

WHY BELIEVE IN THE PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE?

1. CHURCH-AGE BELIEVERS ARE PROMISED SALVATION FROM WRATH!

(1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 5:1-9; Romans 5:9; Revelation 3:10)

a. **The Great Tribulation is expressly called the day of God's wrath.** *(Psalm 110:5; Revelation 6:17; Isaiah 13:6-13).*

It is true that in every century that some Churches have been subjected to great persecution, but this is quite different from the Great Tribulation!

The general persecutions of the saints are caused by the wrath of wicked men and the devil and his cohorts, whereas **the seven-year Tribulation is a period especially pertaining to God's wrath!** *(Isaiah 13; Revelation 6:16-17; 14:16)*

Some pre-tribulation rapture naysayers contend that the Church will NOT BE **saved out from the time of great wrath**, but rather will be **saved through this wrath**. This cannot be true, since the Bible clearly reveals that those who are on earth during the Great Tribulation **will not be delivered from wrath but will be overcome!** *(Revelation 13:7).*

Therefore, the Scriptures which promise Church- age believers **deliverance from wrath** MUST refer to **salvation out from the very presence of the wrath!**

Concerning the Great Tribulation, we are told that *"as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth" (Lk. 21:35).*

So, the Church-age believers must either be physically removed from the earth, or they will be involved in the day of wrath.

God promises removal. *"... I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Revelation 3:10).*

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2. THE RESTRAINING INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT MUST BE REMOVED BEFORE THE TRIBULATION!

(2 Thessalonians 2:1-8)

In other passages of the Bible, the Holy Spirit is shown to be a *restrainer of sin.* *(Genesis 6:3; Isaiah 59:19)*

We know that The Holy Spirit's **indwelling influence** came into this world in His present, special dispensation at Pentecost in Acts 2, when He came as Christ promised to empower the Church for the Great Commission! *(Acts 1:8)*

Holy Spirit indwelt believers have been a *restraining force* to hold back the full onslaught of evil in this world since that time. Imagine a world where there is NO influence of Holy Spirit indwelt and filled people to hold back Satan and his cohorts from carrying out their wicked agenda!

That is exactly what will transpire when believers are removed at the rapture of the Church!

3. IN THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION, THE CHURCH IS NOT MENTIONED OR SEEN ON EARTH AFTER CHAPTER THREE UNTIL YOU GET TO CHAPTER NINETEEN, WHEN SHE IS SEEN RETURNING TO EARTH WITH CHRIST!

The Churches are repeatedly mentioned in Revelation one through three, then disappears until the end of the book, but the true Church is not the focus on the Great Tribulation recorded in *Revelation 4-18*. Israel is the focus!

4. JESUS HIMSELF PROMISED THE CHURCH-AGE BELIEVERS MANSIONS IN HEAVEN! (John 14:1-3)

When the Lord Jesus returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation, He will set up His Messianic kingdom. If the Rapture occurred at the end of the Tribulation, the promise to Church-age believers pertaining to Heaven would not be fulfilled. Church-age believers are a heavenly people with a heavenly hope!
(Ephesians 1; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 3:1-3).

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5. **THE TRANSLATION OF CHURCH-AGE SAINTS IS SHOWN AND SAID TO BE IMMINENT!** (i.e. It could happen any moment!) Whereas the Second Coming is said to be preceded by specific signs! (*1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 4:15, 17; Titus 2:12-13; Matthew 24:42-44; James 5:8-9; 1 John 2:28; Revelation 1:3*)

The Apostle Paul instructed the Church at Thessalonica that they did not need to heed signs and times, because the New Testament believer has been promised redemption from the "*day of darkness*" which shall overcome the whole world! (*1 Thessalonians 5:1-9*)

The Church is not looking for nor waiting for the appearing of the anti-christ! We are waiting for the return of Christ!

6. **THE CHURCH IS A MYSTERY NOW REVEALED THAT WAS PREVIOUSLY UNREVEALED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT!** (*Ephesians 3:1-11*)

The New Testament Church has no part in the chronology of events foretold by the Old Testament Prophets. They clearly foretold the first coming of Christ, His miraculous birth, life, death, and resurrection.

The same prophets described Christ's Second Coming in glory, preceded by a time of unprecedented worldwide tribulation, followed by the glorious Messianic kingdom centered in Jerusalem. These prophets did not see the present Church age—"*which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.*"

Between the first coming of Christ and the Second Coming there is a time gap which was NOT revealed to the Old Testament prophets! This gap is from the time of the creation and empowerment of the Church through the time of its removal (*Rapture*)!

For centuries God has revealed big plans for the nation Israel. Old Testament prophecy pictures Israel at the heart of a worldwide kingdom with Israel's divine Messiah as the Sovereign Ruler.

