

# *Evidence of Pre-Tribulation Rapture*

by Michael Aprile

Recently, a person came to my home and asked that I listen to a tape of a prophetic message about the end times, requesting that I just listen to it for awareness. The premise of this person's message was based on Revelation 13 and suggested, among other things, that we are now in the beginning of the Tribulation period. The tape explained, citing some excerpts of Scripture, that Christians would have to endure to the time when the Antichrist came on the scene, in mid-tribulation, and then would be snatched from the midst of it all (before the terrible part started). This article, therefore, is taken from the letter of response I delivered to this person, for sake of edification and to refute error through the Word.

First of all, it is important to understand that there are no more "prophets" through whom God chooses to give dreams and reveal special revelation today. This error in thought has brought many people to doom and confusion and still often deceives even the elect, from time-to-time. This was how the Mormon religion came into being, leading many people down a primrose path of subtle deception. It is essential to know that the devil is the "father of lies" and deception. Just keep in mind that all prophecy has been stated, for these last ages, and most of them have been fulfilled to date. Know this: if anyone appears to say different, he, she, or it has not come from the Lord.

I suppose just as good a place as any to start is by stating the three groups of people relevant to end-time Biblical prophecy: The Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church (of believers in Jesus Christ). The Jews are, of course, God's chosen seed of Abraham. They were, are now, and ever shall be His chosen people. Though many Jews have become Christians today (called Messianic Jews), most Jews are not believers in Jesus Christ, the Savior. The Gentiles are people who do not believe in Jesus Christ any more than the unsaved Jews, but are not Jews. The true Church is made up of saved Jews and Gentiles. While it is true that the human institution we know as the church contains an element of unbelievers, the true Church is made up of only genuine believers in Christ their Savior (see 1 Corinthians 10:32; and 1 Corinthians 1:2). This Church of true believers was begun at Pentecost and will end abruptly at the time of the Rapture.

The premise that this "saved" Church lives at least halfway through the Tribulation period.

It is my belief that the people who are saved during the Tribulation are not a part of the believer Church that will be raptured, even though these people will eventually be brought to Christ through this same belief. I have here, as my primary task, to demonstrate why the Rapture of the church-age believers (and not the chosen or remnant) occurs just prior to the seven-year Tribulation period. I hope I am correct that, if I can do this, more people will understand this and be ready to restudy the Scripture, in light of this evidence, and will eventually dispose of those ideas that run contrary to Biblical reason.

First of all, you might want some direct revelation, from Scripture (not me), that shows God's program for Christ's believer Church, made up of the seven churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation, that begins at Pentecost and ends with the Rapture. Revelation 4:1-3 shows the Apostle John being invited to see the future of Christ's Church played out before him. Here we see John actually invited up (Raptured) into heaven to see and speak to these seven churches who were there worshipping God prior to the opening of the seals (scrolls) that began the wrath of the Tribulation period. When Christ (The Lamb) breaks the seals in chapter 6 through chapter 8 verse 4, John is allowed to witness the "saints" that were "too many to count" and "people from every nation, race, tribe, and language" who were "dressed in white robes" that were "washed in the blood of The Lamb" who are standing in front of the throne of heaven praying. These saints cannot be mistaken for any other besides the saints of the rapture. The Jews (144,000), who were written in the Book of the Lamb,

are mentioned quite separately in chapter 7. The saints proclaimed loudly there before The Throne, "Salvation comes from our God on the throne and from the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:10.) This is the succinct language and the heavy indications of none other than born-again believers. What is important to note here is that this was John being shown by God the future of the church-age believers, who were praising God for saving them (Revelation 7:10), and receiving their reward (Revelation 7:15-17), before the trumpets were sounded (Revelation 8:5 through Revelation 11:19). These trumpets were, in fact, depictions of the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation period.

