the dead. It will continue until the rapture. It is better to see the gospels as the end of the Old Testament rather than the beginning of the New Testament. Only then can one truly appreciate the incredible "church dispensation."

This is a special time on God's timeline like no other.

2 PETER 3:15-16.

"And consider the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you, as he does in all his epistles, speaking in them of

these things, some of which are hard to understand, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they also do the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

One of the key characteristics of dispensational theology is that dispensations cannot overlap. By definition, one dispensation must end before another can begin. However, this is not the case with the "**pre-wrath**" view. This view has moved the church over into the tribulation into what is a new dispensation. It is simply not possible. You cannot have two dispensations running together. The greatest weakness of this view is that it robs the church of its "**blessed hope**" the coming of Christ. The end of the church dispensation is something to look forward to.

We are looking out for Christ not the antichrist!!

HEBREWS 12:1-2.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

19. THE RAPTURE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Some of the strongest arguments in favor of the “**pre-tribulation rapture**” or the “**pre-70th week of Daniel**” rapture are found in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament we see.

HEBREWS 10:1.

“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices which they offer year by year continually make the comers perfect.”

The Holy Spirit explains that these Old Testament types were preserved for us to learn from.

ROMANS 15:4.

“For whatever was written aforetime was written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”

1 CORINTHIANS 10:11.

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Bible students are well aware that there are many Old Testament types that are shadows of a New Testament fulfillment. A classic example is Abraham taking his only son, Isaac, to sacrifice in the land of Moriah as an offering to the Lord.

He expected God to raise him from the dead. *Genesis 22* and *Hebrews 11*.

HEBREWS 11:17-19.

"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac shall your descendants be called," because he considered that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from which also he received him, as it were, again."

Abraham is a beautiful example of the heavenly Father and Isaac is a powerful example of Jesus the Son of the Father who voluntarily laid down His life on Mount Moriah over 2000 years ago. Although the rapture was partly hidden from Old Testament believers, the types we find throughout are foreshadowings of a future rapture where God will take His people from the earth before the tribulation.

NOAH'S FLOOD.

In Noah's day there were those who went through the flood - Noah and his family, and there were those who perished in the flood.

There was also Enoch who was "changed" or "taken away" by God in the ark as a witness before God's judgment on the earth.

GENESIS 5:24.

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."

HEBREWS 11:5.

"By faith Enoch was taken up so as not to see death; and he was not found, because God had taken him up: for before his taking up he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

Just as Christians who abide in Christ please God.

1 JOHN 3:22.

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."

Something that is very interesting is the fact that from the moment God commanded Noah to enter the ark until the flood began was exactly 7 days.

GENESIS 7:1-10.

"Then the LORD said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen you righteous before me in this generation. Take to yourself seven pairs of every clean animal, the male and its mate; and of every animal that is not clean, two, the male and its mate. And of the birds of the air, seven pairs, the male and its mate, to keep them alive on all the earth. For yet seven days, I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made will I destroy from the face of the earth." And Noah did just as the LORD commanded him. And Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came upon the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. Of clean animals and of animals that are not clean, and of birds and of everything that creeps on the ground, two by two went into the ark with Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. And after seven days the waters of the flood were upon the earth."

Possibly this is a type of the seven-year tribulation that will be on earth.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GEMORRAH.

In Lot's day, he and his family were removed from the area before God executed judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). God not only "saved" them in this judgment, but took them out of it before the judgment. Jesus said that just before His return it would be as it was in the days of Noah and the days of Lot.

LUKE 17:26.

"And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man:"

LUKE 17:28.

"As it was also in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built."

The judgment on Sodom did not take place until Lot had left. (GENESIS 19:22) Remarkably, while Lot was still hesitating, the angels took him by the hand, his wife, and the hands of his two daughters, and led them out of the city. God showed them mercy.

GENESIS 19:16-22.

"But he lingered. Then the men took hold of his hand, and of his wife, and of his two daughters, because the LORD was merciful to him; and they brought him forth, and brought him out of the city. And it came to pass, as they had brought them forth without, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain of Jordan: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. And Lot said unto them, Oh, no, my lords! Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy kindness, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life.

But I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil overtake me, and I die. Behold, this city is near to flee to, and it is a small one. Let me flee there, is it not a small one? —that I may live! And he said to him, Behold, I have shewed you favor in this thing also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. Escape thither quickly, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there. Therefore they called the city Zoar."

