

# The Reason for the Rapture

## I Thess. 4:13-18

### Introduction

The *Left Behind* books are bigger than Harry Potter. The series of children's books about a school for witches has sold 12 million copies, but the series of apocalyptic novels has sold 20 million. One might rejoice that a conservative, Bible-believing, evangelical title has finally broken through into the mass market and thus, presumably, into the culture as a whole; but unfortunately, the great popularity of the series is spreading confusion and misunderstanding about the end times.

The *Left Behind* novels are fiction, not theology, so they must be approached as literature. They have some good moments — the shots at liberal theology and the New Age movement; horrific thrills; suspense that builds through book after book

### Review

### Lesson

## I. What isn't the Reason

## A. Dispensational Separatism

### 1. The Church and Israel are distinct?

**Assumption #1: The 70th Week is only for the Jewish Nation: Israel and the church are separate entities God cannot work with both at the same time.** This assumption is based on the scripture: *Luke 21:23 (NIV) How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. 24 They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the **times of the Gentiles** are fulfilled.* The basis for this assumption is that God dealt with the world through the Jewish nation in the Old Testament, but after Jesus came, a new dispensation of grace came. They see the 70th week of Daniel as a return to the Old Testament dispensation as God deals again specifically with Israel. However, this assumption is invalidated by the scripture in... *Acts 2:15 (NIV) These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. 18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. 19 I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. 20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. 21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'* According to this assumption, this prophecy in Joel should have been applied to Jews only, however, it was applied to the early church. The importance of this assumption is that it gives a foundation to the pre-tribulational claim that Matthew 24 was written specifically for the Jewish people. This is an assumption because nowhere in scripture is this distinction made.

**Assumption #2: Matthew 24 was written specifically for the Jews.** This is an assumption made because Matthew 24 just simply does not conform to a pre-tribulational view of end-time prophecy. The same people that adamantly hold to this assumption would never allow this invalidation of scripture with

any other passage - and yet there is nothing in scripture that supports this exclusive application.

## 2. The Church has to be removed from earth for Gods plan with Israel?

**Assumption #3: Rev. 4:1 signifies the Rapture.** This passage is: *(Rev 4:1 NIV) After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."* There is a door standing open in heaven, a voice like a trumpet, and the proclamation to "Come up here." Pretribulationists vehemently stand by the principle that this passage depicts the rapture. The reason this assumption is so important is that it provides the **only** scriptural evidence of a pre-tribulational rapture. The problem is that the natural sense of the passage is that John was taken by the Spirit into heaven and to see this as applying to the rapture stretches the natural meaning to the extreme - that application is an assumption.

**Assumption #4: The Holy Spirit is the Restrainer in 2 Thess 2:7.** This passage states... *(2 Th 2:6-8 NIV) And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. {7} For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the **one who now holds it back** will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. {8} And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.* That phrase "one who now holds back" in the NASB is "the restrainer" and the "one who letteth" in the KJV. It is never stated, yet pre-tribulationists assume that this "restrainer" is the Holy Spirit. This gives evidence that the Holy Spirit is removed out of the way (along with the church in the rapture) and then the Antichrist is revealed.

If this restrainer is NOT the Holy Spirit, then this passage destroys a pretribulational rapture, because the Antichrist MUST come first. The restrainer is simply not identified. However, Daniel 12:1 gives the possibility that the restrainer could be the archangel Michael.

**Assumption #5: 144,000 Jews sealed in Revelation 7 become evangelists.**

There is a problem with the pre-tribulational rapture view and that is how to explain the multitude that no one could count that shows up in Rev. 7. Therefore, it is assumed that the 144,000 Jews that are sealed become evangelists and win this multitude during the tribulation period. This is extraordinary when these same assumptions conclude that the Holy Spirit has been taken out of the world. Moreover, the book of Revelation indicates that during the tribulation period (70th week) that rather than responding to God, people will harden their hearts. *Rev 9:20 (NIV) The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood--idols that cannot see or hear or walk.*

**Assumption #6: the greatest revival in history takes place during the 70th Week.** This is an assumption because nowhere is there any indication that this revival takes place, in fact, as we have seen the opposite is true. As we have said, this revival is assumed to explain the presence of the multitude that mysteriously appears in heaven. If one does not assume this revival then the only explanation for this multitude would have to be the rapture which would NOT happen before the tribulation period begins.

