

The Pre-Trib Rapture

A Bucket Full of Holes!



Solid proof the Pre-trib
Rapture theory is false!

by Paul Benson

The Pre-trib Rapture: A Bucket Full of Holes! *by Paul Benson*

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This is a much expanded version of the previous work:
Should we trust: The Pre-Tribulation Rapture Theory?

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Preface

A love for the truth is not an option for the believer! If you are taking the time to read this book it is obvious you have a desire to get to the truth of the matter under discussion. I commend you for that. And I pray your understanding would be greatly increased through this effort. Please proceed prayerfully. Words of truth only truly become words of life when the wind of the Spirit blows upon them.

This book is a consolidation of material from three aspects of my studies and writings on the issue of Christ's Return, and the myriad of error being presented concerning that event. To the content of a previous booklet 'Should We Trust The Pre-trib Rapture Theory?' I have added quite a number of my blog articles on this subject as well as some additional insights I have received. The result is what I consider a pretty thorough rebuke of that myth that hits it soundly from about 50 different points of concern.

Due to the source of this material being many documents written over time there is a certain redundancy evident in some of the points raised. Where possible I have edited out such repetition, but where to do so would detract from important points being made it was left in. Actually, I suspect this will probably be more beneficial rather than any annoyance as some times looking at a point from a little different slant can shed additional light on it.

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My goal here is to raise in the Body of Christ an awareness as to what is actually stated in the Word of God about the Second Coming and our gathering together unto Christ, and also what is not stated! I clearly show the various aspects of Pre-trib Rapture theory fall into the latter category.

I have found that once a person can be convinced to question the validity of that teaching, and to examine it for correctness in light of the Word of God, it quickly begins to unravel. A thorough application of critical examination leads to an understanding that every passage used to teach the pre-trib rapture is either stolen away from context dealing with the Second Coming of Christ, or are benign passages which have a presupposed notion read in to them. I am talking about passages which would in no way give you a certain understanding if you had not come to the text with that preconceived notion in hand.

The greatest strength of the Pre-trib Rapture teaching is found not in any oneness with the Scriptures, but in the eerie (and quite likely supernatural) way people are convinced to accept it without question. Few of its adherents raise even a minimal demand for Scriptural validation of its diverse components, yet vigorously declare it to be 'Bible Truth'!

It is absolutely amazing the lengths folks will go to in order to fabricate various proofs, or twist alternate renderings out of verse, to provide support for their theory. Much of this book deals with debunking those cagey 'proofs' and showing them to be unworkable. All in all I think you will find much to ponder in these pages.

So let's engage that safeguard of critical examination and take a thorough look at all the various facets of pre-trib theory, and see if there really is any reason we should be believing in such a concept.

-Paul Benson

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Check out my Blog: '**Let's Get It Right!**': www.pbenson.me

Introduction

The promise of the Resurrection of the Dead is at the very heart of our Christian faith. It is our blessed hope which the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross has purchased for us. Teaching on this amazing promise Paul wrote we should '*comfort one another with these words*' (1Thess. 4:18). I hope you know the peace and comfort received from a confidence in our future joining together with Jesus to live forever as the Redeemed.

The purpose of these writings is not to discourage folk from looking for the 'catching away' of the Church; but to encourage them to look for it in a fashion and time-frame which is in accord with the truth of the Scriptures; and to not be turned aside to follow any of the deceptive teachings which have grown so prevalent in our generation.

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse,
deceiving, and being deceived. 2Timothy 3:13

The Scriptures foretold of a progressive increase in the warfare against the Church in the area of false doctrine, There have always been falsehoods trying to seduce the Church. Even from the first century the Gnostics, Nicolaitanes, and money hungry Balaams were at work to pollute the beliefs of the early Church. But whereas in those days the watchmen were fighting at the wall to keep the enemy out, in our day the battle rages on the streets of a city whose walls have long since crumbled from neglect. And the defenders of the truth must now contend with not just the enemy, but with many who have been so inundated with falsehood they now wage war against their own watchmen, and against the very truth itself.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 2Timothy 3:16

Paul told Timothy the Scriptures were for, among other things, administering correction. My aim in writing this book is not so much to win others over to my doctrinal view-point; but that they would adopt a pattern of critically examining (in light of God's Word) what is preached and taught, and effective study habits which root out error and put it to flight. Then *the Word* will do the correcting if necessary. The Word is our standard of truth, not one particular doctrinal set or another.

It is my hope people would realize how deceived we have been by the teachings of man; and thus be convinced of the need to embrace the corrective apparatus of proper Bible study; **looking for the true meaning of verses of Scripture through studying them in the passages of their origin.** I believe this practice will ultimately lead to a similar belief structure as I have; for that has been the source of mine. And so much better to get there on efforts of your own, and not just because of what others, or even myself, have taught. I am definitely fallible; but God's Word is not.

We need to verify whether people are preaching the same meaning for Bible verses as what you would get reading them in context. This practice of critical appraisal destroys the majority of false teaching; and will prove to be a valuable defense.

'Proof texts' that are snippets of Scripture taken out of context are the basic building blocks of all pseudo-Christian false teaching. And these false teachings are not only damaging and defiling, but also quite divisive.

The introduction of the pre-tribulation rapture theory into the belief system of the Body of Christ in the 1800's, and its rise to extraordinary popularity in the last 6 to 8 decades, has produced a deep schism among us. A unified belief in proper doctrine concerning end-time events would sure help heal that damage. It is toward that end I write these words.

P.B.

Section One: Finding A Bible Based Focus

Part 1. Rapture Versus Resurrection

I can't help but notice a trend in today's preaching that does not mirror a ratio of emphasis we see in the Bible. What I mean by that is: How many times do the Scriptures mention the 'catching away' of the Church? Not many. One clear description we find in 1Thessalonians 4 and a few not so clear references to it elsewhere. But the coming Resurrection of the Dead and the transformation of the living Saints, which is going to be such an indescribably awesome phenomenon, is either vividly described or plainly referred to dozens of times in the Bible. It is a theme thoroughly woven into the fabric of Scripture.

How old is the teaching of the coming Resurrection of the Dead? Many claim Job to be possibly the earliest writings of the Scriptures; even he spoke of this event:

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that **he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth**: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet **in my flesh shall I see God**. Job 19:25-26

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Throughout the books of the Bible we see people speaking of their hope of the Resurrection. Martha said she knew her brother Lazarus would rise someday:

...Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in **the resurrection at the last day.** John 11:24

Paul also cited the hope of the Resurrection:

...Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, **Touching the resurrection of the dead** I am called in question by you this day. Acts 24:21

The Pharisees trying to trap Jesus in his words asked:

In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them?... Mark 12:23

Jesus spoke often of the blessedness of those who will be counted worthy of the Resurrection:

...for thou shalt be recompensed **at the resurrection of the just.** Luke 14:14

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto **the resurrection of life;** John 5:29

David also voiced his hope in the Resurrection:

...**For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell;** neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.
Psalm 16:9-10

Isaiah joins the crowd marveling at this wonderful promise:

Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and **the earth shall cast out the dead.** Isaiah 26:19

But not one of these people, or any others in the Bible, referred to their 'blessed hope' as that short trip from earth to the clouds known as the 'Rapture'. Their hope was in, and their main focus upon, becoming like Jesus through the Resurrection of the Dead. Other than its popularized mention in 1Thessalonians 4, where do

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you see in the Bible any notable emphasis placed on the 'catching away'? I surely do not!

