

A CASE FOR A PRETRIBULATION RAPTURE



**BEFORE,
DURING,
OR
AFTER**

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WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE RAPTURE?

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:17

Although the word rapture is not even in the Bible, if you've been a Christian for very long, you most likely are familiar with the concept. The word *rapture* is a modern term meaning *to be caught up*. God gives us portraits of a rapture throughout scripture. In the Old Testament, Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind. In the New Testament, Paul was caught up to the third Heaven.

God is going to take His Church out of this world by way of a rapture. Every child of God has been promised Jesus will “. . . *descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God*” (1 Thessalonians 4:16)! The dead in Christ will rise first, then those that are alive will “. . . *be caught up together. . .*” to meet Jesus in the air. If you're washed in the blood of Christ, this promise is yours. It is the believer's blessed hope (Titus 2:13)! We are instructed to “. . . *comfort one another with these words*” (1 Thessalonians 4:17,18).

Most Christians agree on the Rapture of the Church. So, the question is not *if*, but *when* will the Rapture take place? All the debate centers around a horrifying event that will come upon the earth known as the Tribulation. Will the Church have to endure the events of the Tribulation? Will the Saints of God be raptured out before, during, or after the Tribulation: pre-Tribulation, mid-Tribulation, or post-Tribulation?

What do you believe?

It's not a matter of man's opinion or belief. It doesn't matter what you've been taught on the subject before. It doesn't matter what some great evangelist or theologian thinks.

The question that should be on your mind is: What does the Bible say about the Rapture? Is God's Word even clear on when the Rapture will take place?

Contrary to all the debate, when you prayerfully study it out and allow the Holy Spirit to guide you, I believe God's Word speaks loud and clear about when the Rapture will take place.

In this booklet, I don't want to persuade you with my opinion, or convince you with a cunning argument. I want to simply share God's Word and present scripture that undeniably supports a case for a pre-Tribulation rapture. I have compiled seven reasons, indisputable evidence from scripture, that tells me the Church will be raptured just prior to the Tribulation. As you go through these pages, pray God will allow His Holy Spirit to lead you. The Spirit will bear witness.

¹⁶For 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:

¹⁷Then 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.

¹⁸Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

Some might argue:

Why even worry about when it's going to take place? Isn't it enough to just know the Rapture will happen? It's not going to affect my walk with Christ anyway.

Or will it?

Consider the following verses:

⁴⁵ But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

⁴⁶ The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

Luke 12:45-46

¹ Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

³ And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

1 John 3:1-3

THINK ABOUT IT



Take a moment and think about what you believe about the Rapture? When do you think the Rapture will take place? Even if you're indifferent, or feel like it has no bearing on your walk with the Lord, write your thoughts.

Who or what influenced your view about the Rapture? Why do you believe what you believe?

Do you have any scriptures to support your view?

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Matthew 24:42

The first fact that I would like to point out in Scripture that supports a pre-Tribulation rapture is the command *to watch*. We are told to watch for we don't know when Christ will return. Scripture declares He will come unannounced, when the world is unaware, like a thief in the night. Don't be found sleeping! Watch! The Rapture is imminent. How does this support a pre-Tribulation rapture? The answer can be found in Daniel 9:20-27 where all the events of the Tribulation are clearly spelled out. (An entirely different study on its own but summarized below.)

Tribulation Begins:	The antichrist comes on the scene and makes a peace treaty with Israel
Mid-Tribulation:	3 1/2 years after the start of the Tribulation, the antichrist breaks the treaty with Israel, declares himself to be god, and desecrates the Temple.
Tribulation Ends:	7 years after the peace treaty

Suppose the Rapture will not occur before the Tribulation begins. If this is the case, then there's no reason to watch. We won't be caught off guard because all we will have to do is wait for the antichrist to show up and sign a peace treaty with Israel. If we believe in a mid-Tribulation rapture, then wait three-and-a-half years to go by before preparing to leave this world. Suppose the Rapture will occur post-Tribulation, then wait seven years after the peace treaty. Why would Jesus tell us to watch and don't be caught off guard when we could just keep our eyes on the

political scene? We could just wait for the events told in Daniel to unfold.