Now these assumptions are significant in that one must accept all of these assumptions to believe in a pre-tribulational rapture. If any of these assumptions are rejected then the case for a pre-tribulational rapture is seriously in doubt, if not impossible. Yet, these assumptions are also significant because of the fact that they ARE assumptions. There is not a single existing scripture that teaches explicitly a pre-tribulational rapture.

There is one other issue here that could almost be classified as a pre-tribulational assumption. However, it is not a foundational assumption supporting the pre-tribulational view, but comes as a natural consequence of accepting the view. This issue is the doctrine of Imminency. Imminency

states that nothing else needs to happen before the rapture takes place, but this is not taught in scripture. Imminency sounds so spiritual and correct as preachers proclaim that “Jesus could come at any moment.” However, scripture declares at least three things that must happen before the Day of the Lord occurs. 1) The sign of the Day of the Lord - see Joel 2:31, 2) The prophet Elijah must come - see Malachi 4:5, and 3) The Antichrist must be revealed - see 2 Thess 2:3. None of these has happened as yet, therefore the doctrine of imminency cannot be correct. Now, does this mean Jesus could not come soon? No. In fact, Jesus told His followers in Matthew 24, “When you see standing... the Abomination of Desolation...” Based on Jesus’ words there is a possibility that we may not even realize what is happening until the Abomination of Desolation takes place. At that point Jesus return could happen VERY quickly

## B. The 7 year Tribulation

### 1. Where does the 7 years come from

#### Daniel 9

In [Genesis 7:24](#) and in [Genesis 8:3](#), the Bible says the flood lasted for one hundred and fifty days. Now if the flood was 150 days and the Jews counted that as five months, how long were their months? Thirty days.

Twelve thirty-day months equals a 360-day year. So we believe the Jews functioned on a 360-day year calendar. The earliest known months used then in the biblical text were 30-day months giving us a 360-day year.

And then every once in a while they'd throw in an extra pile to catch up with the solar year.

Now let me give you another thought. Are you ready for this one? Daniel 7 says that the great Tribulation will last for a time (that's one), times (that's two), and half a time (that's half)-- times, time, half a time, three and a half. Revelation 13 says the Tribulation will

last forty-two months. And Revelation 12:6 says the Tribulation will last 1260 days.

Now isn't that interesting? We have three different time frames for the Tribulation. In one place it says three and a half years, one place it says 42 months and one place 1260 days. Three and a half years equals 42 months. Is that right? That's right. I'll tell you that's right. Thirty-six plus six--three and a half, okay. Three and a half years equals 42 months, but if 42 months equal 1260 days, they have to be months of 30 days. There's no other way.

So again we find not only in Genesis but clear in Revelation that the Bible is still counting on the same kind of clock, months are 30-day months. So, Daniel would have used a biblical prophetic calendar. He would not use the pagan 365-day year. So, what do we have? We have a period of 490 years of 360 days. Are you still with me? Four hundred and ninety years of 360 days.

Now you say, "When did this period begin? Because if we can find out when it begins, we can find out when it ends." Good thinking. That's right. Let's find out when it begins. It even tells you in verse 25. And it just says this, and I like this, know therefore and understand. Get it. He keeps saying this all through this text. Now get this. It begins from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. Now that's fairly clear, right? You say, "Hey, we're in great shape." It begins right at the command to restore and build Jerusalem. That's terrific--except there were four of those commands, four of them. Three of them are given in the book of Ezra: one by Cyrus, one by Darius, and one by Artaxerxes. And then there was a fourth one by Artaxerxes, a second one of his. Now, which one is the one we start with cause they were all given at different dates, and if they all start at a different time they're all going to end at a different time? And there's much debate as to which of these is right.