So I ask again, why all this modern day focus on the 'caught up to meet him' aspect of Christ's Coming? Does *the Bible* put the emphasis there? If you stop and think about it the 'caught away' part of what we experience that day is relatively minor compared to what we will experience in the Resurrection! How did things get so turned around to the point where a brief journey upwards overshadows what transpires in the Resurrection?

The dead awake with the image of Christ. The mortal has put on immortality (1Corinthians 15:54). No more sickness, disease, or dying! We've carried the earnest (down-payment) of our inheritance all these years and now we have the fullness of that promise in our resurrection. We have now entered eternity in a glorified body, and death can never touch us. Why minimize that and maximize being carried up into the sky? Could that be a proper focus?

I realize pre-trib rapture folk believe that the Resurrection and the 'catching away' all take place in the same micro-second (a false belief discussed later). But my point is: Why carry on and on about the catching away and say so very little, or often nothing at all, about our resurrection and transformation, and the glory that shall be revealed in us? You might hear it mentioned in the reading of a text, but the pre-trib preachers rarely focus on it. Usually the brunt of the message deals with avoiding the time of great tribulation; which they incorrectly state is the wrath of God (a false notion we will also discuss later).

In all false teaching there is found an appeal to the flesh; some allure or benefit to the carnal nature. I find it telling that the rapture teaching is usually couched in the context of escaping the time of tribulation and the Mark of the Beast. While their focus there is on escapism and personal well-being, the teachings of the Bible concerning the Resurrection *don't* carry the same focus. Our anticipation of resurrection centers on *laying aside* concern for your own life and, thru faith in his death on the Cross, following in the footsteps of Christ; and identifying with his sufferings, death, burial, and rising from the dead, in the hope of inheriting eternal

life. A proper focus is not about the preservation of self. It's about the *death* of self.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, **we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:** Romans 6:5

We'll look a little more at identifying with his sufferings and death later. You may, or possibly may not, like what I have to say. My opinion of what genuine Christianity looks like seems to be quite different than that of many others.

It is my firm belief the Bible does not teach neither two resurrections of the believers nor two 'catchings away' of the Church; one before the great tribulation in addition to the one clearly taught at the Second Coming. Though many don't realize it pre-trib theory *demand*s two of each! Since I do not believe the teachings of a 'pre-tribulation rapture' are portraying the same event the Bible describes, I will be referring to those teachings as the 'pre-trib rapture theory'; and the genuine event which transpires at Christ's Return after the tribulation as the 'catching away'.

I will show many examples of why I say the pre-trib rapture theory is a deceiving and damaging false doctrine; and has been fabricated from Stolen Snippets, Deceiving Distractions, Unbiblical Concepts, and Outright Lies. It is a man-made fable resting solely upon Scripture stolen out of context and notions which completely lack any foundation in the Word of God. This is a bold accusation, and will likely offend many, but as they say: *'The proof is in the pudding!'* I hope you will consider what is written here prayerfully and with an open Bible. May the Holy Spirit guide us into all truth.

Part 2. Why A New Name: 'The Rapture?'

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power **and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.** -*Peter an apostle of Christ*

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Have you ever asked why there was a need to come up with the new name 'The Rapture'? Did anyone *really* need to rename our promise of the Resurrection? Do we need a new name for salvation? For healing? For the Cross? No, those names have been working just fine! How about for Heaven? No, Heaven doesn't need a new name either. But, for the sake of discussion, let's say I came up with a new doctrine that is *a little different* than what has been commonly believed about Heaven. And what if I said getting there is *a little easier* than what we've been taught? Just how would I go about promoting my new revelation? How could I get people to take the bait and swallow the hook?

I couldn't call it Heaven. Folks might look into what the Bible really teaches on Heaven, and the path that leads there, and call me on it. I'd need a way to get them to turn loose of long held beliefs, and embrace my theory instead. I would need some real catchy phraseology, and have to concoct some very subtle distractions.

First I would have to invent a *new name* for my new revelation. Then I could say I'm not talking about that *old concept* of paradise but this other more 'enlightened' one. Then I would start pulling snippets of Scripture out of context that kinda-sorta sound like my theory; and go to work devising all kinds of clever 'proof texts' about my new doctrine. Skewed understandings of Bible verses so cunningly devised that my unsuspecting followers will be totally convinced they are 'Bible Truth'!

I could probably even get them to finance a book series!

Where could I find a really appealing name? I know! I'll take a word for Heaven from the Greek, translate it into an obsolete dialect, then render that word into English; and I'll have a new name for my new doctrine (don't laugh, that's exactly how they came up with the name 'Rapture!'). And I can say it's from the Bible because it is (kinda-sorta).

I've got a great idea! Let's just call this other concept of paradise 'Ecstasy', shall we? Now I've got a catchy name that will appeal to the senses of the carnal: 'Ecstasy!' ('Rapture' anyone?)

And good news! You can get into this Kingdom of Ecstasy much easier than was previously believed. New revelation shows us you

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can escape all that 'suffering for Christ' business. You don't have to identify with his death. And you don't have to suffer persecution for taking a stand for Jesus in this world. Have it your way! Just accept my new teaching of escapism and all will be well.

Wouldn't you rather go hassle free to the realm of Ecstasy than to suffer aggression and hardship along the path to that other place? (Wouldn't you rather go in the Rapture and escape the end-time trials and persecutions to be endured by those awaiting the Resurrection at the Second Coming?)

OK. Enough about my new name for my new doctrine. *Please forgive me for jesting.*

But seriously, have you ever wondered why the preaching on an event called 'the Resurrection at the Last Day' for close to twenty centuries now becomes preaching on something called the 'Rapture'?

Have you ever questioned why the focus was taken off our personal identification with the persecution, death, and resurrection of Jesus (which identification leads to our *own* resurrection), and why that focus is now placed instead upon *a departure* from this world? That *is* a pretty significant change of focus! Wouldn't you agree?

What brought this on? *Why the change?*

Why? Because many in this day have turned aside to believe in a fable! This was prophesied to happen, and this erroneous modern theory is a direct fulfillment of that prophesy. Maybe there is *some* truth after all to people saying the pre-trib rapture theory is in the Bible! Here it is spoken of in this prophesy:

For the time will come when **they will not endure sound doctrine**; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And **they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.** 2Timothy 4:3-4

...they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

We are living in the day of the fulfillment of those words!