As if that is not enough to bring the pre-tribulation evidence to the forefront, then let's examine some more direct Scripture in evidence to the fact. The New Testament teaches that the Church (true believers) will be removed by the Rapture before the Tribulation begins (1 Thessalonians 1:10). This verse tells us that the "saints" are waiting for "Jesus" to "come from heaven" to "save them from the Retribution which is coming." Now, is it just me, or is that not extremely clear? If there is some question still, then read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. The Retribution, the Apostle Paul explains in Romans 1:18 through 3:20, is meant for the unbelievers among the chosen Jews and the Gentiles, but not the faithful (who simply wait for the Rapture). Then, there is 2 Peter 2:4-9 that emphasizes how God always rescued the faithful from circumstance where He poured out His wrath, before they had to face it. This is the nature and history of a God that is the "same yesterday, today, and forever" (always). Still other verses of Scripture add evidence to evidence that the saints will be kept from the Retribution, such as 1 Thessalonians 5:9; and Revelation 3:10. Yes, it is definitely true and evident that the church-age believers will be in heaven during the Tribulation. We see them, in Revelation 4:4,9-11; 7:13-14; and 19:4, as the "24 elders." These saints will undergo the judgment seat of Christ, during the seven year Tribulation period in preparation (Revelation 19:4-10,19) for accompanying Christ at His Second Coming (Revelation 19:14). We see the heavenly preparation of the Church, during the Tribulation period (Revelation 19:7). As the story seems to go, in God's scheme of things, the true Church is Raptured to heaven and those unbelievers left in the organized church (the institutional church) will pass into the Tribulation and form the base for the apostate super church. This is the church that the False Prophet will use to aid the worldwide rule of the Antichrist (see Revelation 13; 17-18). Once again, the true Church of Jesus Christ will not go through the Tribulation.

Before I keep my promise and show why the Rapture must be Pre-Tribulation, let's quickly look at the four known viewpoints on the Tribulation period.

**The Pre-Tribulation View** is that Christ comes in fulfillment of His promise in Revelation 3:10.

**The Partial Rapture View** is that Christ will only rapture those who look for Him (Hebrews 9:28) - this one is not well accepted, because Rapture teachings in Scripture do not support it.

**The Mid-Tributional View** is that Christ raptures His Church in the middle of the tribulation with the rapture of the witnesses in Revelation 11 serving as an illustration of it. One problem with this is that the two witnesses are Jews and have come to minister to Jews in Jerusalem, and are not members of the Church. Following this view simply skips over the concept that John is taken up into heaven as an illustration of the Rapture of the Church (see Revelation 4:1-3).

**The Post-Tributional View** is that Christ will come at the end of the Tribulation period. This gives the saints no time to visit the Father's house, before the 1000 year reign, nor time for the judgment seat of Christ, and no time for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Of course, this view overlooks that Jesus keeps believers from the time of trial (Revelation 3:10). One more problem is that a vast majority of the saints would be martyred - which is not born out in Scripture.

With this in mind, let's now examine why the Rapture must be Pre-Tribulation. **The Lord Himself promised to deliver us.**

There is a clear promise in Revelation 3:10: “Since you have my command and endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live upon the earth [emphasis added].” The word “from”, in Greek, is “out of.”

### **Only the Pre-Tribulation View preserves imminency.**

The Bible instills in us that Christ could come at any moment. More specifically, it says Christ will come to call His bride to be with Him in His Father’s house. This expectancy is what God expects the Christian to have. That is why there are so many admonitions in Scripture to watch, be ready, and to look for Christ to come at any moment. Placing the Rapture at any point other than before the Tribulation destroys the immediate, at-any-time coming verses in Scripture. The other Tribulation views have Christians looking for the Antichrist and the events of the Tribulation, instead of for Christ. This is flat wrong and contributes to the devil’s plan, instead of God’s.