Because we are commanded to watch, that means the Rapture could happen at any moment. Therefore, the only logical scenario is a pre-Tribulation rapture. If you ever believe you can pin point exactly when Christ is going to return then you will not live the life that God has called you to live. The fact that I know that Christ could come any minute breeds caution in the way I live.

WATCH! DON'T BE CAUGHT OFF GUARD!	
Matthew 24:42	Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.
Matthew 25:13	Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.
Mark 13:33-37	Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is . . . ³⁵ Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh . . . ³⁶ Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. ³⁷ And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.
Luke 21:36	Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.
1 Peter 4:7	But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.
Revelation 3:3	Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

⁶ And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

⁷ For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

⁸ And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

2 Thessalonians 2:6-8

There is a great fascination with end time prophecy. Many leaders in the Christian arena have been caught up in date setting and predicting when and how the events described in Revelation will play out. Which nations will form a one-world unified government? Who will be the head of this alliance? Is the antichrist among today's politicians?

This leads to my second point. Before the Tribulation can even begin, the antichrist must come on the scene. However, scripture tells us the antichrist cannot come on the scene until something is removed from this earth. The Bible tells us in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8 the reason why the antichrist hasn't intervened so far.

... Ye know what *withholdeth* (verse 6)

Something is withholding, or holding back the revealing of the antichrist.

For the mystery of *iniquity* doth already work: ... (verse 7)

This word *iniquity* means a condition of contempt or violation of the law, or simply, lawlessness. Although the spirit of the antichrist is already at work, his fury hasn't been fully unleashed yet.

... only he who now *letteth* will let, until he be taken out of the way (verse 7)

This word *letteth* is an interesting verb meaning *to hold back, to detain, to restrain or hinder the progress of*. Something is standing in the way of the antichrist. What is hindering the progress of the spirit of the antichrist? What has to be removed before the antichrist can come on the scene?

It seems like evil is already rampant on the earth. How can it get any worse? Yes, we live in a fallen world, and we are confronted with evil in some way, shape, or form every day of our lives. It's one of the challenges a Christian faces: “. . . *to keep himself unspotted from the world*” (*James 2:27*).

However, during the Tribulation, a state of wickedness and lawlessness will abound to a degree this earth has never known before. If you feel that evil is almost unbearable now, then just think how horrible it will be during the Tribulation when wickedness and lawlessness will be unrestrained. What has to be taken out of the way before this can occur? What is keeping wickedness somewhat in check?

There are three things that hinder or control lawlessness in the world today: human governments, the Holy Spirit, and the Church. The question is which one must be removed to set the stage for the antichrist?

Let's examine each one:

Human Governments

Governments make and enforce laws that restrain evil and keep order. Ironically, the secular world has rejected God, yet all societal laws and moral codes are rooted in God's Law originally given through Moses. Without laws chaos would result. Are human governments withholding the antichrist? Absolutely not! The antichrist will be the head of, and rule through a human government, an alliance of nations.

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Ghost is the Comforter for the believer, but He also holds back lawlessness. He does “. . . *reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement*” (John 16:8). The Holy Ghost convicts hearts and restrains the unleashing of evil.

Every believer has been promised the Comforter “. . . *That He may abide with you for ever*” (John 14:16). Therefore, the Holy Spirit can not be removed as long as the Church is here on the earth.

The Church

The Church, the collective body of Christ, sets the example, and has a great measure of influence in the world.

*Ye are the light of the world.
A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.
Matthew 5:14*

The order and structure God set forth for the Church some 2000 years ago has been integrated into the secular world whether they are willing to admit it or not. Corporations, social and political agencies, governmental institutions, the infrastructure of society is founded on Biblical principles laid out for the Church.

*And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.
1 Corinthians 12:28*

Whether it's on an individual basis or on the masses, there's no denying that the presence of the Church profoundly influences society. Although it may not seem like it, the Church sets the stage for behavior, and brings order to an otherwise chaotic world.