A Common Misconception

I often hear people say, 'It is not an issue to be concerned with. It's only a matter of timing. Some just believe differently about when the same event will happen in relation to end time events; that's all!' But that notion is in itself a false belief, and a subtle distraction! It keeps folks from identifying the problem, and seeing the need to deal with it.

The concept of a pre-trib rapture, and the Resurrection of the Last Day (that is actually taught in the Bible), are NOT describing the same event! (There is actually a great dissimilarity between the two!) I am surprised at how many people don't understand that Scripture plainly teaches a Resurrection at the Return of Christ to this world. Even if there *was* an earlier 'rapture' event there would still have to be another Resurrection and catching away at the Second Coming (to deal with those saved during the tribulation).

PLEASE GET THIS! It's NOT the timing of ONE event, but the introduction of a SECOND that is the issue. We have many folks in this generation claiming the Scripture is teaching two resurrections and two catchings away. This is an 'adding to' of the Word of God and is a very dangerous practice.

Even theologians who promote the pre-trib theory freely admit there IS a resurrection at the Second Coming, but say the rapture is *another separate* resurrection seven years earlier. Many people do not understand this, and thus think the (supposed) pre-trib rapture is the *only* catching away the theory teaches. This blinds them to the many Scriptural conflicts the concept of two separate 'raptures' forces. And those conflicts do exist!

But, since it's easier to pass off a false doctrine if people believe it's the only game in town, most rapture teachers don't say a lot about the Second Coming's resurrection. It causes upset in those who, when searching God's Word for both, find instead truth which rebukes their theory. The Scriptures portray the Resurrection of the Righteous as ONE event which transpires at ONE time! When you put the focus of your studies on the resurrection instead of the 'catching away' this becomes very apparent:

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But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become **the firstfruits** of them that slept. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 **For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.** 23 **But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.** 24 Then cometh the end... 1Corinthians 15:20-24

This passage gives us a clear biblical order of the Resurrection. Doesn't sound much like two different 'catchings away' does it? No, it plainly shows one event. When does this event happen according to the Bible? **At Christ's Coming!** And there is also a doctrinal safeguard built into this passage; a second witness of the types/shadows of the Old Testament events painting portraits of N.T. truths. Let's look at that second witness.

Notice the term 'firstfruits' in the passage above. This is a reference to the Old Testament practice, commanded by the Law, by which a man would ask God to sanctify, or bless, the harvest of his fields, orchards, or vineyards etc.. He was to harvest the first small portion of his crop and take it to the priest as an offering to God. The priest would *lift it up* before God as a wave offering, and this 'firstfruit' offering would sanctify the remainder of the crop; which the husbandman would then go harvest.

Do you see now why Paul called Jesus the 'firstfruits'? The offering up of Christ was a firstfruit offering to God. This sacrifice sanctified the rest of God's harvest, namely us the believers. (The day Jesus rose from the dead was not called Easter by God's people; it was the Feast of Firstfruits; which always fell on the Sunday following Passover)

What a beautiful image of Christ's work on our behalf found there in the Law. And just what is the pattern given to us here? The firstfruit offering first, then the remainder of the crop harvested. The same as we saw in 1Cor. 15! Christ resurrected first; then the rest of us at his Coming! **The harvest of ALL believers down through the centuries will take place at one time: the Second Coming!** The rapture theory divides our resurrection into two events, but the Word of God tells us this takes place all at once.

Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (1 Cor. 15:23).

So we see it's not simply a disagreement over timing, but the introduction of a myth about a second prior event; a myth which has no foundation in the truth. The Church WILL go through the great tribulation.

And we see it was the introduction of a NEW doctrine that necessitated the need for a NEW name.

If you want a truly biblical understanding of end-time events, focus your studies on the resurrection, Christ's *and* ours, and you will see a much different picture than that presented by those promising an escape from the coming time of great persecution.

The Bible promises us a wonderful day when we will be caught up to meet Jesus at the Resurrection of the Just at the Second Coming (after the tribulation).

The promise of an earlier 'rapture' is nothing but a fable!

Part 3. The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

A Prophetic Pattern

A lot of people will tell you the parable of the wheat and tares is not about the resurrection of the believers and the catching away of the Church. The reason *they must* is because their beliefs on the end-times are so far from the truth they cannot reconcile them to the prophetic patterns shown in the Scriptures.

The types, shadows, allegories, and parables of the Bible were given us as a framework for our beliefs to fit into. They are a safeguard we must follow to keep our doctrine in line with the truth. Our beliefs must bear a striking resemblance to the picture presented by these patterns or something is amiss. Let's see if our understanding of the end-time scenario fits the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares:

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Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 **Let both grow together until the harvest:** and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, **Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them:** but gather the wheat into my barn. Matthew 13:24-30

The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; 39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40 **As therefore the tares are gathered and burned** in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. Matthew 13:38-40

The Resurrection of the Just will be God's end of the world harvest of all the fruit his good seed, the Gospel, has produced. Jesus gave the parable of the wheat and tares to show us a pattern of this harvest of mankind at his Return to Earth. **It will follow the pattern of a farmer in those days harvesting his crop.**

At harvest time they would go through the field and separate the tares (weeds) out from among the wheat so the bad seed would not be mixed with the good when it was reaped. These tares would be bound in bundles and set aside for later burning. Then the harvest of the good crop could now take place, with the wheat then being taken away from the field. Later the farmer would return and burn the bound up weeds. That is the pattern given for the end of the

world harvest, and the events which transpire WILL fit it perfectly! But the teaching of many on this issue does not follow that biblical pattern.

Those promoting the pre-trib rapture theory say this parable cannot be about the Resurrection of the Just and our catching away because the tares (they say) are destroyed first then the wheat is harvested; so this parable must be about something else (a later judgment or something). This is a very common misunderstanding. But they are not discerning the real sequence the pattern presents.

What they miss is the tares were not *destroyed* first in this harvest of old, only separated and marked for destruction; (...bind them in bundles). Notice the passage said, '*As therefore* the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world'. It's saying the manner in which these tares at the end of the world are dealt with will mirror that of the tares of the old time harvest. It's not saying 'Go burn the tares now!'; it's saying 'Go bind them in bundles for burning.' Think about it. Those tares couldn't be burned with the wheat still in the ground. It would set fire to the field and destroy the crop! The field was not burnt until AFTER the harvest! (Likewise the wrath of God does not fall until AFTER the catching away at the Second Coming.)

This pattern fits perfectly with the end-time events prophesied elsewhere in the Scriptures. The Mark of the Beast will identify and separate the tares, sealing their fate, (binding them for later burning). Then the Lord will harvest the wheat, gather us up unto him, and return to burn his field. Just like they did in the days of old! God's harvest will fit the pattern of the literal harvest or there was no point in giving the parable in the first place.

Also the Bible says the harvest is **the end** of the world. This must take place in conjunction with the Return of Christ which **is at the end**. A purported pre-trib rapture would not happen at the end, but 7 years before the end! That is totally out of sync with this parable. Their scenario has the wheat harvested (pre-trib rapture) before the tares are bound up; and then more wheat growing after this preliminary harvest (the Jews and Gentiles saved during the tribulation)! No wonder they have to say the parable of the wheat and tares is not about the resurrection and our catching away. It

rebukes over and over the bogus order their doctrine presents of the end-time events!