### **The Church is to be delivered from the wrath to come.**

The promise in 1 Thessalonians 1:10 was given by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul. This promise was delivered to a church that needed to be quickly grounded in the Word of God before Paul was driven out of town. These teaching pertained to Bible prophecy and end-time events. The letter centered on the Second Coming, the imminent return of Christ, the Rapture, the Tribulation, and other end-time subjects. Aside from the points about turning from idols to the true and living God, Paul stressed waiting for the Son “Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.” (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10.) The context of that Scripture is the Rapture, for Christians are not waiting for the glorious appearing. Paul tells these people, in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, that the latter will not occur until the Antichrist ( or “the lawless one) is revealed (verse 8). The Christians in Thessalonica were awaiting the coming of Christ for His Church - that is, the Rapture. We see where they already knew the Tribulation (or “wrath to come”) would follow the Rapture, and that God had promised to rescue them from the wrath to come.

### **Christians are not appointed to wrath.**

1 Thessalonians 5:9 points to the fact that “God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” This verse follows the strongest passage in the Bible on the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4) and must be taken strictly in light of its context. There seems to be a need for context, in interpretation, but no less a need for understanding word usage and meaning. The phrase “the day of the Lord,” in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2, refers to the period when the Lord saves His church from wrath (the Rapture), puts the unbelieving through His wrath (the Tribulation), and then makes His glorious appearing (the Second Coming) to set up His kingdom - in that order. In short, the Rapture occurs before the Tribulation, while the glorious appearing occurs after it.

### **The Church of Believers is absent in Revelation 4-18.**

The Church is mentioned 17 times in the first three chapters of Revelation, but after John (a member of the Church) is called up to heaven, at the beginning of chapter 4, he looks down on the events of the Tribulation, and the Church is not mentioned or seen again until chapter 19, when she returns to earth with her Bridegroom at His glorious appearing. Why? The answer is obvious: she isn’t in the Tribulation. She is raptured to be with her Lord before it begins!

May you now be at ease about any sense that we are now in the time of the Tribulation. Over the last twenty years or so, I have heard several seemingly well-founded themes that would fool “even the elect, if that were possible” (Matthew 24:23-24). There is an importance for gaining wisdom over knowledge, where it comes to studying the Word of God. We must spend as much of every waking hour each day as we can rightly divide the Word, so that we are not deceived by every wind that blows through (Acts 20:30; 1 Timothy 4:1-2; 2 Timothy 3:6-9; and 2 Peter 2:1-3). Even Jesus warned of the wickedness of always looking for signs rather than having hope of salvation. As it has been said, there

is nothing that Satan would like better than to have Christians keeping an eye out for the Antichrist rather than for Christ.

Finally, I want to relate one other concept that I feel has been hindering our understanding and has been used to create confusion among Christians about the last days. This thing that was brought to the forefront of Christian concern by Hal Lindsay, in his book *The Late Great Planet Earth*, concerning the dates 1948 and 1967. There is no doubt that, in the scope of Israel's history, these dates have great import and significance. However, I am now convinced that these dates cannot be used, and indeed are falsely used, to determine dates in relationship to the end times. There is one important factor that has been continuously ignored and overlooked about these dates, where they might have significance to the end times and to Israel once again becoming a nation. That is, the verses related to this incident as a sign of the beginning of the time of great sorrows (the Tribulation), when placed contextually, read that, at this time Israel will, as a nation, "repent." Repent certainly does not mean believe in God, because Israel had never stopped believing in God, prior to the 1948 and 1967 dates. Repent actually means to "turn around."

One has to ask the vital question, "Turn around from what?" What direction are they going that God does not want them to be going? The answer is that Israel, to date, has been in disbelief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Savior (The Messiah). So, we must conclude that, within context, the verses say that Israel has not become a nation and repented. This means that the "time of great sorrows" (the Tribulation) has not yet begun. In fact, the Bible relates that God may look like He is slow to come, but rather He loves His chosen people Israel and being very merciful, has not brought the end times so that "not one [He has chosen] will be lost."