Now some say the first decree of Cyrus is the one. That's the one and they find that, by the way if you're interested, in the first chapter of Ezra. And so they say the first decree of Cyrus is the one and the reasoning being that in Isaiah 44, the Bible tells us

that Cyrus would be the servant of God who would lead the people or let the people go back to the land to rebuild their city and so forth. So they say the 490 years began when Cyrus made the first decree. You know when that was? 536 B.C. Okay, let's take that. Let's say it began in 536 B.C. and it went from there. And by the way, if you'll notice over in verse 27, it says: "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." For one week. The seventieth week is cut off the other 69, so we can't count that one. We'll see where that comes in later. So back to verse 25. It begins with a commandment to build Jerusalem and it goes unto the what? The Messiah. And it will be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks. Seven and threescore and two is 69. So, the first 69 or 483 of the 490 start with a decree and end with the Messiah.

And so some scholars say it has to be the first decree, it has to be the decree of Cyrus because in [Isaiah 44:24](#) to 28, Isaiah said Cyrus would make this decree and so forth. But you know what happens? When you go with 483 years from 536 B.C., you wind up around 54 B.C. and you can't have the Messiah 54 years before Christ. You've got a problem. In fact, Christ doesn't really start His ministry until 30 A.D. and so it's 80 years off.

You say, "Yeah, but it's close." But God isn't just close, folks. God is not just close. And you know what this fellow said that holds this view? He said, "Well, the solution is that the Ptolemaic calendar and the Ptolemaic list of the reigns of kings is off 80 years." That's no solution. You can't prove that. You can't just say, "Well, we come up 80 years short so therefore history's 80 years off." That's not too convincing. There's no proof of that at all.

So, we don't accept that first decree. And I'll tell you another reason why. Because in the first decree of Cyrus there was no command to rebuild the city, only the temple, only the temple. Then some people say no. Nobody says it's the second decree of Darius but they'll jump to the third one and they'll say, "It's the first decree of Artaxerxes in 458 B.C." And that's moving a little bit ahead in the calendar, about 90...80 years or so. They're trying to make up that little slack. And so they say 458. And if we go 483

years from 458, which is the decree of Artaxerxes, we wind up at 25 A.D. Well, that's a problem, 25 A.D, because the only thing that can be remotely close to 25 A.D. would be the baptism of Christ. And the baptism wasn't His presentation as Messiah. The baptism was the Father's approval. That was between Himself and God. There's not even any comment that anybody around made any statement about it at all. We don't even know if they heard what was going on. They heard a noise.

And by the way, the first decree of Artaxerxes said absolutely nothing about the city either, only about the temple. Nothing about restoring and rebuilding the city.

There's one other alternative. And that it is the fourth decree which is the second decree of Artaxerxes. There are basically two that really have found the thread of truth and it has been sustained throughout history. One is Sir Robert Anderson who lived a hundred years ago and was with Scotland Yard and wrote a classic book called *The Coming Prince*. And the other is a rather new book written by Dr. Harold Hoehner of Dallas Theological Seminary in which he confirms with tremendous accuracy the figures of Sir Robert Anderson though he differs with him on one year. He wants to push it up just one year, and I'll show you that as we go. And this is a fascinating, fascinating thought.

In the first three decrees there was no authorization given at all for the building of the city. So it can't start there. In fact, it's most interesting to me, and I was reading through Ezra to check all of this, that when they were building the temple in Ezra chapter 4, this is most interesting, they were stopped for a while in their building because they were accused by their Jewish enemies of attempting to rebuild the city without a permit. So we know they didn't have that right until that decree of Artaxerxes. That's the only decree that fits. And that's found in Nehemiah chapter 1 and chapter 2. Nehemiah chapter 1 and chapter 2. And I just want to read chapter 2 verse 1 because we don't have to spend too much time in this point. But it says in chapter 2, "It came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, "and then it goes on to say that he made the decree as you read down



through verse 8. But I want you to note the month was Nisan and the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. When did Artaxerxes begin to reign? There's very little doubt about that.