The Chaff Has To Go!

A vital part of this process of harvesting the wheat was the separating of the wheat from the chaff. The chaff was once quite important in that it housed, nourished, and protected the kernel of wheat while it was alive; but it is no longer of use to the wheat after it has been harvested. It is also of no use to the farmer, and must be removed before the wheat is acceptable to him.

Our mortal body is typified by the chaff. Like the chaff of the wheat it now houses, nourishes, and protects us, but will be of no further use to us (or God) after the harvest of mankind. It has to go! Just as the wheat is shed of its husk, we also will shed our 'chaff' at the resurrection of the Just! The fallen flesh we now inhabit, no longer of any value to us (or God) will be replaced with a glory we can only imagine!

Just as the wind blowing over the threshing floor blew away the chaff, at the Resurrection the wind of the Holy Spirit will move upon us and free us from this body! And once the wheat (us) has shed its chaff (our earthly body) we will be accepted, and gathered unto our Lord (the catching away)! Is this harvest not the hope and anticipation of every believer?

So we see the post-tribulation Return of Christ, and the resurrection / catching away that happens at that time, is a perfect match to the prophetic imagery of this parable! In both the old-time harvest and the end-time harvest we see:

- **The wheat and tares growing together until the end.** Any theory which removes the believers (or unbelievers) from the world *before* the very end is unworkable!
- **Then the tares separated out and bound up for later destruction.** The Mark of the Beast and persecution of Antichrist will accomplish this separation between the true believers and the unbelievers / make-believers in preparation for the harvest of mankind.

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- **Then the harvest of the wheat.** The angels now begin the reaping of God's long awaited harvest: the Righteous redeemed!
- **Then the separating of the wheat from its chaff.** Just as the wheat in the old-time harvest was lifted by a winnowing fork into the breeze that blew across the threshing floor, separating out the chaff; we will be raised by the resurrection and the wind of the Spirit will free us from mortality by transforming us into a likeness of Christ's current glorified state!
- **Then the wheat being accepted and received.** Just as the wheat once freed from its chaff was received by the farmer so will we now be fit to be gathered unto Christ as he awaits us in the air at his Second Coming!
- **Then the husbandman returns to the field and burns it (along with the tares).** After the harvest and in-gathering the farmer would return to burn his field to destroy the bad seed (tares), purify the field, and prepare it for the new season to come. In like manner Jesus will descend to earth, after the resurrection /catching away at his Second Coming, and purge this evil world by fire, preparing it for a new era!

The resurrection and catching away of the Church at the Second Coming (and the fiery vengeance poured out at that time) fit the prophetic picture of the parable of the wheat and tares like a tailor made glove! And why shouldn't this be so? Both are plainly described to us in the Bible! But any other scenario (pre-trib, mid-trib, no-trib or what-have-you) are, as we have seen, not according to the prophetic pattern given us by this parable. And thus should be rejected outright.

Part 4. Embracing A Biblical Image Of Election!

Sadly, the 'Learned Ones' have a way of turning the simple truths of the Bible into a complicated mess which can only be (supposedly) understood through their 'Learned Theories'. The wayward notions of TWO comings of Christ in the end-times, and a pre-tribulation rapture, rest upon (and in fact are forced by) what

is known as Dispensational Theology. Without this faulty theological foundation as a platform, an already wobbly pre-trib rapture theory would fall over on its deluded noggin.

A Dispensationalist will often 'prove' his theory by pointing out the many errors of Replacement (Covenant) Theology. And this is not hard to do as those errors do exist. It is quite possible to show from the Scriptures the many shortcomings of Replacement theology. But there is a subtle deception at work there. Because Dispensational (Separation) theology is also full of error itself. A classic case of the pot calling the kettle black!

The truth of the matter is found in a fact which those who promote either of those theories like to ignore. That there is a third theory which rebukes both of them; and presents a Biblical (and therefor proper) understanding of the concept of Election. That third theory is known as Remnant Theology. But you do not need to be a theologian to understand who God's true elect are; it is actually quite simple!

The three main theories on election are:

- 1). Replacement (Covenant) Theology**
- 2). Separation (Dispensational) Theology**
- 3). Remnant (Biblical) Theology**

Let's take a brief look at each of these three theories; and then see how they compare to the biblical teachings on who God's true 'Elect' are today. Again, this is not a complicated matter; it is a truth which is easily grasped through Paul's use of the Olive Tree to illustrate Election in Romans 11.

Replacement (Covenant) Theology

Replacement theology, also known as supersessionism, teaches the Christian church has superseded Israel in God's plan. The heart of Replacement theology is the notion that the Church has completely replaced Israel in the plan of God; and that the Jews are no longer God's chosen people. That all the future promises to Israel will be fulfilled in the Church, and not to Israel. This means

one must spiritualize the unfulfilled promises to Israel and then apply them to the Church; and claim the New Testament usages (after Acts) of the word 'Israel' are referring to the Church and not to national Israel.

Replacement theology relies heavily upon an allegorical system of Biblical interpretation. This has been a very popular view for much of the history of the Church; although it's tendency to foster antisemitism has led to many rejecting it since the atrocities of WWII.

FOOD 4 THOUGHT: If this theory were true Paul's illustration in Romans 11 would have been of one tree being uprooted and then another tree being planted in its place; but this is not the case. Keep this in mind.

More on Replacement (Covenant) theology
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supersessionism>

Separation (Dispensational) Theology

Separation Theology has a much different outlook on the relation of Israel to the Church. They claim a great distinction between God's dealings with Israel and the Church; with them being and remaining a totally separate entity. The promises of God to Israel (so they claim) will be fulfilled to them exclusively after they return to God in the end-time scenario; and God's dealings with, and reward of, the Church take place in an entirely separate manner (and location).

A major tenet of this theory is that when Israel rejected Christ God suspended his dealings with them, and the Christian Church is what he has occupied himself with in the mean time. The Church is seen as a parenthetical work God does while waiting for the day he will once again 'deal' with the Jewish nation, and bring them into right relationship with him.

The strict application of historical grammatical interpretation in Dispensational theology is what forces the separation of Israel and the Church. It also forces the removal of the Church before God's final dealings with Israel to bring them into the fulfillment of his promises to them. It is the foundation upon which the doctrine of

the pre-tribulation rapture of the Church stands. **Without this foundation the pre-trib rapture theory cannot stand on its own!**

FOOD 4 THOUGHT: If this theory were true Paul's illustration in Romans 11 would have been of TWO trees which remain separate and apart from one another; but this is not what he portrayed. Keep this also in mind.

More on Separation (Dispensational) theology:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dispensationalism>

Although there are certainly vital elements of truth in both these afore mentioned theological positions, sadly neither brings us to a conclusion concerning election which is in agreement with the Scriptures. Let's check out that third theory.

