

Spiritual Strategic Warfare



”Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place” **Ephesians 6:14**

”And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” **Ephesians 6:15**

“above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts (arrows) of the wicked one” **Ephesians 6:16**

”And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ...” **Ephesians 6:17.**

“For the word of God is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow (bone), and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart...” **Hebrews 4.12.**

Zidkiyah Yisrael

The False Rapture Doctrine!!



The rapture doctrine is one of the most popular topics that is so widespread among the Christian church today, many have heard from sermons and teachings where it has become established doctrine. Some people have made up their mind that this doctrine is taught in the bible that the Church is to be rapture into heaven at any moment in the blink of an eye! There is a saying “just because something is said or repeated over and over does not necessarily mean it’s true.” Adolf Hitler said if you tell a lie loud enough and long enough, sooner or later people will believe it.

PROVERBS 23:23

Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

The first scripture I would like for us to read will tell us where the saints came from and where they are at. **THE CHURCH WILL GO THROUGH THE GREAT TRIBULATION!** No matter how much we put mental ascent to anything, it still just does not change the truth of God’s word:

REVELATION 7:9

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;

REVELATION 7:10

And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

REVELATION 7:11

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 worshipped God,

REVELATION 7:12

Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, [be] unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

REVELATION 7:13

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

REVELATION 7:14

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.

Notice! These are they that came out of **great tribulation**! Some of you after reading this will repeat what your pastor said instead of hearing the word of God. **Proverbs 4:7** says “ *Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get **understanding**.*” According to the bible it clearly tells us that the ones who are arrayed in white robes came out of great tribulation! There is great confusion regarding prophecy dealing with the tribulation. The reason for this is due to a lack of knowledge of biblical prophecy, with a strong understanding of sequence of events in scripture that will take place before the Millennium kingdom is established.

Did you also notice that the ones who died during the tribulation washed their robes and made them white in verse fourteen? How do you wash your robes and make them white?

REVELATION 19:8

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: **for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.**

So far the first verse should have knocked your shoes off. Watch this series of verses. In **Matthew twenty four** the disciples asked Jesus a question. The question is two in three.

1. When shall these things be?
2. What shall be the sign of thy coming?
3. And the end of the world?

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?

The scriptures tell us that Jesus the Messiah answered and the first thing He told them was this:

MATTHEW 24:4

And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Take heed that no man deceive you.**

Well guess what? Deception and false teaching is all over the place. Men are deceiving and being deceived, it is so sad. I would ask that you read the whole chapter of **Matthew twenty four** and see what Jesus said and not what men are telling you today. I will go straight to the answer starting in **verse twenty nine**. My question to you is are you going to

believe the words of the Messiah Jesus Christ or continue to believe the false prophets, pastors, teachers and ministers of today?

MATTHEW 24:29

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

Jesus says immediately after the tribulation of those days. **What days is He talking about?** Jesus just finished telling us in this entire chapter. But one thing is for sure His second coming will not be a secret.

1. People will see the sun be darkened!
2. The moon will not shine.
3. The stars will fall from heaven.
4. The powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Remember all of this takes place after the tribulation, in which they tell us we are not going to be here, but I am telling you that is not what the scripture says. You will be here if you're not dead! The only way anybody will avoid the great tribulation is by death. There is no secret rapture! There are many false teaching and prophets. Millions of dollars have been made on movies and books dealing with the false rapture doctrine.

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 in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Then shall appear the sign of Jesus coming in heaven. Wow! looks like a lot is going on to be a secret. But when Jesus comes it will be in power and great glory. Then look at what takes place:

MATTHEW 24:31

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

Now hear comes what they call the rapture, I call it Jesus coming. Here is the trumpet that sounds. Have you noticed in the false teaching they are duping the masses by, there is no trumpet. Jesus came the first time, they tell us that He will come in a secret rapture and get His people before the great tribulation. Now guess what! In order for the people to be raptured, Jesus has to come and get them right! So this makes the second time He has come by their false teaching. Then He will come and destroy and every eye will see Him. This makes the third time, they are teaching three comings of Jesus. **This is false teaching!**

It will not be a secret that is for sure. Let's go to the next verses of scripture:

I CORINTHIANS 15:51

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

The scriptures tells us that we shall all be changed, and when this will happen.

I CORINTHIANS 15:52

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.

Take notice at the last trump! Not before the trumpet shall blow but at the last! Not at the first trumpet, but the last. Not the second, third,

fourth etc... but the last. **In the book of Revelation there are seven trumpets. Start in the eight chapter of Revelation.** You will see that there is a lot of destruction taking place during this time frame.

They tell us that we are going to be secretly raptured up out of here before all of this, but yet the apostle Paul tells us different. So we might as well get ready to go through each of these trumpets! period! Oh another thing, the real Christians will enter in through much tribulation.

They try to create an issue by saying that we are not appointed to God's wrath. And as real true Christians, not worldly professing Christians, but the real Christians, God will preserve through the great tribulation. God preserved Israel when He poured out the plagues against Egypt. So will our God preserve us? But do not be mistaken, many people will fall because of their pride. Many will rise up against God's anointed leaders and fall just like Korah, Dathan and Abiram. We will see the earth opened up again and swallow up many that transgress against God and His real people. The big TV ministries and all who follow their falsehood will be destroyed for their lies.

I CORINTHIANS 15:53

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality.

I CORINTHIANS 15:54

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

I CORINTHIANS 15:55

O death, where [is] thy sting? O grave, where [is] thy victory?

I CORINTHIANS 15:56

The sting of death [is] sin; and the strength of sin [is] the law.

ACTS 14:22

Confirming the souls of the disciples, [and] exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

The true Church will go through tribulation. Just like the time of the exodus was a time of proving of the people, so will the great tribulation prove God's people. I have heard a many people saying ("God understands that we've got to eat so He will not send me to hell for receiving the mark of the beast") I thought to myself are people going by the imagination of their own heart, are people really not studying the bible to make such a bold claim as this???

I THESSALONIANS 4:13

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

I 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.

I THESSALONIANS 4:15

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 not prevent them which are asleep.

I THESSALONIANS 4:16

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:

One thing is for sure, a shout is very loud and this trumpet that will be blown by the archangel all will hear even the dead that are in the graves will hear it. So the rapture as they call it, cannot be secret. They tell us that one day cars will be wrecking all over the place because they will be

unmanned. They tell us that all of a sudden-poof-the Christians will be gone! I am telling you that this is a damnable doctrine. Many people will believe their lies and they will be damned. Christ will return to resurrect, to purge, to heal, and to establish the eternal kingdom of God on this earth. Heaven and earth will unite like a bride and husband for all eternity.

I 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.