Every facet of life is to be influenced by the Church. We are to be the example.

⁴For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: ⁵So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. ⁶Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us . . .

Romans 12:4-6

Now back to our original question: What must be removed before the antichrist can come on the scene?

If human government is not standing in the way, and the Holy Spirit won't leave the world without the Church, then the only logical conclusion about the "*what withholdeth*" is the Church. The Church must be taken out of the way before the antichrist can be revealed. If you're a child of God, you won't even be here when the antichrist is revealed.

That tells me the focus of my life shouldn't be on discovering who this antichrist will be, or what nations are going to form this end time government. I should be focused on watching and waiting for Jesus Christ to appear.

The world doesn't comprehend this! In a world obsessed with pleasures and self-interests, how could they understand? They might call you an ignorant fool, or tell you that you're wasting your life. However, a great privilege has been bestowed upon everyone that makes Christ their Lord:

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. ²Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

1 John 3:1-2

We've been called the sons and daughters of God. Wow! What a thought! Every privilege that belongs to Jesus has been granted to each and every Christian. But there is a contingency associated with these promises found in the next verse:

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

1 John 3:3

If you have this hope in Christ, you will seek to purify yourself. The pure in heart will see Jesus! If you are going to make the Rapture, your goal can't be conforming to this world. You must have a desire to be different, to be pure, to be like Christ no matter what the cost. In fact, the ultimate plan or goal of God for your life is Christlikeness. When we see Jesus Christ, we shall become like Him!

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Romans 8:29

That's all God has ever wanted for mankind. God doesn't want religion! He wants to have a people that reflect the image of His Son, Jesus. It's all about being like Christ! There is no other will of God for your life. There's no other end time prophecy or plan you need to be worried about. The single most important end-time pursuit you need to worry about is: Does Heaven see Jesus in me? That is the pre-requisite for a Church that's going up in the Rapture.

What about those that have never heard the gospel?

I thought the gospel had to be preached to all the world "*. . . for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come*" (Matthew 24:14).

The Bible doesn't say that every human on the planet will be preached to, but that the gospel will reach all nations. That has already happened.

This may sound unfair to those who have never heard the gospel, but Romans 1:20 tells us God made mankind with a conscience that can reason and see clearly that there's a creator "*. . . so that they are without excuse.*" God speaks even to the heathen and reveals to him there is a creator. Even the most ungodly have the opportunity to open their heart; then God will reveal Himself. If these that have never seen a Bible much less read one, for these who have never heard the gospel, who have never attended a worship service, if they are without excuse, how much more are we?

But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Luke 12:48

To whom much is given, much is required. We have absolutely no excuse for missing the Rapture! Some may tell you that's just a scare tactic. Yet the reality is if you're not living for Christ when the trumpet sounds, you're not going up in the Rapture. You may be tempted to let your guard down and live like the world. However, the pleasures of sin are only for a season. But for everyone that looks for Christ and heeds the warning of an imminent rapture, they will meet the Lord in the air and will remain in His presence experiencing joy and pleasures forevermore.

Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Psalm 16:11

That's not a scare tactic, but a hope in a promise given to every child of God.

THINK ABOUT IT



Are you intrigued by prophecy and the study of end time events? The book of Revelation has been a hot topic in both religious and secular circles. So much drama has been written and produced by the entertainment industry about the end of the world that it's hard to distinguish between what's biblical and what's fiction.

The most important fact that you need to know is:

. . . Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him **shall he appear** the second time without sin unto salvation.
Hebrews 9:28

Jesus is coming for those that are looking for Him. That should be the focus of every Christian. Are you looking for Jesus? Are you longing for the day you will see Him face to face? If not, what has your attention? What consumes your thoughts?

Is there anything about your life right now, your habits, your lifestyle, your choices . . . Is there anything you would change if you knew Jesus was coming today? Write your thoughts.

Although we've only covered two of the seven points, take a moment and think about what you wrote on Page 6. Has your view on the Rapture changed at all?