Historians tells us that he acceded to the throne in 465 B.C. That's in the Encyclopedia Britannica, by the way. So that's a very established fact, 465 B.C. So his twentieth year would be what? 445--cause we're coming down toward the birth of Christ. So 445, and according to Sir Robert Anderson's calculations, the years of a king's reign were from the first of the month of his reign. And so if it's the month of Nisan, it begins at the first of the month of Nisan. And that is again substantiated, he feels, because there's no other date mentioned. So it would be likely the first day of the month of Nisan in 445.

Now for us, that translates to March 14, 445 B.C. And by the way, if you want to read the book *The Coming Prince* you can wade through this material. Several hundred pages of all of the calculations. So on March 14, according to Sir Robert Anderson, 445 B.C. began the 483 years. This is the first 69 weeks.

When did it end? Back again at our verse. Look at it, verse 25, "...unto the Messiah." Unto the Messiah, the Prince. It is then consummated that first 69 weeks in the arrival of the Messiah the Prince, it will be--he says--seven weeks and threescore and two weeks. "The streets shall be built again and the wall even in troublous times." Now stop there for a moment.

So we have these two periods divided. First seven weeks and then 62 weeks, equaling 69. Now watch this. The first seven weeks is a 49-year period. So let's separate it out. Seven weeks, verse 25 indicates, until the street is built again and the wall even in troublous times. Now if you study the book of Nehemiah, you'll find out one thing very quickly. They had a lot of trouble building the city, didn't they? Troublous times. But he sees, the prophet sees, a 49 year period. So if you go from 445, 49 years later you're at 396 B.C. and that's a very crucial time for that was not only the time when they completed the city but that was the time also when the Old Testament canon was completed as well. It's

as if God established His people in their land, God established His city, God established a temple and God established His Word. And from there till the coming of John the Baptist, there was no prophet. God had affirmed His people, His city and His Word. And by the way, it says in verse 25, in those 49 years, "The street would be built and the wall." And the actual word for "street" is the word for public square, or marketplace and it probably is best understood as the inside of the city. And then the wall is actually the word for a moat or a ditch or an external fortification. And what it means is the city was completed inside and outside. It was fully done in those years. Complete restoration in 49 years. And, beloved, there's only...it's only possible that that could have occurred from the decree of Artaxerxes because it was at that time that Nehemiah began to rebuild. So the decree of Artaxerxes, I believe, has to be the decree and you have the period of time in which the city is finalized. All you need to do is read Ezra 9 and 10, Nehemiah 4, chapter 6, chapter 9 and you can see the trouble they had in doing it in those troublous times. Now, we covered the 49 years and we have another period in verse 25. And then comes threescore and two weeks, or 62 weeks--62 weeks. And this goes from the time of 396, from there on ahead. Now, let's take the whole figure of 483. From 445 B.C., we want to go 483 years. You have 69 times seven years which equals 483 years. And then you have 483 years times 360 days. And that's the figure I want you to get. The total of days is one hundred and seventy-three thousand, eight hundred and eighty days. That is 483 years times 360 days. Remember, I told you we're dealing with a 360-day year. So in order to convert that to a 365-day calendar like we have, we have to reduce it to days and then divide it back again. So we're dealing with 173,880 days from the decree of Artaxerxes in 445 B.C. to the coming of Messiah the Prince. The Messiah will come in 173,880 days. Now, the phrase unto Messiah the Prince, I think, is a very interesting phrase. I think it's a phrase that carries with it a very official terminology. Mashiyach nagiyd, the Messiah, the anointed

one, the Prince, the Ruler is a very official term. By the way, that very term prince is used first of Saul and used other times of kings. So it is a kingly concept. It isn't the birth of Christ we're looking at.