The words "**I can do nothing until you get there**" are quite important to note. They were forced out of the city and they had to arrive in the new city before God could bring judgement.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH.

Joseph is a type of Christ in many ways. He took a pagan bride before the 7 years of famine began.

GENESIS 41:45.

"And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah, and gave him Asenath the daughter of Potiphera priest of On to wife: and Joseph went out over the land of Egypt."

Note that after Joseph took this pagan wife, his brothers, the Israelites, and the entire world suffered a famine.

GENESIS 41:54=57.

"And the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. And there was famine in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, and the people cried to Pharaoh for bread, Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph, and do whatsoever he saith unto you.

And the famine was over all the face of the earth: and Joseph opened all that there was, and sold unto the Egyptians: and the famine was sore in the land of Egypt. And all the world came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all the earth."

During this famine, many came to Joseph to buy food. Similar to when Jesus took His church, His brothers the Israelites and many others in the world will go to Christ for help. (Revelation 7)

It is interesting that the great tribulation is called "Jacob's trouble."

JEREMIAH 30:7.

"Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like it! It is also the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."

It is also called the "time of the Gentiles."

EZEKIEL 30:3.

"For it is a day, even a day of the LORD, a day of clouds; it shall be the time of the nations."

Many Gentiles will be saved at this time.

The famine is a type of the tribulation and Egypt is a type of the world.

AMOS 8:11.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD."

This account strongly indicates that Jesus will come for His church before the tribulation, before the famine arrives.

RAHAB AND THE JEWISH SPIES.

In Joshua chapter 2, Rahab trusted the Lord and befriended the Jewish spies. By faith, Rahab hung a scarlet cord in her window (a symbol of the blood of Christ) and she and her family were brought out of Jericho before the city was burned. Joshua 6.

Rahab was a prostitute and a pagan woman.

HEBREWS 11:31.

"By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that were disobedient, because she had received the spies with peace."

She is also mentioned in the family tree of Jesus.

MATTHEW 1:5.

"and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse,"

This is Rahab a beautiful type of the church of Christ. Although she was a prostitute, she received grace through faith and was spared by the blood of Christ from the judgement of God. Also in this account we see seven days of warning before the judgement. The people of Israel marched around the city for six days and on the seventh day the judgment came.

ABIGAIL AND DAVID.

1 SAMUEL 25:39-42.

"When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the LORD, who has pleaded the cause of my reproach against Nabal, and has kept his servant from evil, and the LORD has returned the evil of Nabal on his own head." And David sent and asked Abigail to take her to him as his wife.

And when David's servants came to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her, saying, "David has sent us to you to take you to him as his wife." And she arose, and bowed herself with her face to the ground, and said, Behold, thine handmaid be a maid to wash the feet of the servants of my lord. And Abigail arose quickly, and rode upon an ass, and her five damsels followed her, and went after the messengers of David: and she became his wife.

The bride - **Israel hears the Bridegroom** - Jesus -'s voice calling her. Then in verses 10 and 13 the bridegroom speaks and says; "**Rise, my love, my fair one, come!**"

ISAIAH'S TIP.

In Isaiah we have a possible picture of the rapture.

ISAIAH 26:20-21.

"For, behold, the LORD comes out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: and the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

The believers are protected in heaven while the tribulation continues on earth. This could also refer to the Jews being protected in Petra during the tribulation.

THE PROPHET DANIEL.

In Daniel chapter 3, King Nebuchadnezzar - a type of the antichrist - has ordered that everyone worship his image. Daniel's three friends - Jews - are protected in the fiery furnace, but Daniel is nowhere to be found. Daniel was the ruler of the province of Babylon, and the chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon.

DANIEL 2:48.

"Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief governor over all the wise men of Babylon."

Yet he was not at this event. Daniel was apparently away on some mission. Could this be a type of the church? Three times Daniel is called "beloved man".

ZEPHANIAH'S TIP.

ZEPHANIAH 2:2-3.

"Before the decree comes, before the day passes like chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD comes upon you, before the day of the LORD's anger comes upon you. Seek the LORD, all you meek of the land, who have practiced his ordinances; seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be hidden in the day of the LORD's anger."

According to this verse, the believers will be hidden from the wrath of the Lord.

MALACHI'S TIP.**MALACHI 3:18.**

"Then you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not serve Him."

Chapter 3 of Malachi deals with the day of the Lord. When one reads the entire chapter 3 it is clear that the believers will return to the earth. In order to return from a place one must first leave the place. We must leave the earth go to heaven and then come back to the earth.