Do you see how your view on the Rapture affects your walk with Christ?

Do you fear you'll not be ready? God's perfect love casts out all fear. He has made a way to insure you make the Rapture. God will keep you if you've dedicated your life to Him. There is nothing to fear if Jesus is the love of your life. Is Jesus your everything? Are you walking with Him daily? Do you live to please Him?

If you aren't sure you're ready to meet Jesus, whether it's by way of the Rapture, or the grave, you can know with great assurance that you are saved. God's mercies are new every morning. It doesn't matter if it's the first time, or the umpteenth time, call upon the name of Jesus Christ. Ask Him to forgive you of all your sins. Dedicate your life to Him right now. Turn to page 30 and follow the steps of FAITH.

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

Revelation 1:19

The book of Revelation is captivating to say the least. It's easy to get caught up in the mystery: deciphering the seals, the beasts, the whore of Babylon, the antichrist, and so on. However, the book of Revelation is not that complicated. Furthermore, all the horror and destruction that will come upon the earth primarily takes place after the Church has moved to Heaven.

Let me explain further. The entire book of Revelation can be divided into three parts which are outlined in Revelation 1:19. The key to this outline can be found in Revelation 3:22, the last place the Church is mentioned on earth.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION		
PART 1 Chapter 1	Things which thou hast seen	About John's experiences from his gospel account and epistles all the way to this Revelation.
PART 2 Chapters 2-3	Things which are	Deals with the current condition of the seven churches.
PART 3 Chapters 4-22	Things which shall be hereafter	Begins with the period of tribulation and extends to the eternal City of God.
Revelation 3:22	Last place the church is depicted on the earth.	He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

In Revelation 1, John is in the Spirit and has a special encounter with Jesus Christ. John describes what he hears: *a great voice, as a trumpet*. John turns and sees in the midst of seven golden candlesticks *one like unto the Son of man*.

Jesus instructs John to write **the things which thou hast seen**. John attempts to describe Jesus *clothed with a garment down to the foot . . . His head and his hairs were white like wool . . . His eyes were as a flame of fire. . . John had intimate fellowship on this earth with Jesus as one of the disciples, but now he was witnessing Jesus Christ fully glorified. His feet like fine brass . . . and His voice as the sound of many waters . . . Out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword . . . His countenance as the sun shineth*. The encounter is so overwhelming that John *fell at His feet as dead*.

Next, John records **the things which are**. In Revelation 2 and 3, John writes seven letters which address the current condition of the seven churches. These seven churches were real churches in Asia minor which is modern day Turkey. However, I believe these churches are also a representative of every time frame of the Church Age. These two chapters give us an historical account of the condition of the Church throughout history all the way down to the end time Church, the Laodiceans, the most depraved Church of all. Yes, I believe we have reached this point. The last place the Church is mentioned on earth is in Revelation 3:22 where Christ makes a final plea to the end time Church for repentance and devotion.

Lastly, John writes in Revelation 4 through 22 about **the things which shall be hereafter**. Here we read about the horrific events that will come upon the earth. Again, notice the Church is no longer mentioned in these chapters because the Church is not on the earth. Interestingly, the primary focus of these chapters shifts to the Jewish people. But why? Go back to the morning Jesus was brought before the governor, the chief priests, and the elders. In Matthew 27, no fault could be found in this sinless man. Still the crowd railed "*crucify Him!*".

When the Jews rejected Jesus and declared to Pilate “*we have no king but Caesar*”, God turned the Jews over to Caesar, and they have lived under the impact of this ever since.

From this point on, God directed His attention to include the Gentile world. In Acts 13:50-52, when Paul and Barnabas tried to continue their ministry, the Jews rejected Christ once again so the disciples “. . . *shook off the dust of their feet against them.*” Throughout the rest of the book of Acts, God’s message of saving grace turned primarily toward the Gentile nations. Paul preached the Gospel all the way to Rome, and it continued westward to reach you and me so we could be grafted in.