We, as born-again, Spirit-filled, believers in Jesus Christ feel the closeness of the end, just as the Apostle Paul did. However, that is mostly because we long for Him to come as a bride does for the groom. As it is, Christ, in His mercy may not come for a long time yet. According to the teaching of dispensational truth (the study within ages of God's overall plan), there are two ages, the Church Age (wherein we now strive) and the Millennium age (the Thousand Year Reign of Christ on earth after Christ's return), wherein there is an immeasurable spanse of time. We don't know the day or the hour - but we have the hope of the Rapture when we will be taken up with Christ and will receive our reward, every saved person according to what they deserve.

### ***Where is the Church During The Tribulation?***

By Tom Stephens

- The first three Chapters of Revelation mentions the "Church" 22 times as still being on earth.
- The Church is not mentioned again till Rev 22:17, in heaven.
- Chapter 2-3 of Rev. is Christ encouraging the 7 Churches to repent!... before it's too late.
- The Church is the "Bride of Christ". Not because we are the best; but because we are of the Dispensation of Grace. We chose to be washed in Christ's precious blood and live for Him exclusively for the rest of our lives on earth—simply because of Who He Is in us—and who we are in Him! Though we daily yearn to be with Him forever, we also realize that many still have not repented of their sins. We must attend the Father's business till Christ returns—*but then*—we will spend the 7 years of Tribulation in Heaven preparing for the "Marriage Supper of The Lamb" which takes place near the end of Tribulation.

#### **The Bride of Christ throughout the Tribulation period:**

1. **Revelation 4: 4-7** – (see vs 1: Christ says, "*Come up hither*)." Seated on thrones around Christ's were 24 elders clothed in white raiment; and on their heads were gold crown

2. **Revelation 4: 10-11** – 24 elders fall down before the throne that sat on The Throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, for thy pleasure are and were created.*
  
3. **Revelation 5: 8-14** – **Elders**, mightily in worship of the Lord Jesus, falling down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sung a new song, saying, *“Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth”*.
  
4. **Revelation 7: 11-17** – *“And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the **elders** and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power and might, be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen”*. And one of the elders answered, saying to me, *“What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they?”* And I said unto him, *“Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, answered him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”\**
  
5. **Revelation 11: 16-18** – And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiping God, saying, *“We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to the thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.”*
  
6. **Revelation 19:4-8** – Worshiping and praising; *Proclamation calling the Bride to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb!* And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshiped God that sat on the throne, saying, *“Amen, Alleluia.* And a voice came out of the throne, saying, *“Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great”*. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thundering, saying Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. *“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready”*. **And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.**

**\*Might the Elders actually be those who are saved “out of the Tribulation”?**

No. Absolutely No!

In Revelation 7: 9—17 , John Says, “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice saying, ‘*Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb*’”.

The answer to this question lies above in point 4, where, in Rev. 7: 13—17, where an *elder* asks “*what are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they?*”? And he said unto me, “*These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes...*” (see point 4 above for all)

Read chapter 7 yourself and you will see that one elder asked who are these arrayed in white robes? John answered the elder, “*These are they which came out of the great tribulation*”. God wants you and I to be sure...very sure...of our doctrines from the Word of God. If we don't, we will eventually be deceived. Before and after His Resurrection, Jesus stated to His Disciples, “*Be careful that you allow no man to deceive you; for if it be possible even My elect would be deceived.*”

God did not place too much pressure on us, His people. He deserves our full attention—full commitment.