It isn't the baptism of Christ we're looking at. It is the presentation of Christ as the Mashiyach nagiyd as the Prince, the Messiah. And that's what you have to keep in mind.

Now there are only two events in His life, the life of Christ, where He is officially set apart. One is the baptism, and two is the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Now some believe it's the baptism. But as I said, it can't be because He was not being presented to men there but to God. And the men didn't even know what was going on. There is utterly no reference to Israel. There is no statement about messiahship, only .This is My beloved Son.. And so, if it isn't the baptism, it has to be the triumphal entry, it has to be. There's really no other alternative. And you...no wonder it says in Isaiah 46:10 that God is the one who declares the end from the beginning. And He predicts things that are not yet done. God told Daniel the very day Jesus would enter the city of Jerusalem and what did they say? "Hosanna to the King of David." The Messiah.

It didn't last long. And after, verse 26 says, after this seven and threescore and two weeks, shall Messiah be...what?...cut off.

## 2. The Bible never called the entire 7 years the Great Tribulation

### 3. What are the Biblical distinctives of of the 7 years

#### 1. BIRTH PAINS

##### Luke 18:8-9

<sup>8</sup> And He said: “Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am *He*,’ and, ‘The time has drawn near.’ Therefore do not go after them. <sup>9</sup> But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end *will not come* immediately.”

##### Matt: 24:4-8

<sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. <sup>6</sup> And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> **All these are the beginning of sorrows.**

##### ódin: a birth pang

**Original Word:** ὠδίν, ἴνος, ἦ

**Part of Speech:** Noun, Feminine

**Transliteration:** ódin

**Phonetic Spelling:** (o-deen')

**Short Definition:** the pain of childbirth, severe agony

**Definition:** the pain of childbirth, acute pain, severe agony, a snare.

##### HELPS Word-studies

**5604** *ōdín* – properly, the pain of childbirth (travail); (figuratively) the pain necessary to *open up* (introduce) something new, i.e. to bring in *more*.

[5604 (*ōdín*) suggests *intense suffering* (similar to birth pain) – hence, "to suffer greatly, great pain" (*L & N*, 1, 24.87) like "a birth-pang, travail-pain; figuratively, extreme suffering" (*A-S*).]

## Mark 13:3-8

<sup>5</sup> And Jesus, answering them, began to say: "Take heed that no one deceives you. <sup>6</sup> For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He*,' and will deceive many. <sup>7</sup> But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet. <sup>8</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. **These are the beginnings of sorrows.**

## Revelation 6:

Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." <sup>2</sup> And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

### ***Second Seal: Conflict on Earth***

<sup>3</sup> When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." <sup>4</sup> Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that *people* should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

### ***Third Seal: Scarcity on Earth***

<sup>5</sup> When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. <sup>6</sup> And I heard a voice in the midst of

the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.”

### ***Fourth Seal: Widespread Death on Earth***

<sup>7</sup> When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come and see.” <sup>8</sup> So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

## **2. ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION**

### **Luke 21:20-24**

<sup>20</sup> “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.

### **Matt 24:15-22**

<sup>15</sup> “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place”

### **Mark 13:14-23**

<sup>14</sup> “So when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not”

## **3. GREAT TRIBULATION**

### **Luke 21:21-24**

<sup>21</sup> Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. <sup>22</sup> For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written

may be fulfilled. <sup>23</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. <sup>24</sup> And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

## Matt 24:16-22

<sup>16</sup> “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup> Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. <sup>18</sup> And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. <sup>19</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>20</sup> And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. <sup>21</sup> **For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.** <sup>22</sup> **And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.**

### thlipsis: tribulation

**Original Word:** θλίψις, εως, ἡ

**Part of Speech:** Noun, Feminine

**Transliteration:** thlipsis

**Phonetic Spelling:** (thlip'-sis)

**Short Definition:** persecution, affliction, distress

**Definition:** persecution, affliction, distress, tribulation.

### HELPS Word-studies

**2347** *thlipsis* – properly, *pressure* (what constricts or rubs together), used of a narrow place that "hems someone in"; *tribulation*, especially *internal pressure* that causes someone to feel confined (restricted, "without options").