Remnant (Biblical) Theology

When we leave behind the prideful high-minded theories of man, and prayerfully seek for a Spirit-led interpretation of the Scriptures (which involves different forms of interpretation applied at the proper time and in a proper manner) we arrive at a third theory on election: Remnant Theology! The elect of God who will inherit his promises are a remnant of called out and chosen ones. This remnant is comprised of both a segment of Israel (messianic Jews) as well as the Gentile believers in Christ joined to form what the Bible calls '**one new man in Christ**' (Ephesians 2:11-19).

Remnant Theology is what is portrayed by the illustration of the Olive tree in Romans 11. It is actually a portrayal of elements of two trees, one natural and one wild, which are joined in a remarkable manner. **It is the Biblical and therefor correct understanding of election.** Let's take a run through this chapter, and you will see what I mean.

In the preceding chapter Paul had stated his: *heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved (Rom. 10:1)*. He then goes on to teach the ONLY means of reconciliation to God (and the inheriting of his promises) is righteousness by faith; and he then expounds upon the necessity of the preaching of the

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Gospel to bring this reconciliation to Israel in particular, and all men in general. On to chapter 11.

I say then, **Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.** For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. **2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew...** Romans 11:1-2

These first two verses of the chapter in question totally dispel the notion presented by Replacement Theology that God is 'done' dealing with national Israel. He will be dealing with ALL nations of the earth right up until the day of his Return, calling mankind to repentance and promising eternal life.

God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias?... I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. **5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.** 6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. Romans 11:2-6

Here Paul introduces this concept of an elect remnant of Israel, and firmly states this election is not by lineage, but BY GRACE! And this is very important to grasp; as much teaching upon election puts forth the notion that Israel attains their inheritance simply because they are in the bloodline of those to whom God made the promises. But that is a falsehood, and denies what is clearly taught in this chapter.

(SIDE NOTE: I have never been able to get a dispensationalist / pre-trib teacher to sit down and have a honest look at, and discussion of, Romans 11. They will jump right to the end of the chapter, twist a couple of verses on calling, and then speed off to a discussion of their beliefs based upon Historical Grammatical interpretation of certain O.T. texts. *It is almost like they are frightened of this part of the Bible!*)

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Dispensationalists must turn a blind eye to almost the entire 11th chapter of Romans, as well as a great deal of the other writings of the Apostles, as they are completely contrary to their teachings. And the part they will quote from chapter 11 (v.25-26), they twist the meaning around to where Scripture which actually rebukes their theory now sounds like it promotes it. But they will never accept the message of the whole chapter for what it says. Their erroneous theory forces them to engage in selective vision and willful ignorance.)

What then? **Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it**, and the rest were blinded & (According as it is written, **God hath given them the spirit of slumber**, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. Romans 11:7-8

Notice in this passage national Israel and election (contrary to the teachings of many) are NOT presented as being synonymous! **The election attained something national Israel did not!** National Israel in rejecting Christ was placed in a slumber which caused them to be cut off from election (except for that believing remnant). When you understand this the rest of the true New Covenant concept of election begins to make sense.

And if **some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them**, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; 18 Boast not against the branches. **But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.** 19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20 **Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith.** Be not highminded, but fear: 21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Romans 11:17-21

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Now Paul brings in the illustration of the Olive tree; and also begins a rebuke of those who totally reject Israel as a part of God's future plan; He compares the unbelieving majority of national Israel to branches who were broken off the natural Olive tree (election) by their unbelief (rejecting of Christ); and the Gentile believers as branches of a 'wild' Olive tree which were grafted into the natural Olive tree (election) through faith in Christ.

This merger of the Church being added into the ranks of God's elect remnant by faith in Christ is at the heart of the true biblical understanding of election.

(SIDE NOTE: It is important to note the messianic Jews do not join us in our election; we join them in theirs. We are grafted into their election, not vice-versa. We do not replace them as Replacement (Covenant) Theology demands; or stand apart from them as a separate work God is doing, as Separation (Dispensational) Theology demands. **We are joined to the Jewish Remnant as one entity in Christ.**)

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. **23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.** 24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? 25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; **that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.** Romans 11:22-25

Paul continues his warning against a haughty attitude of the Gentile believers over their becoming a part of God's chosen; and introduces us to the reality of the future return of Israel to their

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status as the elect. He brings out the point God is able to graft back in through faith those who were cut off by unbelief. This promise of a future deliverance of a believing portion of Israel (1/3?) is plainly taught in numerous passages of the Bible. *It is prophesied and will come to pass!*

As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. **29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.** Romans 11:28-29

God still has a call and a future for those of national Israel who will heed that call and return unto him. But it will not be a promise fulfilled through lineage or national citizenship. The only door open to them is the same door we all must enter through; The Cross of Christ and the Blood which was shed to wash away our sin. **There is no election outside of Christ!** And all of the Covenant promises God made will be fulfilled in Christ. *ALL of them!*

We merely skimmed the truths presented us in Romans 11; but any with an open mind, and a hunger for the truth, should now see the true concept of election is not given by either Dispensational or Replacement Theory. **God gave this illustration of the Olive tree as a simple pattern to show us the truth on election.** I hope you would study this out in a thorough fashion, and solidify this truth in your heart. It will safe-guard you against the wayward and high-minded theories of those whose education has gotten in the way of their learning of God's truth.

Pre-Trib Rapture Refuted

Now let's address my earlier statement of how a proper understanding of election destroys the myth of a pre-tribulation rapture.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God....** ...Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.** 6 That

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which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. John 3:3+5-6

One of the most grievous errors of the pre-trib doctrine is that it presents a salvation for national Israel apart from the Work of the Cross. They teach their salvation is different than ours; that it is bestowed upon them through O.T. promises, and they will inherit that promise through lineage. This is a gross misrepresentation of the Scriptures, *and is outright heresy!* Neither the O.T. Saints nor the (supposed) non-Church tribulation Saints will be saved apart from grace through faith.

Dispensationalism teaches the age of grace *comes to an end* at the 'rapture' before the start of the great tribulation; and the tribulation Saints are saved by showing their faith through their martyrdom. BUT this concept of self-redemption is more in line with Islamic doctrine than the doctrine of the Bible! Jesus clearly taught he is the Door, and the only door, into the Kingdom of God.

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. Isaiah 42:1

Please allow me to present some simple truth any believer should be able to grasp. **Jesus Christ himself was prophesied to become God's elect.** He is the fulfillment of the 'seed' of Abraham the promise was given to. And if we are in Christ we too are that promised 'seed'! (see Galatians ch. 3) Therefore if Jesus is God's elect, we who are in Christ are also the elect of God! If the Head of the Body of Christ be God's elect, how could his Body (the Church which he indwells) not also be God's elect? The Church is very much *God's elect today!

*A study on how the New Testament clearly presents the Body of Christ as the elect of God today can be found in Section 3 Part 2.