### **How do we know the elders are the Church?**

- They responded to the voice, "Come up hither". This is the same voice that also called the "two resurrected witnesses" to heaven at Mid-Tribulation.
- They are seated on 24 thrones (12 for Apostles; 12 for tribes of Israel [Messianic])
- They are dressed in white linen garments.
- They wear incorruptible crowns on their heads, and cast them before the Lord.
- They were, in every case, near the throne of their Saviour, Jesus Christ, in worship.
- They awaited the time when Jesus would call the saints to the "Marriage Supper" of the Lamb.
- They sang a new song; one no other could sing, saying, "***Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God Kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.***" (Revelation 5: 8-10) These saints claimed their inheritance! (see also verses 11-14)
- Rev 7: 11-13. Verse 13 refers the reader back to verses 9 and 10, which is the Tribulation saints (those saved by decision inside the tribulation period). Verses 9 & 10 are not the Bride of Christ.
- A Proclamation: It's time for the “Marriage Supper Of The Lamb”! (Revelation 19: 4-8)

Tom Stephens

## ***The Pre-Tribulation Rapture***

Our fellowship as Christians is not based upon the timing of the rapture, but upon the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Some have accused those who believe in a pre-tribulation rapture as "escapists," trying to avoid all trouble or persecution. On the contrary, the Church always has been and always will be persecuted as long as we are in the world, but this is not the same as the wrath of God poured out during the Tribulation. We believe the rapture occurs before the Tribulation because scriptures overwhelmingly support a pre-tribulation rapture, as opposed to the amillennial, post-millennial, and post-tribulation theories.

We can't be dogmatic over something that hasn't occurred yet. Whenever He comes is His will, which should be sufficient for whatever position you hold. In the meantime, God has given us scriptures to examine. The following is a list of scriptural proofs that indicate the rapture will be Pre-Tribulation.

## ***16 Proofs for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture***

### **Proof #1: Revelation 19:11-21 doesn't mention a resurrection.**

The rapture is a resurrection of those "in Christ" (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Isn't it a little bit odd that Rev. 19:11-21, which is the clearest picture of the second coming of Christ, does not mention a resurrection? The rapture will be the biggest event since the resurrection of Jesus where hundreds of millions of Christians will be resurrected and translated, yet there isn't any mention here. Don't you think it deserves at least one verse? The rapture isn't mentioned because it doesn't happen at the second coming.

### **Proof #2: Zechariah 14:1-15 doesn't mention a resurrection.**

This is an Old Testament picture of Jesus returning to earth at the second coming. Again, no mention of a resurrection.

### **Proof #3: Two different pictures are painted.**

In the Old Testament, two different pictures are painted of the Messiah—one suffering (Isa. 53:2-10, Ps. 22:6-8, 11-18) and one reigning as King (Ps. 2:6-12, Zech. 14:9,16). As we look back on these scriptures, we see they predicted two separate comings of the Messiah—the 1st coming as a suffering Messiah and the 2nd coming (still future) as a reigning King.

In the New Testament, we have another picture added. Again, we have two pictures painted which don't look the same. These two different descriptions of Jesus' coming point to two separate events we call "the rapture" and "the second coming."

### **Proof #4: The Known Day and the Unknown Day**

Concerning the return of Jesus, the Bible presents a day we can't know and a day we can know. Matthew 25:13 says Jesus will return at an unknown time, while Revelation 12:6 says the Jews will have to wait 1,260 days for the Lord to return. The 1,260 days begins when the Antichrist stands in the Temple and declares himself to be God (Matt. 24:15-21, 2 Thess. 2:4) This event will take place at the mid-point of the seven year Tribulation (Dan 9:27). The Antichrist has authority to rule for 42 months, which is 1,260 days (Rev. 13:4) and will be destroyed by Jesus at His second coming (Rev. 19:20, 2 Thess. 2:8). The known and unknown days must happen at different times, meaning they are two separate events.

### **Proof #5: A door open in heaven (Revelation 4:1)**

The door in heaven is opened to let John into heaven. We believe John's call into heaven is prophetic of the church being caught up at the rapture (see proof #6). In Revelation 19:11, heaven is opened again, this time to let the armies which are already in heaven out. This is the Church, which has been raptured at a previous time, following Jesus out of heaven at the second coming.