I THESSALONIANS 4:18

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

THE KING IS COMING!!! This is a serious comfort because we wait patiently for His coming. The day of the Lord is not going to be some glorious thing that people are going to be looking forward to either. The prophecies tell that when Jesus comes it will be a day of darkness. Of course Jesus told us the same thing in Matthew twenty four. Looks like to me that with all of the people telling us that certain things are done away with, Jesus is in perfect harmony with the prophets of old.

AMOS 5:18

Woe unto you that **desire the day of the LORD!** to what end [is] it for you? the day of the LORD [is] darkness, and not light.

AMOS 5:19

As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.

AMOS 5:20

[Shall] not **the day of the LORD** [be] darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?

Historical Background of The “Rapture Doctrine”

In the late 1500's two Jesuits name Francisco Ribera and Robert Bellarmine published commentaries on the Revelation as a counter-interpretation to the prevailing view among Protestants which identified the **Papacy** with the Antichrist. **Ribera** applied all of Revelation but the earliest chapters to the end time rather than to the history of the Church. **Ribera's** and **Bellarmino's** writings claimed that **Paul**, **Daniel**, and **John** had nothing whatsoever to say about the **Papal** power, but a future Antichrist, one sinister man who comes on the scene just before the return of Jesus Christ.

For three centuries the Jesuit propaganda of a future Antichrist remained largely inside the realm of Catholicism, but the plan of the Jesuits was that these theological tenets be adopted by Protestants. Known as **Futurism**, it was not until the 1800s that this Jesuit propaganda began to spread to England and to America. In 1826 **Dr. Samuel Roffey Maitland of the Church of England** published a widely-read book attacking the Reformation and supporting **Ribera's** idea of a future one-man Antichrist. Soon after **Dr. Maitland** came **James H. Todd**, a professor of Hebrew at **the University of Dublin** who published anti-Protestant books; **John Henry Newman**, a member of **the Church of England** and a leader of the famous Oxford Movement whose goals included weaning Protestants back to '**holy mother church**' (in 1850, **Newman** wrote his “Letter on Anglican Difficulties,” revealing that one of the goals in the Oxford Movement was to finally absorb “the various English denominations and parties” back into **the Church of Rome**. After publishing a pamphlet endorsing **Todd's futurism** about a one-man Antichrist, **Newman** soon became a full Roman Catholic, and later even a highly honored Cardinal); **Edward Irving**, the Scottish Presbyterian minister and acknowledged forerunner of both the Pentecostal and

Charismatic Movements who began to teach a newly hatched theory of a pre-tribulation “**secret rapture**”; **John Nelson Darby**, known as the Father of **Modern Dispensationalism** who also became a strong promoter of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture followed by a one-man Antichrist. Between 1859 and 1874 **Darby** visited America six times preaching in all of its major cities planting the seeds of **Futurism** in American. In 1909, **Cyrus Ingerson Scofield** published the first edition of his famous **Scofield Reference Bible** in which he injected large doses of **Darby, Todd, Maitland, Bellarmine, and Ribera Futurism** in his footnotes. What continued to fuel the growth of **Futurism** in 20th-century American Protestantism was **the Moody Bible Institute** and **the Dallas Theological Seminary** which strongly supported the teachings of **John Nelson Darby**. **Dallas Theological Seminary** graduate **Hal Lindsey** released a book in the 1970's called *The Late Great Planet Earth* which brought **Futurism** to the masses of American Christianity. In the 1990s, **Tim LaHaye** and **Jerry Jenkins** created *Left Behind*, a sequence of novels in which they took the future one-man Antichrist idea of **Hal Lindsey, Scofield, Darby, Irving, Newman, Todd, Maitland, Bellarmine, and Ribera**, and turned it into “**The most successful Christian-fiction series ever**” (*Publishers Weekly*). But it was the television ministries of **Jack Van Impe, Peter and Paul Lalonde, and Pastor John Hagee**, who worked together to produce *LEFT BEHIND: The Movie*. Thus we see how the floodgates of **Futurism** have been opened, unleashing a massive tidal-wave of false prophecy which is now sweeping over America.

There has been a relatively new belief about the future that was completely foreign to the ancient Jews and to all but modern Christianity that has engulfed many Christians today, and is the basis for the fiction book and movie series written by **Tim LaHaye** called, "**Left Behind**."

It was apparently first taught by the founder of the Catholic Apostolic Church, Edward Irving in the late 1820's. Plymouth Brethren pastor John Nelson Darby then picked up this new teaching, and began preaching this view in 1843. C.I. Schofield made this belief popular in America in the late 1800's with his revised Bible notes published in 1917. What I am referring to is **the belief in a pre-tribulational "rapture."**

Some Christians have put forth some vague examples of a pre-tribulational "rapture" being taught before Darby or Irving. However, these are typically quotes of heretics not accepted by the majority of Christians. The fact that there were at most a few vague examples at best before Darby or Irving should make it obvious that a **pre-tribulational "rapture" was NOT the common belief among early Christians through most of Christian history.**

The earliest view among Christians was the belief in a **post-Tribulational rapture.** This is confirmed by reknown pre-tribulational rapture promoter, Tim LaHaye, in his book, "Rapture Under Attack", page 197:

The post-Trib position (in its primitive form) is the oldest point of view.

Some Christians have argued that the development and understanding of this and other Christian doctrines were not yet complete. I would argue that the development and understanding of such doctrine was in fact complete:

Jude 1:3 *Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*

How can one "contend earnestly for the faith" if it was not made clear? One cannot. One cannot contend for a faith they do not UNDERSTAND. Our entire faith including all its doctrines (not just

"salvation" doctrines) were "once and for delivered to the saints" by God's direct guidance through the Apostles, not only in the form of the New Testament, but through all the sermons they taught, which gave the proper interpretation of the Bible. No doubt that many of the "Early Church Fathers" began to quickly get such clear teachings garbled and confused with their own added commentaries, many of which contradicted each other. Even in spite of this confusion, the post-trib rapture position was the view of the early church.

The Bible does speak of a rapture (literally, being "caught up"), but during most of Church history, it was always believed that Christians would be **ressurrected (or "raptured") after the tribulation, and it would coincide with Jesus Christ's physical return to the earth as described in Revelation 19:11** and the following verses in that passage. The new belief in a pre-tribulational "rapture" has to do with a special resurrection of believers that occurs BEFORE Daniel's "70th Week" (the tribulation) occurs. **When does the "rapture" occur according to the Bible?**

Again, there are a number of passages in the Bible that describe the believer's resurrection, but only two CLEARLY tell us when this resurrection will occur in relation to other predicted events. The first one is **1 Cor. 15:51-52** *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 TRUMPET. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. A logical place to look for where this "last trumpet" is talked about is in the last book of the Bible. We find the sounding of the "last trumpet" in that book in Revelation 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" This verse in the chronology of events is obviously very near the END of the Tribulation. According to Strong's Dictionary, "last" in this verse is the Greek word "eschatos," which means, "**farthest, final (of place or time).**" To assign the last*

trumpet to anything earlier than the last trumpet mentioned in Scripture chronologically in prophecy constitutes a major error.