OTHER EXAMPLES.

Isaac and Rebekah, Ruth and Boaz are also good examples of Christ and His church. Gentile bride who counts the cost and then leaves her family, but is not expected to lead through the famine. There are many other examples, but those mentioned are enough evidence to show that Christians will be taken away in the pre-tribulation rapture.

20. LEFT BEHIND: THE WORLD'S REACTION TO THE RAPTURE.

There is a growing hatred in the world for everything connected to Jesus Christ. It is as if the world is trying to promote a “**god idea**” that can satisfy all belief systems, while rejecting the God of Christianity and disdaining the idea of Jesus as God’s Son who can save the world. There is also a greater hatred for the idea of a rapture where millions of people will supernaturally disappear. More and more leading preachers in church circles are rejecting the rapture and turning to theological ideas such as “**Christian rule**” on earth rather than the rapture. Many in the evangelical world and Roman Catholic church leaders are completely opposed to this idea of people suddenly disappearing from the earth. When you understand the many different ideas about the end times, it is a challenge to really say what the different reactions will be to the rapture. The rapture may serve to force the many religious denominations to form a unity and have a uniform response. Every major religious trend has served to build a consensus against the so-called “**suffering fundamentalism**.” They are building a broad-based movement that aims to unite the Roman Catholic, Evangelical, and Pentecostal movements on a level where they stand on the idea that no theological view is important enough to divide people. We now have a religious atmosphere that pushes fundamental truth to the back burner. The fundamentalists are the ones who disappear with the rapture. There are many who would be happy if we just disappeared because we are a thorn in the flesh with our ideas. Holiness as a lifestyle is taboo.

Preachers who continue to preach against sin and a sinful lifestyle are considered "condemners" and are looked down upon. The music in the acceptable church growth world is "unclean" and "repulsive." The movie "**The Passion of the Christ**" didn't change anything, but it did reveal a few things that had already changed. Suddenly, Protestants and others in the church world could join the Catholic Church without any questions. The two main denominations that stood strong against the changes were the Baptists and the Pentecostal groups. However, they are now leading the way to the greatest unity of the "**Christian**" church in 2000 years. How are all these groups going to explain the rapture and they are still here?

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE RAPTURE.

The rapture is going to cause a huge stir throughout the world and will plunge the world into a very big crisis. It is going to be one of the biggest events in history. The media will investigate every detail of the event. Interviews will be held on all sides and many different ideas will be presented. The paranormal world is going to have a great time with many bizarre stories. Yet they are going to succeed in convincing the rest of the world to just go ahead. The one world religion will soon set up a speakers bureau to appear on all the news channels. They may offer one of the following excuses. First, they will declare that a supernatural miracle has taken place. Religious fanatics and rebellious fundamentalists have now been eliminated and finally peace can come to earth. They will say that these people were no different from the terrorists in the Muslim world. They were the same as the Taliban and other organizations and the world was done a favor by their removal. Precursors of the Antichrist will see this as their golden opportunity and they will join the religious "**One World Church**".

They will make propaganda for the coming of their "christ" and great paranormal events will become common. As the idea of the coming "christ" becomes more and more popular, it will grip the world and a great excitement will begin to build. Great preachers with a demonic touch will hold meetings all over the world. They will whip up the anticipation to a hysterical climax. Incredible miracles will occur, such as the blind seeing again, the deaf hearing, membership growing again and many more. This new world religion will explode. It will be a religious mania. This new religion will be as real as the true Pentecost was back then. The only difference was the absence of restrictions and moral standards. It will be the greatest day of mass religious meetings in history. The music has been written, the musicians trained. The gatherings will have the best at their disposal. The current contemporary, rap, rock, funk and other forms of music that are now dominant in the churches. The masses will line up to be baptized and marked as true worshippers of this new "Christ". They will firmly believe that they are waiting for the coming of the true Christ. While the One World Church promotes the false "Christ" worship, the true church is hidden as much as possible. A true conversion to Jesus Christ has the world in its grip. Millions of people who know very little about the faith will realize that what has happened was the true rapture of the church. These great masses will find private places where they can pray and study the Bible. They will help each other survive as long as possible. Every person who surrenders their life to Christ will sign their own death warrant. This will happen in a very brutal way. The masses who give their lives to Christ during the great tribulation will be hated by the liberal media, the Antichrist and his army of ruthless barbarians, and by the New World.