At the start of Revelation 4, John, the last of the original twelve apostles, is called up into Heaven. If the seven churches in Revelation represent the Church Age, then I believe John is, in fact, the representation of the last living Christian, or the end time Church in these passages. Now read Revelation 4:1-2 again.

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. ² And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

Revelation 4:1-2

A door opened into Heaven, a voice like a trumpet called, and John is immediately transported from earth to the Throne of God. Does this sound familiar? Could this be a glimpse of the Rapture? The phrase *come up hither* in Revelation 4:1 gives us the same portrait as the phrase *caught up* used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

Immediately after the Church disappears from the scene on the earth at the end of chapter 3, John is transported in the Spirit and sees the Throne in chapter 4. If John is the representation of the

last of the Christians living on the earth, then there's no denying the sequence of events in these verses is giving us a portrait of the end time Church being caught up, or raptured.

Many read the book of Revelation like a science fiction novel. Unless you allow the Spirit to guide you, it is easy to become enchanted by the mystery, miracles, and wonders. Yes, it's fascinating, but never forget it is God's Word. It is not fiction, but Truth! All the horrifying events of the Tribulation will come to pass. It will become a reality for those who miss the Rapture.

God's Word does not lie. Allow God's Holy Spirit to speak truth to your heart. The Spirit will bear witness and reveal all you need to know about the Rapture and end times. I am fully persuaded through the Bible that those who belong to Christ can expect to be raptured just prior to the Tribulation. Thank God the Church will be off the earth before the wrath of God's judgement is poured out. However, the fact remains you will either make the Rapture or you will miss it. In 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, the Bible distinguishes between two groups of people: those who make the Rapture and those who don't. Which one are you in?

Those that make the rapture	Those that don't make the rapture
That day won't overtake you like a thief	It will come as a thief in the night
You are not in darkness. Ye are children of the light/day	They are children of the night/darkness
Don't sleep. Watch and be sober	They sleep in the night and are drunken in the night
Be sober and put on the breastplate of faith and love. Put on the hope of salvation for a helmet	They shall say peace and safety; then sudden destruction shall come upon them
God has not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ	They shall not escape the judgement of God
We will live together with Him. Comfort and edify each other with these words	There will be eternal separation from God

4

THE CHURCH REAPPEARS IN HEAVEN

⁹And 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;
¹⁰And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Revelation 5:9-10

After Revelation 3, the word *church* is never mentioned again. In fact, at the end of Revelation 3, the Church has disappeared off of the face of the earth. Literally! She's not mentioned on the earth again. This leads to number four, a very simple, but profound observation.

If the Church is not on earth, then where is she at this point? The next couple of chapters tell us. The focus of Revelation 4 and 5 becomes the Throne of God. The word *throne* occurs twelve times in Revelation 4. In Revelation 5, there is a multitude gathered, singing a song around the Throne: "*Thou art worthy . . . For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood . . .*" It's the Song of Redemption!

How do we know for certain who these are that are singing around the Throne? Who has the right to sing *I am redeemed*? Angels have never been redeemed, but every child of God has. The blood-bought Church, the Bride of Christ, are the only ones that can sing the Song of Redemption. There's no mistaking the Church disappears off the earth at the end of Revelation 3, and reappears at the end of Chapter 5 in Heaven around the Throne of God.

The events of the Tribulation begin in Chapter 6. After the Bride of Christ is removed out of harms way, the seals are broken and the earth enters a terrible time of tribulation.