There is actually a LATER trumpet blown according to end times chronology, but this trumpet is found written in another book, **Matt 24:29-31** *Immediately AFTER the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. THEN the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and THEN all the tribes of the earth will mourn, AND they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. AND He will send His angels **WITH A GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET**, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. The resurrection event mentioned in **1 Cor. 15:51-52** MUST therefore occur right AFTER the end of the Tribulation and AFTER all the world sees him! Even if the **Revelation 11:15** passage somehow signified another resurrection other than the **Matt 24/1st Corinthians 15** resurrection, neither could occur until most of the Tribulation has past time-wise, thus there is still no pre-tribulational "rapture."*

It appears that "pre-tribbers" are forced to interpret the gathering of believers in **Matt 24:29-31** (and **2 Thess. 2:1-4**) as referring to ANOTHER gathering of believers APART from the rapture. If this "gathering" is not the rapture, what purpose does it serve to gather Christians from all parts of both the earth and heaven? Why would God have to re-gather believers that are ALREADY with Him forever (**1 Thess 4:16-17**)? We are only said to be gathered once to Christ. Also, the fact that angels are doing the collecting clearly shows us that these are non-resurrected believers that need supernatural help to be "gathered." They would not need angelic help at all in being gathered if the believers being gathered were already in their supernatural resurrection bodies. On top of that, the picture of a trumpet being used along with the gathering of believers finishes the picture of this passage

clearly being the time of our resurrection, when compared to all the places where resurrection is directly mentioned.

Some Christians believe those part of the "gathering" in **Matt 24:29-31** are only JEWS. Those Jews who believed that Jesus spoke to that day probably believed this. That was because the MYSTERY of the Church (God would save both Jews and GENTILES) was not yet revealed, even though Jesus did hint at this mystery, along with other passages doing the same in the Old Testament. **When the Bible uses the term, "the ELECT," whether it refers to angels or humans, it refers to those in TOTAL that believe and serve God. Keep in mind that the Bible speaks of various RACES OF HIS PEOPLE. God crosses all racial boundaries when He consistently refers to His "ELECT"** There is **NO** reason to believe that the "**elect**" believers referred to in **Matt 24:29-31** are anything but **ALL** believers in Jesus Christ, both **Jew and GENTILE**. Christians who argue that these "elect" are only Jews are not consistent in how they interpret the word "**elect**" in the Bible. They typically will use it to mean **ALL BELIEVERS** everywhere else in the Bible, such as these passages also spoken by Jesus **BEFORE** the "Church Age" started:

Mark 13:20 *"And unless the Lord had shortened {those} days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect whom He chose, He shortened the days."*

Mark 13:22 *for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order, if possible, to lead **the elect** astray.*

Luke 18:6-8

6 *And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge said;*
7 *now shall not God bring about justice for **His elect**, who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?*
8 *"I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"*

The book of Romans, was mainly written to GENTILE believers:

Rom 1:5-7

5 *through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about {the} obedience of faith among **all the Gentiles**, for His name's sake,*

6 *among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;*

7 *to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called {as} saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Yet the book of Romans uses the same exact term, "**elect**" to clearly refer in context to both JEW and GENTILE believers:

Rom 8:32-34

32 *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?*

33 *Who will bring a charge against **God's elect**? God is the one who justifies;*

34 *who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.*

1 Thes. 4:16-17 is usually used to try and prove a "pre-trib rapture" 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 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 thus we shall always be with the Lord. The argument hinges on the assumption that we go from "the clouds" and "the air" into Heaven before the tribulation because Christ does not appear to fully come down to the earth. Now compare this to **Matt. 24:29-31** (covered in the last paragraph). **AFTER the tribulation, Christ, while on the clouds of heaven, will send His angels, without Himself ever touching the ground, to gather all of His believers from all over the earth with the**

sound of a trumpet. Clearly, the chronology of **Matt. 24** teaches us that the tribulation is **over** by the time that He gathers His children in the "rapture." Christ clearly comes to the earth to set up His 1000 year "millennial" reign on earth, and we will be with Him.

There is a Bible passage that would make no sense at all if Christians are "raptured" out before the Tribulation. It is **2nd Thess. 2:1-4** *Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ AND OUR gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for THAT DAY will not come unless the falling away 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.* What made these early Christians so fearful about possibly missing Christ's coming? It was the fear of missing what happens WITH His coming, "**OUR GATHERING TOGETHER TO HIM.**" Paul was **NOT** referring to the gathering of some supposed future believers that miss a **pre-tribulational "rapture,"** but he was clearly referring to the believers living in Paul's day. Paul was comforting believers by telling them that they therefore were not forgotten and left behind by Christ as the rumors were saying at the time of Paul's writing of 2nd Thessalonians, but that they would be gathered **AFTER** some point during or after the reign of the anti-Christ .

Many Christians insist that verses about "the day of the Lord" where He comes "as a thief in the night" refer to a "secret" coming, where He sneaks in and out like a modern-day burglar to snatch out believers without being noticed, and then returns with them (all in resurrected bodies) to heaven. In the ancient world, a "thief in the night" did **not** act like our modern-day burglars. What thieves in ancient times would do was **suddenly** come upon a house, and before the family at the home could properly act, the thief would have subdued the "strong man" of the house, and then begin to plunder the house much like the current "home

invasion" robberies in the USA. These robberies were not some quiet, James Bond in-and-out missions where no one notices. In fact, Jesus tells us in **John 10:10** "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." If the reader is still convinced that Christ will come in "secret," then check out the four following passages in the Bible to see HOW Jesus comes "as a thief in the night: **1 Thess. 5:1-6** "Now, brothers, **about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober."** **2 Pet. 3:10** "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." **Rev. 3:3** "Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you." **Rev 16:15-16** "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame. And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon." In none of the verses or contexts is there indication of a secret and quiet "rapture." In fact, **the analogy's emphasis has to do with its suddenness, its loudness, and its destructiveness.**

Please note chronologically where Christ is said to come "as a thief" in the book of Revelation: **Rev. 16:15-16** ("Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame.") **And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.** This

battle of Armageddon occurs right when Christ returns. Notice that Jesus did not say "I **already came** like a thief" by this point in the book's chronology, which is very near the end of the tribulation. At this point, Jesus is saying that He is still YET TO COME as a thief!