**2347** /*thlipsis* ("compression, tribulation") carries the challenge of coping with the *internal pressure* of a *tribulation*, especially when feeling there is "no way of escape" ("hemmed in").

## Mark 13:14-23

“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>15</sup> Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his

house. <sup>16</sup> And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. <sup>17</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>18</sup> And pray that your flight may not be in winter. <sup>19</sup> **For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.** <sup>20</sup> **And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.**

<sup>21</sup> “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, *He is* there!’ do not believe it. <sup>22</sup> For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. <sup>23</sup> But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.

## Revelation 6: 9-11

### ***Fifth Seal: The Cry of the Martyrs***

<sup>9</sup> When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. <sup>10</sup> And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” <sup>11</sup> Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they *were*, was completed.

## 4. RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH



## I Thess 4:13-18

<sup>13</sup> But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words.

### **harpazó: to seize, catch up, snatch away**

**Original Word:** ἄρπάζω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** harpazó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (har-pad'-zo)

**Short Definition:** I seize, snatch, obtain by robbery

**Definition:** I seize, snatch, obtain by robbery.

### **HELPS Word-studies**

**726** *harpázō* – properly, seize by force; *snatch* up, suddenly and decisively – like someone seizing bounty (spoil, a prize); to take by an *open display* of force (i.e. *not* covertly or secretly).

Used also

### **Rev. 12:5**

<sup>5</sup> She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child **was caught up** to God and His throne.

### **Jude 21-23**

<sup>21</sup> keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

<sup>22</sup> And on some have compassion, making a distinction; <sup>23</sup> but others save with fear, ***pulling them out*** of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

### **2 Cor 12:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—<sup>4</sup> how he ***was caught up*** into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

### **Acts 8:39**

<sup>39</sup> Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord ***caught Philip away***, so that the eunuch saw him no more;

## **I Cor 15: 51-52**

<sup>51</sup> Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—<sup>52</sup> 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.

## **Revelation 7:9-**

<sup>9</sup> After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

<sup>11</sup> All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup> saying:

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,  
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,  
*Be* to our God forever and ever.  
Amen.”

<sup>13</sup> Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?”

<sup>14</sup> And I said to him, “Sir, you know.”

So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. <sup>16</sup> They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; <sup>17</sup> for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

## 5. DAY OF THE LORD Wrath of God

### **Luke 21:25-28**

<sup>25</sup> “And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; <sup>26</sup> men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup> Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup> Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

### **Matt. 24:29-31**

<sup>29</sup> “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. <sup>30</sup> 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. <sup>31</sup> 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.

## **Mark 13:24-27**

<sup>24</sup> “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; <sup>25</sup> the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. <sup>26</sup> Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup> And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

## **Revelation 6:12-15**

<sup>12</sup> I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. <sup>13</sup> And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. <sup>14</sup> Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. <sup>15</sup> And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, <sup>16</sup> and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! <sup>17</sup> For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

## **6. CHRIST RETURN TO EARTH**

### **Revelation**

#### **19 20**

#### **C. Persecution**

- 1. The Bible never promises deliverance from Persecution**
- 2. The Bible Does tell the church to watch out for signs preceding the Great Tribulation of Antichrist**

## II. What is the Reason

### A. Removal from the Day of the Lord

#### The Explanation of the Day of the Lord

##### A. Its Reference in the New Testament

###### 1.I Thess. 5:1-3

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. <sup>2</sup> For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> 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.