Portrait of the Bride of Christ, the Church

She is in Christ	<p>1 Thes. 4:13-18</p> <p>2 Cor. 5:17-21</p> <p>Exo.12:13</p>	<p>How do you get in Christ?</p> <p>Go back to Egypt, the night of Passover: God's children were safe inside when the death angel passed over. Why? Because the blood had been applied to their doors. There's nothing you can do on your own except trust in Christ. It's the blood of Jesus Christ applied to your heart. That's the only way in.</p>
She belongs to Christ	<p>1 Cor. 15:23</p> <p>Gal. 5:24</p>	<p>You are betrothed to Christ! You must guard your passions, your affections, your devotion. Resist temptations. Don't play the harlot with the world. Keep your eyes focused on Christ!</p>
She does good	<p>Mth. 25:23</p> <p>John 5:29</p>	<p>We all want to hear "<i>well done, thou good and faithful servant.</i>" What does it mean to do good? It may surprise you, but the word <i>good</i> in Matthew 25:23 and John 5:29 isn't what you might think. It means to be useful, or to have something in your account. Is your life useful to God, totally at His disposal to do what He wills? Or are you pursuing your own thing? Will you have something in your account to present to Him? Don't waste what His blood has purchased. Your life belongs to Him.</p>
She is worthy	<p>Luke 21:34-36</p> <p>Acts 5:41</p> <p>2 Thes. 1:5</p>	<p>Counted worthy, not by man's estimation, but by the Righteous Judge. Your life is counted worthy only if you're covered by the blood of Jesus. Live to please God, not men. Don't worry about what this world thinks. Just aim to please God.</p>
She purifies herself	<p>1 John 3:2-3</p>	<p>If you judge yourself, you won't be judged. You can't make yourself holy. That's the Holy Spirit's job. But you can remove those things in your life that you know aren't contributing to the process to make you like Christ.</p>
She has no spots or wrinkles	<p>Eph. 5:27</p>	<p>Whether it's intentional or not, every time we compromise and live like the world, dirty spots stain our garment. When we wallow in the pleasures of the world and get our eyes off our mission, we take on a few more wrinkles. Thank God, the blood of Jesus Christ covers it all, washes us, and makes us brand new.</p>
She walks in the Spirit	<p>Gal. 5:16, 19-21</p>	<p>It's a constant battle: our old flesh nature vs. the Spirit of Christ. The only way to overcome your old flesh nature is to make a conscious effort to walk in the Spirit every day. Temptations may come and go, but if you're walking in the Spirit, you won't fulfill the lusts of your flesh.</p>
She walks in the Light	<p>1 John 1:7</p> <p>Col. 2:6-7</p>	<p>Walk in the light of Jesus. Let His glorious light completely expose those areas in you that don't look like Christ.</p>

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Luke 21:36

The next point that supports a pre-Tribulation Rapture is a promise to those that are counted worthy. Watch and pray that you may be accounted worthy to escape! Escape from what? What is this event that is so terrible that we would want to escape from?

This is not referring to an escape from hell. If you are covered in the blood of Jesus, there is no way you can enter hell. Christ has already redeemed you from hell. As a child of God, you are promised a heavenly inheritance, not a devil's hell.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

⁴ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

⁵ Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1:3-5

This escape is not referring to hell, nor is it just referring to a provision of protection from trials on this earth. The word *escape* in Luke 21:36 specifically means *to flee, or to take flight*. Those that do escape are going to take flight *to stand before the Son of man*. This means the body has to leave one place to be in another. This promise of escape is referring to an escape from an event that shall come to pass on this earth, specifically the Tribulation. This escape will come for every believer by way of the Rapture.

What about John 16:33? *In the world ye shall have tribulation.*

Yes, the children of God face a measure of tribulation, or trials, during the natural course of their life on the earth. However, the trials we face on earth that Jesus is referring to as tribulation here aren't from God's wrath, but rather satan's wrath. Nothing infuriates the devil more than when a child of God overcomes their flesh, operates in the Spirit, and lives the life of Christ. The devil will attempt to steal, kill, and destroy any move of God in your life. We may face tribulation but not the Tribulation referred to in the Revelation. The Tribulation in Revelation will be a time when God's wrath is poured out upon those that have denied His dear Son.

So, what does it mean to be accounted worthy? In Acts 5:41, they rejoiced *they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name*. It's a privilege to suffer for Jesus Christ. This suffering is a commitment to stay true to the faith, no matter what it costs me. To be counted worthy, your life must be totally sold out to the Father. In everything you do, you must seek to please God not pursue your own pleasures, nor seek the world's approval.