Also, there is no verse in the New Testament that uses the word "thief" as referring in any way to a "secret" gathering or resurrecting of believers. Look up the verses to see for yourself: **Matt. 24:43; Luke 12:33-39; John 10:1-10 and 12:6; 1st Thess. 5:2-4; 1st Pet. 4:15; 2nd Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:10 and 16:15.**

Christians who believe in a "secret" **pre-trib rapture** are forced into believing that trumpets are very quiet instruments. Consider once again a relevant passage on this: **1 Cor. 15:51-52** *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 trumpet, For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* Many Christians use these following verses to try and prove that believers will be taken directly into Heaven after their resurrection: **John 14:1-3** *"Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. "In My Father's **house** are many **dwelling places**; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, {there} you may be also. The word translated "house" (oikia) has also been translated numerous places to mean something referring to family and what the family owned. This is how the word used in family titles, such as "the house of Windsor." Here is a good example of this in the Bible: **Heb. 3:5-6** *Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ {was faithful} as a Son over His (the Father's) house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. Here, we are told that we are literally part of God's "house."**

The question now is WHERE are these dwelling places that we will be in, and when will we enter these places? Maybe it would help if we use the more understandable translation, *In My Father's family are many dwelling places*. This verse is speaking more about the Father's ownership of such dwelling places, not so much on where these dwelling places will be when we actually dwell in them.

Keep in mind that **John 14:1-3** was spoken by Christ BEFORE the time believers were EVER allowed to enter Heaven in any form, physically or in spirit form. Throughout history, believers had to go to **Abraham's Bosom (part of Hades)** until Christ died for our sins, and took "the captives" to "**paradise**" some time after His Own resurrection (**Eph. 4:8-10**). Could this be what **John 14:1-3** is referring to? Considering the time Jesus told us about His preparation for these places, and the fact that believers were not as yet allowed to "dwell" in Heaven, this appears to be a better possible understanding of our Jesus words here.

Since "house" can (and by the context here does mean) family, the location or locations of our "dwelling places" does not have to be limited to just being in heaven. Even if our dwelling places are in heaven now, Jesus could easily bring them down from heaven, especially since these places were probably not meant to be lived in for only seven years. In my opinion, these "dwelling places" Jesus referred to will ultimately be found in the future New Jerusalem, which we won't live in until **after** His 1000 year reign: **Rev 21:1-3** *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer {any} sea. And I saw **the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle (means literally, "dwelling place") of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them...** Rev. 21:16* *And the city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. Rev 21:23-24* *And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon*

to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined **it**, and **its** lamp {is} the Lamb. And the nations shall walk by **its** light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into **it**. **Rev 22:1-5** And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of **its** street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve {kinds of} fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in **it**, and His bond-servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face, and His name {shall be} on their foreheads. And there shall no longer be {any} night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever. I believe that this is the ultimate fulfillment of what Jesus said in **John 14:1-3**.

Still another argument attempted to be made for a "pre-trib rapture" is the picture of the "24 elders" surrounding God's throne BEFORE the start of the tribulation. Here is the entire passage in question:

Rev 4:1-8 After these things I looked, and behold, a door {standing} open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, **like {the sound} of a trumpet speaking with me**, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting {was} like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and {there was} a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. And **around the throne {were} twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones {I saw} twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads**. And from the throne proceed flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And {there were} seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; and before the throne {there was,} as it were, **a sea of glass like crystal**; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. And the

first creature {was} like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature {was} like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, {is} the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come."

First off, the Bible does not say that these "24 elders" are human. Some versions of the Bible translate **Rev 5:9** like this *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;* (King James Version). **In the actual Greek, the word "us" was added to the translation.** Here is the same verse in the more literal New American Standard version *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood {men} from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.* Notice that this translators admitted that "men" (in brackets) was not in the original language. We cannot even begin to build the foundation for the "pre-trib rapture" view here since the Bible does not say whether or not these "24 elders" are human. The words of the song above seem to indicate praise to God about beings *other* than themselves being saved by God, if anything.

Many if not all of the beings around the throne are angelic creatures (Rev 5:11) *And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands."* Second, even if the "24 elders" (or "the sea of glass") were humans, where is the proof that they are in **resurrected** bodies? Why can't the "24 elders" (and maybe the entire "sea of glass") be humans in merely *spirit* form? **The angels around God's throne do not have physical bodies, but they are still there, and are just as "real."** Is this not a classic case of circular reasoning, where the "pre-tribber" assumes that the "24 elders" (and "the sea of glass") are not only humans, but are also

resurrected humans? I will agree with "pre-tribbers" that what we are seeing at this point in **Revelation chapters 4 and 5**, is what is happening behind the scenes in Heaven mere hours or even minutes *before* the tribulation begins, with the opening of the seals on the scroll that only the "Lamb" is worthy to open. This is a major beginning of the "revelation" of Jesus Christ to the earth (as the full title of the book says), and here, we see the fact that it is HE who is behind the changes that will lead to "the end of the world" and the starting of His Kingdom there.

How about the fact that John went up to **heaven** before seeing a preview of the tribulation? Is that really symbolic of the rapture?

Rev 4:1-2 *"After these things I looked, and behold, a door {standing} open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like {the sound} of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." Immediately I was IN THE SPIRIT; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne."*

I took a look at the various passages in the Bible that use the phrase "in the Spirit" (en Pheumati), and they ALL refer a state certain believers are in while still in their physical, but NOT resurrected, bodies. Could John have been allowed to enter heaven with his mortal body? Apparently no, because **mortal "flesh and blood" cannot enter such a place (1 Cor 15:50)**. We cannot face God in His full glory in our mortal bodies and keep living (**Exod 33:20**). It is true that both elect and fallen angels are allowed to have access directly to God's throne room, but they do not have physical bodies. The Apostle Paul did not know whether or not he was in or out of his body when he saw Heaven before his death (**2 Cor 12:3**). Paul certainly knew enough of the Bible to know that even if he was allowed to enter any part of Heaven, that he could NOT in his mortal body, stand before GOD.

Regardless of whether John had a physical body or not in his visit to heaven in **Rev. chapter 4**, John clearly was NOT in his *resurrected*

body at the time of his visit. Also, even though his getting "in the Spirit" was immediate, an actual blowing of a trumpet *did not occur* (as it will in our resurrection), but a **VOICE LIKE the sound OF A TRUMPET SPOKE TO HIM**. As the reader should know, if something is LIKE another thing, it does not follow that they must be equal. The word "like" simply creates an analogy between one or more aspects that are similar between two things. Granted in all fairness, I believe that this passage's **symbology** appears to lend itself somewhat to the "pre-trib rapture" view. Nevertheless, the symbolism still is inconclusive at best here. Keep in mind that we should ALWAYS trust plain Scripture over any supposed symbolism (especially if it is not clear) to confirm or deny doctrinal truth.