The pre-trib theory rests firmly upon the notion of God dealing with national Israel as his chosen elect apart from his dealings with the Church. Proving God's true elect are a Remnant body composed of a blending of Jewish and Gentile followers of Christ means God deals with them in a singular manner and at the same

time. This sets aside any notion of God removing the Church before the tribulation so he can concentrate on his 'Jewish elect'. **He has been concentrating on them for 2000 years in Christ!**

FOOD 4 THOUGHT: Is God going to split the 'one new man in Christ' he created in half, and subject half to the (supposed) 'wrath of God' during the tribulation; but take the other half off to a wedding feast that only half the Bride is in attendance of? This is the kind of unreasonable conclusions Dispensational theology presents. When confronted with the Biblical truth of election the pre-trib theory becomes quite nonsensical. Many other aspects of this folly could be highlighted but I think you get the point.

Teachers serve an important function in the Church (I should know because I am one); but a teacher should only be *confirming* what the Spirit and the Word *are already speaking* to you (plus you can benefit from many hours of research and prayer condensed into a short teaching). **God never intended for 'education' to replace the function of the Holy Spirit as teacher!** All in all you don't need a guru (*or me*) to tell you what to think or believe. And with so many theological theories at odds with each other it is quite obvious 'higher learning' does NOT necessarily equate to higher levels of truth!

I hope you are encouraged to reach out and grasp the simple truth on election presented in Romans 11; and not leave it up to the 'Learned Ones' to tell you what to think or believe. We may develop a firm understanding of the doctrines of our faith by simply studying the Scriptures for ourselves (under the guidance of the Holy Spirit) and choosing to believe what is plainly stated in them.

May the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God, lead us all into God's perfect truth. And may God deliver us from the many errors of the 'Learned Ones'!

Part 5. Thy Kingdom Come

My beloved spake, and said unto me, **Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. 11 For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;** 12 The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; 13 The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. **Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.** Song 2:10-13

Come Spring

What a poignant and beautiful allegory we get from this book of the Bible. There's a day coming! A wonderful bright spring day arrives after a time of winter's harshness. Who doesn't anticipate spring after all the cold and moisture involved with the winter season? (Up here in Montana it comes in the form of snow and ice, and often sub-zero temperatures!)

I don't think this allegory is speaking of winter and spring in the sense of months and years, but in the sense of the time of man, so to speak. As the closing of a year gives way to the brutality of winter, and as the fullness of life gives way to the troubles of old age, so also **the fullness of this era of mankind is sadly giving way to great darkness.** But thank God, there IS a day coming!

A coming springtime day in which the Bride of Christ will rise up to meet the Groom as he returns to earth as promised. *Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.* If you are a believer and those words don't stir you deeply you better check your pulse. The Resurrection at the last day, and our catching away to meet Jesus,

has been the hope and expectation of the Church for nearly 20 centuries. Just as assuredly as Jesus came to earth to redeem us by his sacrifice on that Cross, he will return for those he has redeemed.

Come Sunrise

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and **all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up,** saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. **2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings;** and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

Malachi 4:1-2

A stunning contrast is painted for us here of the marked difference that day will bring for those longing for his Return compared to the fate of those who reject his Lordship. **One day but with two very different outcomes for those who experience it.** For the wicked it will be a day of judgment and destruction; a grim end without hope of redemption. But to the righteous it will be a day of healing and renewal; the start of a new day full of promise and blessing; portrayed in the following passage as a glorious sunrise after a long dark night of great tribulation and trial.

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. **2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee,** and his glory shall be seen upon thee. Isaiah 60:1-2

I know this scenario doesn't jive with what a lot of people are teaching about the Return of Christ (many erroneously have the Bride *departing before* the bitter winter) but this is the pattern given us here, and so many other places in the Word. Jesus is coming to dispel the darkness, not to take us away from it.

Come Kingdom

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, **The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.** Revelation 11:15

As believers we await a coming King as well as a coming Kingdom. He has not promised to take us off to his Kingdom; but *he has promised to bring it here to us!* The exhortation of the Scriptures **is for us to be awaiting a Return, not a departure.** Isn't that the whole point of praying 'thy kingdom come' like Jesus said to? Christians have been praying for this day since he departed!

Come Lord Jesus

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense. Song 4:6

Some great advice here on how to pass the time awaiting that wonderful day. Climb a fragrant mountain and wait there! David called this the secret place of the Most High where one abides under the shadow of the Almighty. A place where the Magnificent One feeds among his lilies. A place of fellowship and strength only known to those who press in with the whole heart, hungering and thirsting after righteousness. I hope you know where that place is. Maybe I'll see you there; we can pray for his Return together.

My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies. 17 **Until the day break, and the shadows flee away,** turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether. Song 2:16-17

An Embarrassing Numbering Issue!

The fact that the 'Second Coming' of Christ is referred to as such is in itself irrefutable evidence that the pre-trib rapture myth is truly a modern creation. The Church has always referred to Christ's Return to Earth after the great tribulation as the Second Coming because they believed it would be his next appearance!

If the early church had believed in one coming of Christ to 'rapture' them, and then another coming when he returns to rule and reign years later, they would have by nature called his 'rapture' coming the Second Coming and his later Return to rule would of course been named 'the Third Coming'!

When the pre-trib rapture theory came to popularity there was no good way to deal with this pesky numbering issue; because the concept of his Second Coming was already so ingrained in the vernacular of the believers it could not be undone or altered. So they have to shy away from this sore spot, and act like this is a non-issue, even though it's clearly a major rebuke to their myth. This 'Uh-oh!' causes many to question the correctness of their rapture theory.

And rightly so!

Section Two: Stolen Snippets

The Seduction Of Error

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, **giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils...** 1Timothy 4:1

False doctrine ALWAYS carries with it a seduction. You can count on that. Here is a quote from my book **Escape or Passover**:

QUOTE: There is a spiritual seduction that goes hand in hand with false teaching. You'll always find a temptation to the flesh involved in accepting error. Somehow wrapped up in every false doctrine is a benefit to the flesh. Whether it be the exaltation of self, the promise of pleasure, escaping the call to crucifixion, the lure of personal prosperity, or simply an easier route to be had (escapism); somewhere in every false doctrine is an appeal to the carnal man.

Recognizing Satan's tactics of offering benefit to non-subdued flesh or a carnal mind is half the battle in living in victory over seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. The seduction of false teaching has a much greater pull on the one who chooses to live in carnality or pride. Much ground can be gained in this battle by giving heed to the call to live a crucified life. A dead man is not all that interested in offers catering to the lusts of the flesh or the pride of life.

Coupled with seeking knowledge of the truth, a life of humility and holiness is very much an additional protection

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against falsehood. Not everyone will be able to receive that statement, but it's true. A clean heart and wholesome teaching are a lot more connected than we realize. There is a delusion and a seduction involved in ALL false teaching that escapes the detection of the natural man, and has to be discerned spiritually.