We've all fallen short. Peter knew this too well when he began “. . . to curse and to swear, saying I know not [Jesus]” (Matthew 26:74). Did he fear for his life? Or was it his reputation that was at stake? Whatever it was, Peter chose not to be associated with Jesus and denied His Lord three times. How could he?

It's easy to criticize Peter, but we've all denied the Lord and betrayed Him at some point in our life. Just like Peter, we are all unworthy. However, thank God, our worthiness is not based on man's estimation. According to 2 Thessalonians 1:5, we are counted worthy by the Judge's estimation, but not because of anything we've done. If you've been washed in the blood of Christ, you are counted worthy by *the righteous judgement of God*. It's only by faith through Jesus Christ that you are counted worthy to escape God's wrath. Are you covered in the blood that Jesus shed for you? It's available to everyone. All you have to do is call upon the Name of Jesus.

⁹ For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

¹⁰ Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

Just as every child of God has been promised an escape from the end time horrors to come upon the earth, they have also been promised to be spared from the wrath of God. Hence, my sixth point, the children of God have no appointment with the Wrath of God.

Recall in 1 John 3:1, if you are a born again believer, then you are a child of God. The blood Christ shed purchased you into the family of God. We are sons and daughters of God!

Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Romans 5:9

When you are in Christ, covered by His blood, God no longer sees you, but His dear Son. Christians are not appointed to wrath. For those that have been abused, or just never had a good relationship with their earthly father, you may not relate to this concept. However, God is Love. As a good Father, God will chasten, correct, or rebuke, but He never pours His wrath out on His children. Never! Every trial God allows you to go through in this life is not because God wants to punish you, but because your Heavenly Father loves you with an eternal love. He works all things together for your good, and for His glory. Don't ever doubt God's love for you!

During the Tribulation, God's wrath will be poured out upon the earth (Revelation 14:10, 19). However, there's no way God will allow His Church to go through this.

The Bible is clear on who receives the wrath of God. God's wrath is not for His Church, but a judgement reserved for the disobedient, the ungodly, those that have rejected Jesus Christ.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
2 Corinthians 5:21

Christ took what we deserve so that we could have what He deserves. Through Christ, we have been made the righteousness of God. And this privilege is available to whosoever will call on the Name of Jesus.

It's clear the Church will escape God's wrath; therefore, the only conclusion is a pre-Tribulation rapture!

GOD'S WRATH WILL BE Poured OUT:

John 3:36	On those that deny Christ.
Romans 1:18	On ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.
Romans 2:5	On the hardness and impenitent heart . . . Those that reject God's grace.
Ephesians 5:6 & Colossians 3:6	On the children of disobedience
Revelation 14:9-10	On those who worship the beast and his image, and on those who receive the mark of his name

²In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

John 14:2-3

My final point focuses on the promise that Jesus is preparing a place for those that love Him. That's a wonderful thought, but if you dig a little deeper, you will discover the full meaning and magnitude of this promise.

To fully comprehend the promise in John 14 and how it supports a pre-Tribulation Rapture, you must understand that Jesus is drawing an analogy from the Jewish wedding custom of the time. The Jewish custom first started with a formal betrothal phase, or engagement. The man would bring a marriage contract to the family of his chosen bride. Included in this covenant was the groom's payment to the bride's family, given as a token of his love, but also to compensate the family for the bride's upbringing. From this point until the final consummation, the bride would wear a veil signifying she was spoken for.

Jesus paid our debt, and purchased us with His own blood on the Cross so that we can enter into this marriage covenant. If you have surrendered to Jesus as your Lord, you are betrothed to Him. You are set apart, no longer free to partake of sinful pleasures this world has to offer. You are bought with a price. You belong to Christ! (I Corinthians 6:19-20)

During the betrothal, the groom would leave the bride, but not without a promise to return for her when things were ready. The groom would go back to his father's house where he would begin constructing an additional living space for his bride. When the attachment was completed, the groom would go get his awaiting

bride. The bride had to be ready at all times for her groom. Only the father of the groom knew the time since he had to give the final stamp of approval on the new construction. It had to be perfect!