Another alleged argument (using only supposed symbolism again) for a "pre-trib rapture," is that the church appears to be missing after **Rev. chapter 3**. Up through **Rev. chapter 3**, we see the often repeated sentence, (as in **Rev 3:13**) '*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*' After **Rev. chapter 3**, and clearly into the tribulation, we never again see the word "church" or "churches" used again, until much later after the tribulation. According to "pre-tribbers," **Rev. 4** marks the end of the "church age," and the re-starting of the "Jews age." In a sense, they are right, in that God is at this time putting a greater focus on Israel, in order to finish up His plans for human history. One cannot prove the "church" is missing on the earth just because it is not mentioned by name in certain places. **If we continue to use this same logic, the "church" will then not return to the earth until AFTER Christ's 1000 year reign on the earth, since they are not again mentioned until Rev. 22:16!** Obviously, we must look upon verses *outside* of the book of Revelation to be certain of when Christians will get resurrected.

Regardless of what symbolism one sees in Scripture, the *clear and literal* portions of the Scriptures always take higher priority. **2nd Thessalonians chapter 2 clearly and literally teach that the Antichrist must be revealed and make his claim to be God **before** there can be**

ANY resurrection. The Antichrist does not exalt himself in such a way until we reach half-way through the seven-year tribulation, otherwise known as the middle of Daniel's "70th week" (Daniel 9:27). Even if somehow there will be multiple "raptures" or resurrections, NONE of them can occur before this point. **The ONLY other places that the Bible clearly talks chronologically about our "rapture" or resurrection is in Matthew 24:29-31, and 1 Cor. 15:51-52 (due to the reference, "at the LAST trumpet").**

One of the main arguments for the rapture occurring before the tribulation starts is based upon these verses: **II Thess 2:6-7** *And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains {will do so} until he is taken out of the way.* Many have argued that it is the Holy Spirit that is restraining the Antichrist from coming to full power, and that when the Holy Spirit takes off His restraint, that He must also leave the earth along with Christians. **There is no passage that says that the Holy Spirit LEAVES the earth when He stops the restraining of the Antichrist.** In fact, there are at least a few passages that indicate that the Holy Spirit will work very powerfully among various believers in Christ during the Antichrist's reign: **Rev. 11:3-12; Rev. 12:11; Rev. 14:1-7.** Also, **God would be breaking His promise in not giving His Holy Spirit to those who become believers during the tribulation: Rom. 5:5; Rom. 14:17; Rom. 15:13 and 16; 1 Cor. 6:19; 1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 6:6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 1:13-14; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 1:5-6; 1 Thess. 4:8; 2 Tim. 1:14; Titus 3:5; Heb. 2:4; Heb. 3:7, Heb. 6:4; Heb. 10:15; 12 Pet. 1:12; 2 Pet. 1:21; Jude 1:20.** Think about it. ALL of these verses would be *meaningless* to followers of Christ during the tribulation if the Holy Spirit was truly taken away from the earth! Obviously, the Holy Spirit will still be here, and will be working powerfully through His children during the tribulation period.

A "pre-tribber" sent the following argument for a pre-trib rapture. The argument focuses on some pre-King James Bible English translations of

the word "apostasia" in **II Thess. 2:3** *Let no one in any way deceive you, for {it will not come} unless **the apostasy** ("apostasia") comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction...* The claim is made that some of these early English translations translated the word "apostasia" to mean "the departing." Somehow, this difference in translation supposedly refers to the rapture. First off, most scholars would not recognize such translations of this Greek word as being more accurate. Secondly, this other translation does not rule out the accepted meaning of "apostasia." Also, the two **only other usages of forms of the word "apostasia"** clearly support the commonly accepted translation. Let's look at the two other passages in the New Testament that uses the Greek work, "apostasia," and see how it is used in those contexts:

2 Tim 4:3-4 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but {wanting} to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will **turn away** (verb form "apostrepsousin") their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.*

Acts 21:20-21 *And when they heard it they {began} glorifying God; and they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles **to forsake** (verb form "apostasian") Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.*

In both cases, we see that "apostasia" is not used in any form of physical departing, but a turning away from God's truth and from obedience to Him.

Some "pre-tribbers" have argued that a post-trib rapture cannot qualify for being the "blessed hope," since Christians would not be spared from having to go through the tribulation. Pre-tribbers forget that the "blessed hope" is for **ALL** true believers in God throughout **ALL** of our roughly

6000 years of human history, not just the ones who are alive for a rapture to save one generation from some suffering. Let's look at the verse in question:

Titus 2:13 *looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;*

When will Jesus appear in glory? Only at the end of the tribulation. Even pre-tribbers quickly agree with this. Also, if one can justify separating "the blessed hope" from being part of "the appearing" of Jesus, then those who do *not* believe in the divinity of Jesus would be justified to separate "our great God and Savior" into two people, the Father ("our great God), and Jesus ("and Savior, Christ Jesus"), just as many cults do in their arguments against the deity of Jesus. Let us not be inconsistent with our Biblical exegesis, especially when we are dealing with the same sentence structures in the very same verse. **The appearing of Jesus in glory is "the blessed hope," just as much as Jesus is "our great God and Savior."**

Some say that Christians cannot be here during the Tribulation because God will be pouring His "wrath" upon the earth at that time, and we are promised that we will not be exposed to the "wrath of God." First off, God in the past had no problem raining His wrath down on unbelievers with believers right in their midst. If you doubt this, read about the ten plagues God put onto the Egyptians according to the book of Exodus. Also, **how about the Christians that are said to be here during the Tribulation? Obviously, God will protect tribulation saints from His "wrath."** This does not mean that God will save us from **man's or Satan's "wrath."**

Also, how about all the millions of Christians today and for almost two-thousand years who have suffered and been put to death for their beliefs? The Bible clearly promises us that "we WILL have tribulation" in this life: (John 16:33 33) "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world YOU WILL HAVE TRIBULATION; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Also, **1st Thess. 3:1-4** *"Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer TRIBULATION, just as it happened, and you know."*

Comparisons of how the word "wrath" is used in *all* the other places in the Bible is important. Take a look at a few examples:

(Rom 1:18-19) *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them."*

The aorist tense for "revealed" is used in **verse 18**. Thus, the more literal translation would be, *"For the wrath of God keeps being revealed."* In the Greek, this "wrath" certainly cannot be limited to only the future tribulation. It is a constantly "now" event. It is "wrath" being poured out upon unbelievers while Christians are still living among them, including the present moment as you are reading this.