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; **because they received not the love of the truth**, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause **God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie**: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

2Thessalonians 2:10-12 **END QUOTE**

The Danger Of Stolen Snippets

Evidence of mischief should be an immediate Red Flag concerning *any* teaching! People who preach the truth do not need to engage in shenanigans to get their message across. Whenever we see deceptive practices employed we should stop and question the motivation. *But how many actually do?*

It is quite common to use isolated verses or even portions of verse in our preaching and teaching. I call these isolated bits of verse 'snippets'. We all use them (even me), and space and time constraints dictate that we do. No one could reasonably expect we should quote an entire context every time we want to refer to a specific verse. But there is an inherent danger involved in this practice. It's very easy to stray from the truth the verse was intended to convey.

A common tool of deception is the practice of pulling a snippet out of its proper context, and using it to convey an idea that it does not present in its original context. I refer to these misappropriated bits of Scripture as 'Stolen Snippets'! They sound quite convincing until compared with what their contextual meaning actually speaks.

The danger with this practice is this: To those who are lacking in discernment, or a familiarity with the true teachings of the Word of

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God, the poisoned concepts presented by these stolen snippets will most likely be ingested as truth! But the antidote is quite simple. Read the snippet in its original context and ask: Does this verse (or portion of verse) now speak what it has been claimed to speak, or was it assigned a new or altered meaning?

If the claimed meaning of the snippet is not in sync with the original meaning, then that facet of doctrine it is being used to present should be considered bogus! If this critical evaluation was a standard practice of all Christians there would be a lot less falsehood defiling the Body of Christ. It was this practice of critical examination that got me free of the pre-trib error the Denomination I was a part of sought to impose upon me. The knowledge of the truth set me free! **Thank you Jesus!**

Examples Of Stolen Snippets

Stolen Snippet 1. 'As it was in the days of Noah'

And **as it was in the days of Noe**, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, **until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.** 28 Likewise also **as it was in the days of Lot**; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29 But **the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all.** 30 Even **thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.**
Luke 17:26-30

You often hear pre-trib preachers making statements like: 'Jesus said it would be just like the days of Noah and Lot when our rapture happens.' See how cleverly they now have Jesus acknowledging their theory. This is subtle deceit. They are insinuating Jesus was referring to a pre-trib rapture when he said these phrases. This is not true. These allegorical references to Noah and Lot are unmistakably both found in the immediate context of Jesus teaching on his Return. Notice in the passage above the

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words: 'thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is *revealed*.' That is the Second Coming!

If you study it out you would be amazed how many pre-trib 'proof texts' are actually snippets of Scripture stolen out of passages clearly belonging to the Return of Christ. They are stealing these snippets out of Matthew 24 and applying them to their theory for the same reason they always do; they don't have any of their own! The Bible does not teach a previous event, only the Resurrection of the Dead at the Second Coming. There are no pre-trib rapture verses, only *stolen ones* used to teach that error.!

Many others use a twisted interpretation of these verses to promote a number of false teachings about the end-times. They say Jesus was comparing the conditions of society and moral decay of our age and theirs, in these passages. I see *nothing* in this passage about the decay of society, or even a mention of the sinfulness of the people in general! The focus was on the fact that life was just going on as usual until judgment fell. I would have to agree there are many similarities between our day and theirs, but pointing that out was not his objective at all. As we will see he was making just ONE significant point.

The point of this allegory was the similarity of *the sudden destruction of the wicked* following *the deliverance of the Righteous* in both their day, and the coming day of Christ's Return. The very same day the door was closed on the ark God's wrath began to descend upon the wicked. The very same day Lot left Sodom and entered Zoar destruction rained down upon the wicked. The same day Jesus returns, and resurrects/catches away the Righteous, sudden destruction will once again fall upon the wicked. This is the point Jesus was trying to get across, and the prophetic pattern we are to embrace. Same day - sudden destruction!

Shifting the focus away from this is a necessary distraction because the concept of '*sudden destruction of all the wicked immediately following the catching away*' does not fit the framework of their esteemed fable in the least bit. They teach the righteous are taken away 7 (or 3½ for some) years before Jesus returns and destroys his enemies. These allegorical passages about

Noah and Lot are actually an explosive rebuke to the pre-trib rapture, and must be diffused, and then misapplied to protect their theory. Standard operating procedure for the promotion of that doctrine.

Stolen Snippet 2. 'In the twinkling of an eye'

In a moment, **in the twinkling of an eye**, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1Corinthians 15:51-52

Almost any theologian (including rapture theorists!), will tell you 1Corinthians chapter 15 cannot rightfully be considered a 'rapture passage'. There is no mention of the catching away of the believers to be found in the *entire* chapter! But it is probably the most descriptive of any in the whole Bible dealing with the event of the Resurrection of the Dead.

It does NOT say we will be 'caught away' in the twinkling of an eye! Read carefully. It says we will be *changed* in the twinkling of an eye. Not a thing about a rapture! To say the phrase is referring to our catching away is a false statement! **It is a lie!** The reference is to the raising of the dead and the transformation to a glorified body. How then did the phrase '*in the twinkling of an eye*' come to be applied to our journey from the earth to the clouds, and thus giving everyone a quite presumptuous notion this trip will happen instantaneously? It is a stolen snippet!

This is a prime example of a snippet of Scripture stolen out of its rightful context, assigned a new meaning, and then misused to promote an unbiblical concept. This hi-jacked verse has been turned into a catch-phrase for the pre-trib rapture theory. I'm sure you have heard it used countless times to support the notion of an instantaneous disappearance of the Body of Christ prior to the great tribulation. That we are (supposedly) going to vanish in the twinkling of an eye! But what does that verse really teach in its true context?

And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,** at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, **and we shall be changed.** 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 1Corinthians 15:49-53

The entire chapter of 1Corinthians 15 deals with the resurrection and our transformation to a state that mirrors that of our Lord Jesus. Again I say: The catching away of the Church is not mentioned even once in the entire chapter! That is NOT the focus of this phrase. No where does the Bible say the Church will 'disappear' in the twinkling of an eye. It says we shall be 'changed' in the twinkling of an eye.

'But Paul', they say, 'Don't you understand it all happens together at once?' And then I have to say, 'Oh, does it really? Why should we believe that? You don't have one verse that presents that notion either; not even a stolen one! If you believe that it is because someone *taught you* to believe it, not because you read it in your Bible!'

...the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 **Then** we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them...
1Thessalonians 4:16-17

If you have one event happen **and then** another event follows it they don't happen simultaneously. Here once again we have a snippet of Scripture robbed away from its home and used to support a totally unfounded belief that the 'rapture' is a split second event. The Bible does not say the catching away will happen 'in the twinkling of an eye', nor that the resurrection and catching away are a simultaneous event; and the use of this phrase in regard to the promotion of either notion is quite deceptive.