Religion's followers. The persecution of Christians will be global and brutal. Human rights will not exist. There will be no emergency number to call. The death of these converts who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb will be as violent as never before.

In the eyes of God, these people are champions who bravely spread their testimony wherever they go.

REVELATION 6:9-11.

"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 a little season, until their fellowservants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

The gospel will surely be heard worldwide during the seven years of tribulation. These people were killed for their testimony. **How dangerous is your testimony?** There will be two incredible prophets of God on earth during this time. They will preach the word of God and will not be killed until the time of their testimony is over. They will perform many genuine miracles and even close the heavens so that there will be no rain. Their testimony will be so effective that the "**Beast**" the leader of the One World Religion will wage war against them. After three and a half years of ministry they will be killed and this will cause a world excitement.

REVELATION 11:3-13.

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks that stand before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must be killed in this manner. They have power to shut heaven, that no rain fall in the days of their prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. 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: 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 the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three and a half days, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell on the earth shall rejoice over them, and shall send gifts one to another, because these two prophets tormented them. And after the three and a half days the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet: and great fear fell upon them that beheld them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in a cloud: and their enemies beheld them. And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell, and seven thousand men were slain in the earthquake: and the remnant were afraid, and gave glory to the God of heaven."

Even Angels will fly through the heavens preaching the everlasting gospel. No one who takes the mark of the beast and worships the devil, the Antichrist and the Beast will have an excuse. The glory of God against the unholy nature of Satan and his deceived followers will be plain for the world to see. The Spirit of Prophecy used by the prophet Daniel gave us incredible information about the seven years of tribulation that will take place.

The last chapter of his book speaks of the rapture and resurrection of the righteous as well as the resurrection of the wicked.

DANIEL 12:1-13.

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever. And thou, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. And I, Daniel, looked, and, behold, two others stood, the one on this bank of the river, and the other on that bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was above the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?

Then I heard the man clothed in linen, which was above the waters of the river, and he lifted up his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever, saying, For a time, times, and half a time, and when they have scattered the power of the holy people, all these things shall be fulfilled. And I heard, but I understood not: therefore said I, My lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and made white: but the wicked shall deal wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand: but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and thirty and five days. And you, go to the end; and you will rest and rise again to your destination at the end of days."

He describes the first three and a half years and places the "**terrible abomination**" in the middle of the week. Then he describes the last three and a half years. This is a special description. Along with the "**terrible abomination**" in the middle of the week, he also describes a revival of the righteous. Along with this, he also speaks of the wicked who, despite judgments and the undercurrent of a true revival, will continue to become more and more wicked. They will remain wicked and will become more and more wicked to a level never experienced before. A wicked man can become a deep devil without God. This is already happening and will reach a climax in the tribulation. At the very beginning of the seven years, the sixth seal reveals something of man's reaction to the judgements of God.

OPENBARING 6:14-17.

"en die hemel het weggewyk soos 'n boek wat toegerol word, en al die berge en eilande is uit hulle plekke versit; en die konings van die aarde en die grotes en die rykes en die owerstes oor duisend en die magtiges en al die slawe en al die vrymense het hulle weggesteek in die spelonke en in die rotse van die berge, en vir die berge en die rotse gesê: Val op ons en verberg ons vir die aangesig van Hom wat op die troon sit, en vir die toorn van die Lam; want die groot dag van sy toorn het gekom, en wie kan bestaan?"

Daar is geen getuenis van bekering nie, terwyl hulle bewus was van wie af hierdie oordeel gekom het. Teen die tyd van die sesde seël was die harte van die mens alreeds arrogant en hardkoppig.

OPENBARING 9:20-21.

"En die orige mense wat deur hierdie plae nie gedood is nie, het hulle nie bekeer van die werke van hul hande, om die duiwels te aanbid, of die afgode van goud en silwer en koper en klip en hout wat nie kan sien of hoor of loop nie. En hulle het hul nie bekeer van hul moorde en hul towerye en hul hoerery en hul diefstalle nie."

In the face of judgments they dare not deny, the wicked will only grow greater and greater. By the time of the two witnesses, the hearts of men were already irreversibly wicked. So much so that when the two witnesses were killed, men sent gifts to one another and celebrated the deaths of the two. As the end of the tribulation draws near, the coming of Christ is at hand where He will return to earth on a white horse and set His feet on the Mount of Olives with His Saints with Him.

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