What is the specific "wrath" in this passage? Keep reading a bit further in the same passage:

Rom 1:24- *"Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them."* This is a general explanation of how "God's wrath" is being poured out RIGHT NOW on unbelievers. Then Paul gives specific examples of what lusts he gave them over to in His wrath (notice all the PAST TENSE verbs):

Rom 1:26-31 *"For this reason God gave them over to degrading*

*passions; for their women **exchanged** the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men **abandoned** the natural function of the woman and **burned** in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they **did not** see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God **gave** them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being **filled** with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; {they are} gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;"*

What will God's **ultimate** "wrath" consist of? I will try and provide a few examples of the most common usages of the word "wrath" in the New Testament:

Luke 3:7 *"He therefore {began} saying to the multitudes who were going out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from **the wrath to come**?" John the Baptist was clearly not talking about the Tribulation, since his audience would not be around for it, unless they could live to be about 2000 years old or more.*

John 3:36 *"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son **shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.**" Jesus is clearly not talking about the Tribulation either here also, since this audience has been dead for many centuries. What "life" do those who have "the wrath of God" abiding on them miss out on?*

Rom 2:5-8 *"But because of your stubbornness and **unrepentant** heart you are **storing up wrath** for yourself **in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God**, who will render to every man according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek*

*for glory and honor and **immortality, eternal life**; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, **wrath and indignation.**"*

Paul was talking to people of his day about the wrath being stored up for them. These people, along with many generations of unbelievers are included in this, and they are clearly not going to be around for the Tribulation. Notice that continual unrepentance constantly creates more of a build-up of God's "wrath." **Also notice here that the opposite of "wrath and indignation" is immortality, eternal life,"** not merely some escape from the Tribulation.

Rom 5:9- *"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath {of God} through Him."* **Who was Paul speaking to? Not to just us today. Are you getting the idea? Every time Christians are said to be saved from the "wrath of God," it has to do with us being saved from the final and eternal judgment, a judgment which is the end result of rejecting the blood of Christ for our sins.**

Let's look at a popular verse that some use in order to try and equate "wrath" with the Tribulation:

1Thes 5:9-10 *"For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him."*

The opposite of wrath here again is eternal life, our salvation. Jesus died for us and provided salvation not from the Tribulation, but from the "wrath" of eternal damnation in the lake of fire. He again here is speaking to those of His day when on earth during His first coming. Also, if this "wrath" referred specifically to the Tribulation as a whole, then God is a *liar*, since He would be allowing believers to be on earth during at least some part of the Tribulation, by God allowing them to be saved *after* a hypothetical pre-trib rapture. Clearly, God's promise

in **1st Thes 5:9-10** applies to ALL believers, in or out of the Tribulation.

There is an interesting Old Testament passage that might seem to make it appear that no believers could possibly be on earth when God's wrath is poured down upon the earth during the tribulation:

Zeph 1:15-18

"A day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of trumpet and battle cry, against the fortified cities and the high corner towers. And I will bring distress on men, so that they will walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the LORD; and their blood will be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them On the day of the LORD'S wrath; and all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy, for He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of ALL the inhabitants of the earth."

The passage by itself sounds as if no believers would be on earth during this "complete end" "of all the inhabitants of the earth," thus necessitating a rapture before this wrath begins. This last Bible passage is a great example why it is important to read all Bible passages in context in order for it to not be misunderstood. Let's look at the very next verses following the passage in question:

Zeph 2:1-3 *"Gather yourselves together, yes, gather, O nation without shame, Before the decree takes effect the day passes like the chaff before the burning anger of the LORD comes upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger comes upon you. Seek the LORD, all you humble of the earth who have carried out His ordinances; seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden in the day of the LORD'S anger."*

In the midst of such amazing wrath, God gives Israel, and apparently all of the earth, one last chance to seek God before He pours out His

climatic Tribulational wrath. According to Strong's Dictionary, the word "hidden" is the Hebrew word "cathar" (saw-thar'); a primitive root; to hide (by covering), literally or figuratively: and in the KJV, has been translated as be absent, keep close, conceal, hide (self), (keep) secret, X surely. This passage, coupled with the next one I will quote, shows that some will *not* be destroyed, but will be "gathered in" and "hidden" from such wrath:

Zeph 3:18-20 *"I will **gather** those who grieve about the appointed feasts they came from you, {O Zion;} {the} reproach {of exile} is a burden on them. "Behold, I am going to deal at that time with all your oppressors, I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will turn their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. "At that time **I will bring you in, even at the time when I gather you together**; indeed, I will give you renown and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," says the LORD.*

Could this passage be talking about the rapture? I think that it most likely includes it.

Regarding the use of the word "**wrath**" in Scripture, looking at the context of all the verses about CHRISTIANS being spared from God's "wrath," they ALL are talking about being spared from the FINAL wrath of ULTIMATE and ETERNAL judgment **in the Lake of Fire**. Let's move on to some of the other arguments that have been used to try and support a "pre-trib" rapture.

The following verse is also used as supposed proof for a pre-trib rapture: **Matt 24:38-39** *"For as in those days which were before the flood **they** were eating and drinking, **they** were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and **they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away**; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be."*

First off, notice who is being taken away. UNBELIEVERS are being taken away. That alone destroys the notion that this passage teaches a pre-tribulation rapture.

Even though there will be great judgment upon the earth throughout the tribulation, where at least a third of mankind will be destroyed, the majority of the world does not get more fully judged *until* Christ returns in **Revelation chapter 19**. **In the midst of God's wrath, God still allows for chances for repentance all the way up to at least this point in the tribulation: Rev 16:10-11** *"And the fifth {angel} poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds. In comparison, God was past ANY mercy at the start of Noah's flood.* There was no more room for repentance of sin at that point, since it was too late to enter the Ark once the doors were sealed shut. Clearly, **God indicates that there is still room for repentance as late as Rev 16:11!** The judgment of God is not fully given until the time when **ALL** unbelievers face the Son of Man at His second coming when "every eye will see Him" (**Rev 1:7**). If you think about it, at the moment an unbeliever dies, God removes His mercy from the person, and begins to pour His "wrath" on Him, wrath that will continue for eternity. Read the article "The courtroom and Judgement of God."

One alleged "problem" some pre-tribbers say there is with the post-trib rapture view, is that if the rapture occurs after the Tribulation, then the only people left to populate the earth during the 1000 year reign of Christ would be unbelievers. Well guess what, they are right! "Pre-tribbers" for some reason wrongly believe that many UNBELIEVERS will survive the Tribulation, and thus, entire Christ's Millennial Kingdom. Here is one clear Old Testament teaching that contradicts their belief: **Zech. 14:16-17** *Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the*

Feast of Booths. And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. There will be survivors that are unbelievers that will continue to populate the earth. However, many of their OFFSPRING will later become believers. Also, Jesus Christ will not give overt religious freedom during His "rod of iron" rule, unless they are willing to tolerate drought conditions in their own countries.