Now reread John 14:2-3 again. *In my Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you.* Hear the depth of the promise Jesus is making to His Bride. He's been building a bridal chamber, a mansion, for over 2000 years. Our minds can't even imagine just how glorious this construction is going to be! A perfect place made just for each and every Christian to enjoy unhindered, intimate fellowship with Christ.

Whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord has this promise. Jesus is preparing a place for you and me. *If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself.* Jesus has promised He will come back again and receive each of us. Jesus has never failed on any of His promises, so you can believe this promise too. If He truly is Lord of your life, He's coming back to receive you! How does this support a pre-tribulation rapture?

According to Jewish custom, when the groom and bride finally united, the veiled bride and groom would remain in the bridal chamber together for seven days. It's no coincidence that the number seven shows up repeatedly in scripture. The number seven represents completion, or spiritual perfection. While the earth will be enduring seven horrific years of tribulation, the Church will be in the bridal chamber celebrating with her Groom, Jesus Christ, the One who paid the price with His own blood. Suppose for a moment that there isn't going to be a pre-Tribulation rapture. Why would Jesus go to prepare a place at the end of the Tribulation if He's going to turn around and come right back to the earth to set up a thousand year reign? (See Chart on Page 31). He's building a place for His bride to dwell together with Him for some length of time, to dine together at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE READY?

³⁵**Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:**

³⁶**Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.** ³⁷**And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.**

Mark 13:35-37

If the rapture is the next primary thing on God's agenda for mankind, how does this affect your life right now? If I knew a major storm was imminent, I would prepare. Board windows. Secure loose items. Stock up on water and nonperishable food. I would make sure that my house was in order and that I had everything needed to sustain life for a few days.

What about eternity? There are no do-overs. When this fragile life on earth is over, it's over! If you knew you were about to meet God Almighty today, what would you do different? How would you prepare?

The truth is none of us can be prepared based upon our own merits. We'll never be holy enough to stand before Him that is holy. That's why we need a savior, a mediator between us and God, an advocate. That Savior, Mediator, and Advocate is Jesus Christ. We must put our complete trust in Him for our salvation. Only then can we, with great confidence, be prepared for that great event called the Rapture.

Pray today! See the steps to salvation on the next page. Seek God's forgiveness for your sins by trusting in the One who has already paid for them. Decide now to give your life for His service.

If you're already a Christian, are you fully obeying His every command? Are you being a witness to the lost? Are you passionate about making Jesus famous everywhere you go? Get serious today. We're going to give account of this life to the God that bought it. Are you wasting what God purchased? Get busy for God now! Prepare to meet your God (Amos 4:12).

Salvation is a matter of FAITH:

F is for FORGIVENESS

Our sin separates us from God. We cannot have eternal life and go to Heaven without God's forgiveness.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23)

A is for AVAILABLE

Forgiveness is available to all.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16)

I is for IMPOSSIBLE

Unlike people, God is holy and righteous. It is impossible for God to allow sin into Heaven.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)

Then how can a sinful person go to Heaven?

T is for TURN

Turn means to repent. Turn away from your sin and yourself, and turn to and trust in Jesus Christ.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9)

H is for HEAVEN

Heaven is reserved for those who follow Christ. Hell is reserved for satan, all his demons, and sadly, those who reject Christ as Lord. God loves you and has made a way for you to be with Him, but it's up to you to choose. Are you ready to take the step of FAITH and trust Jesus Christ?

SALVATION PRAYER

Jesus, I am a sinner in need of a Savior. I believe You are the Son of God. I believe You died on the cross and took my punishment to pay for my sins. I trust you, Jesus, to come into my heart and make me brand new. By faith I receive you as my Savior. I choose to make you Lord of my life. Help me to live a life that pleases you. Thank you for saving me! In Jesus Name, Amen!

SUMMARY OF END TIME EVENTS