### **Proof #6: "Come up here." (Revelation 4:1)**

A voice called for the apostle John to "Come up here," and immediately he was in heaven. This could be a prophetic reference to the rapture of the Church. The words "Come up here" are spoken to the two witnesses who are killed in the middle of the Tribulation, who are resurrected and ascend into heaven (Rev. 11:12). Therefore, the phrase "Come up here" could mean the church is raptured in Rev. 4:1. The word "church" is mentioned 22 times in Rev. 1-3, but is not mentioned again until Rev. 22:17.

### **Proof #7: The 24 elders have their crowns.**

After John is called up into heaven, he sees the 24 elders with their crowns (Rev. 4:4-10). We know that Christians will receive their rewards (crowns) at the rapture (2 Tim. 4:8, 1 Pet. 5:4). We will be

repaid at the resurrection of the righteous (Luke 14:14). The elders couldn't receive their crowns unless the resurrection (rapture) has taken place.

**Proof #8 Holy ones are already with Jesus in heaven (Zech. 14:5, Rev. 19:14)**

The armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, follow Jesus out of heaven at His second coming (Rev. 19:14, Zech. 14:5, Col. 3:4). These are not angels because Rev. 19:8 tells us the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. In order to come out of heaven we first have to go in, indicating a previous rapture.

**Proof #9: Kept from the hour of testing (Rev. 3:10)**

Revelation 3:10 says we will be kept out of the hour of testing which will come upon the whole earth (the Tribulation). Some have wrongly believed "keep" means to keep through, or protect through the Tribulation. Suppose you approach a high voltage area with a sign that says, "Keep Out." Does that mean you can enter and be protected? No, it means you are forbidden from entering the area. But this verse also says He will keep us from the hour of testing. It is not just the testing, but the time period. If a student is excused from a test, he still may have to sit in the class while others take the test. But if he is excused from the hour of testing, he can go home. The Church will be called home before the hour of testing.

**Proof #10: Angels don't resurrect people when they gather them for judgment.**

When the angels are sent forth to gather the elect at the second coming (Matt. 24:29-31), some have wrongly interpreted this as the rapture. There is one huge problem with this interpretation. If we are resurrected at this time, why would we need angels to gather us? In the resurrection, we will be like the angels (Matt. 22:30), able to travel in the air at will. Obviously, these people who are gathered are not resurrected, therefore it can't be the rapture. No one would claim the wicked are raptured at this time, yet Matthew 13:39-41, 49 says the angels will not only gather the elect, but also the wicked. This gathering is not a resurrection.

**Proof #11: Both wicked and righteous both can't be taken first.**

First Thessalonians 4:13-17 says the righteous are taken and the wicked are left behind. Matthew 13:30, 49 says the wicked are taken first and righteous are left behind. This points to two separate events, the rapture and the second coming.

**Proof #12: Jesus returns from the wedding.**

When Jesus returns to earth at the second coming, He will return from a wedding (Luke 12:36). At the rapture, Jesus is married to His bride, the Church. After the wedding, He will return to earth.

**Proof #13: Jesus will receive us to Himself, not us to receive Him (John 14:2-3).**

Jesus said He would prepare a place for the Church in heaven, then He would come again to receive us to Himself. Why would Jesus prepare a place for us in heaven and then not take us there? At the rapture, He will come to receive us to Himself, "that where I am (heaven), there you may be also." If the rapture occurred at the same time as the second coming, we would go up to the clouds and then immediately come back to earth. That would contradict John 14:2-3.

**Proof #14: The one who restrains is taken out of the way.**

In 2 Thess. 2:6-7, Paul says "the one who restrains will be taken out of the way" before the Antichrist can be revealed. We believe this refers to the rapture because the Church is clearly the biggest obstacle to the Antichrist becoming a world ruler.

**Proof #15: The separation of the sheep and goats (Matt. 25:31-46)**

If the rapture occurred at the second coming, why would the sheep and the goats need to be separated immediately after the second coming? A rapture at the second coming would have already separated

the sheep and the goats. With a Pre-Tribulation rapture, the people saved after the rapture will need to be separated after the second coming.