If the "churches" are completely taken out before the tribulation, then why does Jesus say this: Rev. 22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things FOR the CHURCHES. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star." "These things" talked about in the book of Revelation is primarily about the Tribulation. Quite a few statements in this book were specifically written for those believers who would go through the Tribulation, to encourage them and give them some guidance and warnings: Rev. 4:11; 7:14-17; 8:3-4; 12:17; 13:7; 13:10; 14:12; 15:2; 17:6; 18:4; 18:20; and 18:24. These verses, among others, are important for guidance on what to do for survival, such as leaving "Babylon" before we chronologically reach **Rev. chapter 18**. Currently, I believe the description of this city is about Jerusalem. I save the argument for that elsewhere. It appears very logical to conclude that Tribulation saints therefore are considered part of the "churches."

Let me now address the supposed typological "proofs" (other symbolisms) of a pre-tribulational "rapture" that I am aware of. Remember, if a typology contradicts *clear* Bible verses, then the assumed typology is incorrect. That is because alleged symbolism is always inferior to plain and clear Scripture on any particular matter. Nevertheless, I will still try to address these symbolisms for the sake of the reader.

One of the supposed pre-trib "rapture" typologies is Noah. He was saved from the world-wide flood. Noah floated above the floodwaters which even covered the highest mountains, as if they were in the

"air." This supposedly correlates symbolically to where believers will meet Jesus in the "air" in **1 Thess. 4**. Enoch was also *taken away* (supposedly a pre-trib "rapture" type also) to Heaven before this flood. What makes this typology attractive to "pre-tribbers" is because Jesus Himself sets up some kind of typology between Noah and End Times events. The problem with this alleged typology is that Noah does not actually go *into* the "air," Since the ark is always partially UNDERWATER (as all ships are). Also, if there is a valid typology here at all, **why can't it symbolically stand for the time when God protects certain Jews in the wilderness for 3.5 years (Rev. 12), when the antichrist is said to try to "flood" them with water?** Also, Noah was still on the earth in the very midst of what was doing the destruction (water), yet he was surrounded by God's protection in the form of the ark. One could just as easily argue that this typology actually argues for a *post*-trib rapture!

Another analogy that some say teach a pre-trib rapture has to do with Noah being in the ark a whole week (seven days) before the flood water started to come. The picture is of Noah, his family, and all the animals, *supposedly* all waiting in the ark for seven days all safe and secure from the judgments. These seven days are thought by some to symbolize the seven year Tribulation, and that this supposedly teaches that Christians will be raptured before it. Let us take a closer look at the passage in question:

Gen. 7:1-17 **1** *Then the LORD said to Noah, "Enter the ark, you and all your household; for you {alone} I have seen {to be} righteous before Me in this time. **2** "You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female; **3** also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth. **4** "For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made." **5** And Noah did according to all that the LORD had commanded him. **6** Now Noah was six hundred years old when the flood*

*of water came upon the earth. **7** Then Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him entered the ark because of the water of the flood. **8** Of clean animals and animals that are not clean and birds and everything that creeps on the ground, **9** there went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. **10** And it came about after the seven days, that the water of the flood came upon the earth.*

At this point, the passage seems to sound as if Noah, his family, and all of the animals quickly got into the ark, and then they all just waited an entire week for the floods to start. The analogy already breaks down with any supposed pre-trib rapture, because even if the seven days they waited in the ark can represent 7 YEARS symbolically, they all occur completely BEFORE any judgment. Now, if the actually FLOOD lasted seven days, that would better fit "pre-tribber's" beliefs, but the flood lasted 40 days and nights.

Read the next verses right after the last quoted passage, and notice a backtrack chronologically to cover more detail of what actually happened. This is not unlike how Genesis chapter two chronologically backtracks some to cover more details related to Genesis chapter one:

11 *In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. **12** And the rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. **13** On the very same day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark, **14** they and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, all sorts of birds. **15** So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life. **16** And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the LORD closed {it} behind him. **17***

Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days; and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth.

Notice that **THE FLOOD BEGAN ON THE VERY SAME DAY** that everyone, **INCLUDING ANIMALS**, were finally on the ark! The animals that migrated up near to Noah and the ark were **STILL ENTERING** the ark all the way up through the very day of the start of the flood! It obviously took at least a week for this herding onto the ark to complete. Only God knows how long God caused these animals to migrate **BEFORE** this time to get to the vicinity of the ark. Also notice that God did not close the door to the ark **UNTIL** the day of the flood was reached. They were not all snug and secure until arrival of the very day of destruction.

Some consider the book of Ruth as having a pre-trib "rapture" typology as well. Ruth, the gentile bride of Boaz who was her "kinsman redeemer," was born in Bethlehem (like Jesus). Ruth laid at his feet on the threshing floor during harvest time. Boaz "saves" Ruth from being single and redeems her. The threshing floor is supposedly symbolic for the Tribulation. An obvious problem with this typology is that **Ruth is the one who comes to Boaz, not the other way around**. Also, **Ruth was not saved from being on the threshing floor, which would be the typological equivalent to God's wrath, being consistent with "pre-tribbers" logic**.

The following verse has also been used to try and prove that there is a pre-trib rapture: **Rev. 13:6** *And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, {that is} those who dwell in heaven*. First off, angels also dwell in heaven. Disembodied human souls of believers now dwell there also. This is no verse proof that anyone is resurrected at that point.

I also heard this verse used to try and teach a pre-trib rapture : **Luke 21:36** *"But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."* The only requirement to be "raptured"

was to be a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ work on the cross for our sin. Do we need to have our OWN strength to be "raptured?" NO. One would have to pervert core Bible doctrine in order to force a pre-trib rapture into this verse, therefore. This passage obviously is talking about **ENDURE** (not away from) the things that will happen to the earth.

Many believe that the pictures of Noah entering the ark and of Lot leaving Sodom are symbolic for a pre-trib "rapture" in the following passage. Let's see if this is true: **Luke 17:24-37** *"For just as the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. **But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, let not the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house go down to take them away; and likewise let not the one who is in the field turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it, and whoever loses {his life} shall preserve it. I tell you, on that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken, and the other will be left. There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left. [Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.] And answering they said to Him, Where, Lord? And He said to them, Where the body {is}, there also will the vultures be gathered."*** Note again that the flood came and destroyed them all THE SAME DAY Noah entered the ark according to this passage also, God completely destroyed Sodom **the very same day** as soon as they were a safe

distance away (**Gen. 19:22-24**). Please also notice the urgent need to be prepared to leave so as to escape the coming "day." We will not even have time to pick up supplies or even look back before final judgment comes! Take a careful look at ALL that occurs on this specific day. It is referring to the day Jesus is REVEALED to the world, and to the destruction He causes as He and His armies from Heaven cause in Revelation chapter 19 and elsewhere.