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This kingdom, when established, will be eternal, yet Israel today has been temporarily set aside! These Old Testament Prophecies have never been fulfilled! Rather, today God is doing something different from anything which was spoken of in the Old Testament! He is calling out from among all nations a special Body of people. When He has accomplished this present purpose, when the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, God will restart Israel's prophetic clock and will wholly fulfill all Old Testament prophecies in relation to His ancient chosen nation. "*... blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in...*" (*Ro. 11:25*)

The Great Tribulation deals with Israel, not with the Church-age believers. This present mystery period will end with the removal of the Church-age believers from the earth; and the Lord will then take up His plan for the nation of Israel as He fulfills the Old Testament prophecies of the time of Jacob's trouble, the coming of Messiah in glory, and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom!

7. **THE CHURCH CANNOT BE OVERCOME, BUT THE SAINTS OF THE TRIBULATION WILL BE!** (**Compare Matthew 16:18 with Revelation 13:7**)

8. **THERE ARE EVENTS INTERVENING BETWEEN THE TRANSLATION AND RESURRECTION OF THE CHURCH AND THE SECOND ADVENT!**

According to *1 Corinthians 15:51*, EVERY saved person will be translated at the Rapture. Yet *Matthew 25:31-46* shows that when Jesus returns to the earth at the Second Advent He will find many true believers in their natural bodies.

There must, then, be a period of time between the Rapture of the Church-age saints and the Second Coming to allow for these folk to be saved. It is reasonable to believe that this period of time is the seven years of the Great Tribulation.

9. **THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION REVEALS THAT THE CHURCH IS NOT ON EARTH DURING THE TRIBULATION.**

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- (1) The Church is not seen on earth in **Revelation 4-18!**
- (2) The 24 elders are generally believed to represent the entire Church!
- (3) The witness for God in the earth during the Tribulation is Israel, not the Church! (**Revelation 7**)
- (4) The prayers of the saints in **Revelation 8** are prayers for judgment. Only Israel prayed such prayers. The Church-age saints are instructed to pray for her enemies, not against them.

These prayers of Revelation are those of the Psalms (known as Imprecatory Psalms) and are based on God's promise to Abraham to curse those who cursed Israel!
- (5) The scorpion-like creatures of **Revelation 9** are given freedom to hurt all earth-dwellers except those Jews who were sealed by the angel of **Revelation 7**. If believers who make up the Church were on earth, they would be subject to this horrible judgment and wrath of God!
- (6) **Revelation 10** identifies the events of **Revelation 4-18** with those foretold by Old Testament Prophets—i.e. The days of the Great Tribulation or the "*day of the LORD.*" The Church age was never in the view of these Old Testament Prophecies because, as pointed out previously, it was an unrevealed mystery.

The Church has a different purpose and program than national Israel. It is Israel that is in view in Old Testament Prophecies and in **Revelation 4-18**.
- (7) The ministry of the two witnesses of **Revelation 11** identifies them with national Israel and with Old Testament Prophecies of the "*day of the LORD.*" The two witnesses minister from Jerusalem, Israel's capital.

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The Churches have no such capital, her hope being heavenly, not earthly! (**Colossians 3; Philippians 2**)

The two witnesses are clothed in sackcloth, typical of Old Testament Israel, not New Testament believers. Nowhere are the Churches seen in sackcloth.

They are told, rather, to "*rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice*" (**Philippians 4:4**).

The Church-age believer's judgment is forever past, and he is to keep his mind centered in the heavenlies where, in position, he is seated eternally victorious with Christ! (**Ephesians 2:5-10**)

Revelation 11:4 identifies the two witnesses with Old Testament prophecy. **Zechariah 4:3,11,14** is a prophecy of Israel, not the Church.

Further, the two witnesses call down judgment upon their enemies in **Revelation 10:5,6**. Jesus rebuked his disciples for desiring to do just this and instructed the Church-age believer to pray for the well-being of his enemies, not for their destruction! (**Luke 9:54-56; Romans 12:14,17-21**)

- (8) The devil persecutes Israel, not the Church, during the Tribulation! (**Revelation 12**) There can be no doubt that the woman is identified as national Israel. **Verse 5** shows the woman bringing forth Christ! It is obvious that Jesus was brought forth by Israel, not by the Churches! (**Isaiah 9:6,7; Romans 9:5**).

Also, the symbols of **Revelation 12:1-2** recall familiar Old Testament typology of Israel. She is referred to as a woman. (**Isaiah 54:5-7**) The sun and moon and the 12 stars of **verse 2** remind us of Joseph's dream regarding Israel. (**Genesis 37:9**) The words of **Revelation 12:2** are almost an exact quote from **Micah 5:3**, again referencing Israel's delivery of the Messiah. These symbols are not used in the N.T. of the Churches.