**Proof #16: Who will populate the Millennium?**

If the rapture occurs at the second coming and the wicked are cast into hell at that time, who will be left to populate the millennium? Only people in their natural (non-resurrected) bodies will be able to have children (Matt. 22:30). With a Pre-Tribulation rapture, the people saved after the rapture who are alive at the second coming will populate the earth during the Millennium

***Questions for Post-Tribbers***

A Post-Tribulation rapture fails to answer nine questions. The answers to those nine questions leads us to a belief in a Pre-Trib Rapture.

**Question #1:** If the rapture occurs at the second coming, who will populate the millennium? According to the post-tribulation rapture theory, at the second coming all Christians will receive resurrected bodies and all lost people go to the lake of fire. Who will be left to repopulate the world during the millennium? Because people in their resurrected bodies can't reproduce (Matt. 22:30), it will require people in their natural bodies.

**(Answer:** These are people saved after the rapture [see Revelation 7:9-17])

**Question #2:** Why is the rapture missing from Revelation 19:11-23? Rev. 19:11-23 gives a description of the second coming, yet the rapture isn't mentioned. Zechariah 14:1-7 also describes the second coming, but there is no mention of a rapture or resurrection. Some may call this an argument from silence, yet this silence speaks quite loudly. This is biggest event in the history of the Church, where hundreds of millions of people are resurrected-and it's not mentioned in Revelation 19 or Zechariah 14. Why?

**(Answer:** It's not mentioned because it doesn't happen at that time.)

**Question #3:** Who is gathered first, the wicked (Matt. 13:30, 49) or the righteous (1 Thess. 4:16-17)? Both can't be gathered first.

**(Answer:** These are two events separated in time.)

**Question #4:** Since Christians will be rewarded (crowns) at the rapture (2 Tim. 4:8, 1 Pet. 5:4, Luke 14:14), how can the 24 elders in heaven already have their crowns (Rev. 4:4-10) if the rapture hasn't taken place?

**(Answer:** The rapture must have taken place)

**Question #5:** Why do the sheep and goats need to be separated if they are already separated by a rapture at the second coming (Matt. 25:31-33)?

**(Answer:** The rapture doesn't occur at the second coming, so the sheep and the goats will need to be separated.)

**Question #6:** At the end of the millennium, where do the non-Christians come from (Rev. 20:7-10)?

**(Answer:** These are the people born during the millennium. They are the descendents of those who have entered the millennium in their natural bodies.)

**Question #7:** How can Jesus return from the wedding if the wedding hasn't taken place (Luke 12:36)?  
(Answer: The wedding, or marriage of Christ to His Church, has already taken place.)

**Question #8:** Who is the "one who restrains" that must be taken out of the way before the antichrist is revealed (2 Thess. 2:7)?

(Answer: The Church is the biggest hindrance to the Antichrist coming to power.)

**Question #9:** Jesus promised He would prepare a place for Christians in heaven, then would return to take us there (John 14:2-3). According to the post-tribulation theory, Jesus returns to earth and stays with the Church. Why would Jesus prepare a place for us in heaven for the Marriage Supper of The Lamb for His Bride—then not take us there?

(A post-Tribulation rapture cannot explain John 14:2-3.)

## *Answers to Post-Trib Questions*

People who believe in a post-tribulation rapture offer several arguments against a pre-tribulation rapture. Listed below are some answers to their questions.

Argument #1: "The Bible doesn't teach there will be two second comings. What right do you have to split the second coming into two events?"

In the Old Testament, there were two different pictures painted of the Messiah—one suffering (Isa. 53:2-10, Ps. 22:6-8, 11-18) and one reigning as King (Ps. 2:6-12, Zech. 14:9,16). As we look back on these Scriptures, we see they predicted two separate comings of the Messiah—the first coming as a suffering Messiah and the second coming (still future) as a reigning King.