Here is something the "pre-tribbers" consistently miss in light of their rapture belief. Jesus is not **revealed** until He returns at **the very end** of the tribulation. Christians will be "revealed in glory" at the **very same time** that Jesus is revealed to the world (**Col. 3:4**). The following verses should make it very clear exactly what happens when Christ is "revealed," thus, telling us *when* He will be "revealed:" **II Thess. 1:6-10**
For after all it is {only} just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and {to give} relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed for our testimony to you was believed. Christ's "revealing" is when He comes out of heaven and brings final judgment at the very end of the tribulation (**Rev. 19:11-16**). Notice what happens to the bodies that are not taken according to the **Luke 17:37** passage: vultures are gathered around them. The believer's resurrection will be the same day Christ comes back to reclaim the world. The vultures are clearly the same birds referred to in **Rev. 19:17-18** that will feast upon those who try to stand against Jesus the day He returns.

I am reluctantly aware of the implications of what a "pre-tribulational rapture" means. It means that **Christians will go through THE Tribulation, and many will suffer, be imprisoned, and even put**

to death. I wish I was wrong about my views on a post-tribulation rapture, but I cannot ignore the clear teachings of when we are resurrected, and it is not until AFTER the antichrist reigns when Christ makes His physical return to the earth. It appears that Christ sees the need for all Christians to get our "robes cleaned" during this coming Tribulation. The spiritual state of the end-time Church was predicted to be in very bad shape, and that "the love (AGAPE) of many will grow cold" towards the very end of the age (**Matt. 24:12**). Many Christians are predicted to be more interested in getting their "ears tickled" (be entertained) than anything else in the end times.

I know of very few pastors today who do not completely cater to the fleshly desires of their congregations. The sixth "church" of the book of Revelation is told the following (**Rev 3:10**): *"Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."* The seventh church (seven is the number of completeness) is NOT given any such promise, but only stern words that I believe apply to today's generation of believers (**Rev 3:15-22**): *"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*

Jesus is not talking to unbelievers here, as some like to think. He is talking to believers! Jesus is not a shepherd over an UNSAVED church! The "bride" of Christ is not ready for "marriage" until Rev. chapter 19 (she has not cleaned her "linens" yet), the reproving and disciplining by God of Christians will not end until Christ returns in full glory. God is going to purge and refine the church to perfection by the time He conquers the Antichrist in Rev. chapter 19. And He does that through the refining fires of the Tribulation! I doubt that God would ignore the currently pathetic state of today's church, and just "rapture" them out at this point. I doubt Jesus would be desirous of how His "bride" spiritually looks and acts down here right now. I am not surprised why Jesus wants to puke because of us!

Here is another argument for a post-tribulational "Rapture." Ironically, this is very related to dispensational thinking, in that the JEWS play a significant role in not only causing Jesus to return to the earth, but also the salvation of GENTILES, and RESURRECTION!

Most Christians gloss over the last thing Jesus PUBLICLY said to the Jews before He was killed: Matthew 23:39 "For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, ' BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'" This is a direct quote of Psalms 118:26, which was clearly understood by the Jews to be talking about the Jews MESSIAH. It was so clear to the Jews this was so, because on the day Jesus presented Himself as the Messiah, riding on into Jerusalem on a donkey, the crowds who were Jews quoted this passage: Matthew 21:9 The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!"

However, the LEADERSHIP of the Jews did not accept Jesus as the Messiah, and even told Jesus to tell the crowds to quit saying what they were saying.

So, we are clearly told that Jesus would NOT be seen by them again until they quote that passage again to Him. The Old Testament appears to show the time in the future when the Jews, INCLUDING THEIR LEADERS, at the END of the Great Tribulation, will repent of their rejection of the Messiah (whom THEY had "pierced"): **Zechariah 12:9-15** **9**"And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. **10**"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that **they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. **11****"In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. **12**"The land will mourn, every family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves; **13** the family of the house of Levi by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself and their wives by themselves; **14** all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves. **Zechariah 15** continues with talking about the immediate changes of attitude and behavior of the Jews. **Zechariah 15:8-9** makes it clear that God will lead only one-third of the Jews to salvation, and refine them through fire: **8**"It will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD, "That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; But the third will be left in it. **9**"And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

Even Christians who hold to a pre-tribulational rapture believe that this "fire" that the Jews will go through is the Great Tribulation, and that **this repentance occurs at the END of it.**

Zechariah chapter 14 continues with the theme started in **Zechariah chapter 12**, in how God will destroy all nations that come against

Jerusalem, and that He will PERSONALLY fight against them. Please note, that it is JESUS, who is supposed to come back the same way He left, ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES: Zech 14:2-4 **2** For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women **ravished** (raped) and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. **3** Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. **4** In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

It is clear from the rest of this chapter that this is the second coming of Jesus Christ. But what does all this have to do with the Jews acceptance of Jesus as their Messiah, and OUR RESURRECTION? Let's go and read **Romans chapter 11**. Please read for yourself to see that Paul has been talking specifically about the nation and people of ISRAEL as the main subject since **Romans 9:1** and continues to do so through all of **chapters 10 and 11**. Now, let's focus on this key part, found in **Romans 11:11-12, 15**

11 I say then, they [the Jews] did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their [the Jew's] transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. **12** Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! **15** For if their [Jews] rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be BUT LIFE FROM THE DEAD?

Some Christians seem to consider the differences between believers beliefs regarding the timing of the "rapture" is minor. I know that a lot of believers simply say that if the "rapture" does not happen before the tribulation starts, that they would just deal with the unexpected and unlikely situation then. In fact, I am concerned that the "falling away"

of Christians predicted in **2nd Thess. 2:3** could be primarily caused by this very disappointment! Here is the verse once again: *Let no one in any way deceive you, for {it will not come} unless the apostasy (lit. "falling away") comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction...* Satan is a big opportunist, so he will certainly try and take advantage of believers who drift away from God in such a way. They will be ripe for being fooled by the supernaturally amazing deceptions and power of the Antichrist. Even if they don't fall for the lies of the Antichrist, they will be too wrapped up in depression, denial, anger, and pity parties to make much of a good impact for their Jesus, thus giving the forces of darkness plenty of room to maneuver around them. Maybe this is why it is perfect timing for God to switch to ministering to the world through the 144,000 (the Jews)

There are Christians that have distorted characteristics of God to ease their mind and perception of what he really is. They say that they cannot accept the idea of Christians going through the tribulation because that clashes with their belief that God is loving, and that belief trumps whatever else God's word actually says. But we must not try to make God conform to our own imagination, we need to see what His word instructs us. God's word teaches that suffering for Christ is an honor, a privilege, and something that we should not step back from.

Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Rom 8:36-39

In the pre-trib mind, Christians going through the tribulation contradicts God's love. This kind of idolatry is not new. In fact the Apostle Paul

warned us about it in the context of the end of the age. He said we need to learn from the examples in the Old Testament.

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play.” Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. 1 Cor 10:1-12

the pre-tribulation teachers have created a new god that would not allow Christians to suffer for His glory, and to ignore the warnings that are specifically given to believers at the end of the age.