###### 2.II Thess. 1:7b-10a

<sup>7</sup> and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, <sup>8</sup> in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, <sup>10</sup> when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

###### 3.II Thess. 2:1-2

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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,

#### 4. II Peter 3:10-12

<sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, <sup>12</sup> looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

## B. Its Reference in the Old Testament

1. Joel 1:15; 2:1-2a,6; 10-11; 30-31; 3:14-16

### 1:15

<sup>15</sup> Alas for the day!

For the day of the Lord *is* at hand;  
It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.

2:1-2a

Blow the trumpet in Zion,  
And sound an alarm in My holy mountain!  
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble;  
For the day of the Lord is coming,  
For it is at hand:

<sup>2</sup> A day of darkness and gloominess,  
A day of clouds and thick darkness,

<sup>6</sup> Before them the people writhe in pain;  
All faces are drained of color.

10-11

The earth quakes before them,  
The heavens tremble;  
The sun and moon grow dark,  
And the stars diminish their brightness.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord gives voice before His army,  
For His camp is very great;  
For strong *is the One* who executes His word.  
For the day of the Lord *is* great and very terrible;  
Who can endure it?

30-31

“And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth:  
Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.

<sup>31</sup> The sun shall be turned into darkness,  
And the moon into blood,  
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord



**3:14-16**

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!

For the day of the Lord *is* near in the valley of decision.

<sup>15</sup> The sun and moon will grow dark,  
And the stars will diminish their brightness.

<sup>16</sup> The Lord also will roar from Zion,  
And utter His voice from Jerusalem;  
The heavens and earth will shake;  
But the Lord will be a shelter for His people,  
And the strength of the children of Israel.

**2.Amos 5:18-20**

Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord!  
For what good *is* the day of the Lord to you?  
It *will be* darkness, and not light.

<sup>19</sup> It *will be* as though a man fled from a lion,  
And a bear met him!  
Or *as though* he went into the house,  
Leaned his hand on the wall,  
And a serpent bit him!

<sup>20</sup> *Is not* the day of the Lord darkness, and not light?  
*Is it not* very dark, with no brightness in it?

**3.Zeph. 1:14-18**

The great day of the Lord *is* near;  
*It is* near and hastens quickly.  
The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter;

- There the mighty men shall cry out.
- 15 That day *is* a day of wrath,  
A day of trouble and distress,  
A day of devastation and desolation,  
A day of darkness and gloominess,  
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
- 16 A day of trumpet and alarm  
Against the fortified cities  
And against the high towers.
- 17 “I will bring distress upon men,  
And they shall walk like blind men,  
Because they have sinned against the Lord;  
Their blood shall be poured out like dust,  
And their flesh like refuse.”
- 18 Neither their silver nor their gold  
Shall be able to deliver them  
In the day of the Lord’s wrath;  
But the whole land shall be devoured  
By the fire of His jealousy,  
For He will make speedy riddance  
Of all those who dwell in the land.

## C. Its Meaning within the Eschatological Context

### 1. Eschatological Wrath

2. Supernatural Wrath Rev. 8-19
3. Signified by Cosmic disturbance
  - a) Matt. 24:29
  - b) Mark 13:24-25
  - c) Luke 21:25

### III. The Execution of the Day of the Lord

- A. After the Rise of AntiChrist
  1. II Thess. 2:3-4
- B. After the Great Apostasy
  1. II. Thess 2:3
- C. After the Great Tribulation
  1. Matt. 24:15-22;29
  2. Mark 13:24

### IV. The Exclusion of the Day of the Lord

- A. Referenced by Jesus Christ
  1. Matt. 24:31
  2. Mark 13:26-27
  3. Luke 21:27-28

## B. Referenced by the Apostle Paul

1. I Thess 5:1-9

2. II Thess. 1:7-10

3. II. Thess. 2:1

## C. Referenced by the Apostle John

1. John 14:1-3; Matt. 24:40-41 Rev. 7:9-14