In the New Testament, we have another picture added. Again, we have two pictures painted and they don't match. These two descriptions of Jesus' coming point to two separate events we call "The Rapture" and "The Second Coming." (see "The Rapture vs. The Second Coming" Bible study)

Argument #2: "Jesus said the rapture would occur immediately after the tribulation (Matt. 24:29-31) when He sends for the angels to gather His elect."

The event in Matthew 24 is not the rapture for several reasons:

1. Christians will receive resurrected bodies at the rapture (1 Cor. 15:51-53). If we are in resurrected bodies like Jesus, we will be able to ascend just like Jesus did when He ascended (Acts 1:9). Why would we need angels to gather us when our bodies will have the same capabilities as angels (Matt. 22:30)? The angels are gathering the elect—those who have been saved after the rapture who are in their natural bodies.
2. The angels also gather the wicked at this time (Matt. 13:38-43, 49-50).
3. If you make the argument that the angels gathering the elect in Matt. 24 is the rapture, then you will have to claim the angels gathering the wicked in Matt. 13 is also the rapture. Of course, no one believes the wicked are raptured at the second coming.

4. The angels are sent forth to gather both the righteous and the wicked together for the judgment of the nations (Matt. 25:31-48). These are all people in their natural bodies, not resurrected bodies. The wicked will be cast into the lake of fire, while the righteous will enter into the millennial kingdom.

Argument #3: The rapture will occur at "the last trumpet" (1 Cor. 15:52), meaning at the second coming.

The last trump is a term used for the last trumpet blown during the Feast of Trumpets. The rapture will be the fulfillment of the Jewish Feast of Trumpets:

"The 'last trump' refers to the Feast of Trumpets and the Jewish practice of blowing trumpets at this feast each year. During the ceremony, there is a series of short trumpet blasts of various lengths, concluding with the longest blast of all, called the tekiah gedolah: the great, or 'last trump.' Judaism connected this last trump with the resurrection of the dead, and so does Paul. Paul's point here is that the Rapture will be the fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets. [Arnold Fruchtenbaum, "A Review of The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church" (Tustin, CA:Ariel Ministries), p.58]

Argument #4: "The pre-tribulation rapture was invented by those who afraid to go through persecution."

The pre-tribulation rapture position doesn't teach that Christians will escape persecution. Jesus said the world would hate us (John 15:18). The rapture will occur at a separate time than the second coming because God has different programs for the Church and Israel. God has not destined the Church for the wrath that will be poured out during the tribulation (1 Thess. 5:8).

Argument #5: "Paul said in 2 Thess. 2:1-9 that the rapture wouldn't occur until the antichrist is revealed."

Paul is speaking of the day of the Lord (the Tribulation), not the rapture. Paul is showing the relationship between the rapture (v.1) and the day of the Lord (v.2).

First, the day of the Lord refers to the Tribulation period, not the rapture.

The "day of the Lord" doesn't mean a 24-hour day, but a time period of judgment (Isa. 2:12, 13:6,9, Ezek. 13:5, 30:3, Joel 1:15, 2:1,11,31, 3:14, Amos 5:18, 20) The Thessalonians were shaken and disturbed because someone had deceived them into believing the Tribulation Period had begun. Paul said the antichrist must be revealed before this happens. When the antichrist confirms a covenant with Israel, he will be revealed, beginning the 7-year Tribulation period.

Second, if the Thessalonians believed in a post-tribulation rapture, shouldn't they be rejoicing? If the Thessalonians had been taught a post-tribulation rapture, they would have been rejoicing because the beginning of the Tribulation was evidence the post-tribulation rapture was near. They wouldn't be disturbed or alarmed because this is what they would have expected-to go through the Tribulation.

But we find the Thessalonians were disturbed. Why? Because if the Tribulation period had begun, it meant they missed the rapture. This is why Paul writes them about the rapture (v.1), then explains that the Tribulation period begins when the antichrist is revealed. Because that hadn't happened yet, they didn't miss the rapture.

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