Resurrection and ascension are *not* the same event! Look at Jesus our example and forerunner. Think about it. Was his resurrection and ascension the same event? No, they were forty days apart! I don't know how much time (a little or a lot) will be between ours; but **the idea of the Church instantly vanishing has no foundation in the Word.** Not ONE verse! It is taught by the deceptive use of the stolen snippet '*in the twinkling of an eye*'. But I expect our rise to the clouds to mirror that of our forerunner Jesus (a visible ascension). Why would it not? We'll look at a more biblical picture of our catching away a little later.

Stolen Snippet 3. 'Of that day and hour knoweth no man'

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. Matthew 24:36

This verse comes from a context clearly speaking of the Second Coming of Christ. Try as you might you will not find the phrase '*But of that day and hour knoweth no man*' used in regard to a pre-trib rapture. **You will only find it used to specifically refer to the Second Coming!** Strangely, it has become a standard part of the pre-trib story, and many accept it without question. But there is no foundation for this in the Bible!

You would think surely there is a verse somewhere that says, "*No man knows the day or hour of the pre-trib rapture event!*" Why is this? Because people accept the notions presented them by the use of stolen snippets without demanding an express statement of that fact in the Scriptures. We shall devote an entire chapter to the misuse of this snippet later on.

Stolen Snippet #4. 'One shall be taken, and the other left'

Then shall two be in the field; the **one shall be taken, and the other left.** 41 Two women shall be grinding at

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the mill; **the one shall be taken, and the other left.**

Matthew 24:40-41

Left behind! Where ever did the pre-trib crowd find that catch-phrase? Just think about how many sermons have been preached, books have been written, and films produced (not to mention millions of dollars made) off of the idea of being 'left behind' by missing 'the rapture'. Have you ever questioned where in Scripture did they get the concept of some *escaping* and others being *left behind* to face the great tribulation and the mark of the beast?

THEY STOLE IT!

The verses quoted above are another passage about the Second Coming of Jesus, and the Resurrection /catching away which happens at that time! A close look at the context of Matthew 24 shows the entire chapter to be dealing with either the Second Coming, the events and signs leading up to it, or the warnings to us concerning it. There is not a pre-trib rapture even so much as hinted at in the entire chapter.

This is *another* clear-cut case of Scripture stolen out of its rightful context and utilized as prostheses for a theory which has no legs of its own to stand on. This is another theft. **Somebody call the cops!** If a judge made the pre-trib rapture theorists give back all the Scripture they have stolen over the years they wouldn't have any left to teach on. Their doctrine would have to be 'Left Behind'!

This is just one more example of a false claim leading to a popular but mistaken notion. Sorry wrong again! **All these verses from Mathew are in their context clearly speaking of the Second Coming.** Verse 40 starts with the word THEN, addressing the event previously described in the chapter: The Second Coming!

FOOD 4 THOUGHT: What amazes me is how dispensationalist / pre-trib preachers will go to such great lengths to convince you Matthew 24 is about God's dealings with the Jews in the end-times, **and NOT about the Church** (in order to say *the elect being caught up to Christ after the tribulation (Matt. 24:31) are not really the Church, but the Jews who got saved in the tribulation). But then they will pull out all these

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snippets of verse **from that very chapter**, assign a new understanding to them, and use them to teach a (supposed) pre-trib rapture **of the Church!** And few seem to even notice that double-dealing! **Wake-up people!** (*Section 3 part 2.)

If you are going to teach the Olivet Discourse is not about the Body of Christ, then PLEASE STOP using snippets of it to teach a pre-trib rapture of the Body of Christ! *Good Grief!* How can people engage in such duplicitous practices and not be bothered by it? The pre-trib theory is chock full of such conflicting ideas! Want to get rid of all that conflicting theory? Teach ONE catching away of the Church at ONE time: The Second Coming! That is what the Bible teaches!

Stolen Snippet 5. 'As a thief in the night'

But the day of the Lord will come **as a thief in the night; in the which the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.** 2Peter 3:10

News flash here people! The day the heavens disappear and the works of man are burned up is the Return of Christ to Earth, not an event seven years earlier!

The phrase '*like a thief in the night*' is such a pillar in the structure of the pre-trib theory you will rarely hear a sermon on it where it's not used. Also used as a book and film title, and even on 'rapture ready' tee-shirts, many would be shocked to know this phrase was lifted from the context of the Second Coming, and is NOT speaking of a prior event!

Christ's Return WILL come as '*a thief in the night*', but did you know there is no where in the Bible this phrase is used in relation to a pre-trib rapture? Anyone who would claim the above passage from the writings of Peter was referring to a pre-tribulation rapture of the Saints would have some serious problems in the area of reading skills and comprehension! And yes, I do realize the same

phrase is used in another place in the Bible. Let's take a look at that one also.

I have noted elsewhere that in 1Thessalonians we have a situation where a chapter-break splits a contextual passage in two, and if not careful we lose track of some of that contextual information. It is important to understand that 1Thessalonians 4:13 through 5:11 is all one long contextual discussion; and the subject of that context is clearly the Second Coming of Christ! Many refuse to acknowledge this due to the impact that has on their unbiblical notions, but it is absolutely true. How about we give the entire section of Paul's letter discussing the Return and catching away a good look? Here is some of it to start with:

For the Lord himself **shall descend from Heaven** with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain **shall be caught up together with them in the clouds**, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18

Wherefore comfort one another with these words. 5:1

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.** 3 **For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them**, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

1Thessalonians 4:16 - 5:3

Do you notice any difference reading this passage without the interruption of the chapter break? It more clearly shows it's a description of the Second Coming and the sudden destruction that follows. This is NOT a pre-trib passage! The fact this passage *ties the *catching away* (4:17) to the *sudden destruction* of the wicked (5:3) prohibits the notion this is a pre-trib passage. It just does NOT fit their story!

(*a tie clearly shown also by Jesus comparing the rescue of the righteous and the immediately ensuing destruction of the wicked at his Second Coming to the same pattern

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shown in the story of Noah and Lot. **Same day – sudden destruction!** Matt. 24:37-39, Luke 17:26-30)

Now back to our stolen snippet. Once again, we see in 1Thess 5:2 the phrase '*like a thief in the night*' was also used here in regard to the Second Coming. But where does the Bible use it to speak of a pre-trib rapture? It doesn't! Both times this phrase is used (2Peter 3:10 and 1Thess 5:2) it is directly tied to the sudden destruction of the wicked at the Second Coming. The pre-trib rapture does NOT in any way present such a picture! This distinctly shows how bogus it is to claim the phrase is a reference to their unworkable theory.

Remarkably, in verses 4:16 thru 5:11 of 1Thessalonians (clearly dealing with the Second Coming) we find not one, but THREE phrases which are hi-jacked from this context and deceptively applied to the pre-trib teaching!

Let's look at the second snippet which has been pulled from this context and misused.

Stolen Snippet 6. 'Shall be caught up ...to meet the Lord in the air'

Also in this same contextual discussion in 1Thessalonians we see the popular phrase 'shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, *to meet the Lord in the air*'. But, considering the true subject of the context in discussion, to state this phrase is talking about a pre-trib rapture is absolute falsehood! Even most pre-trib believing theologians will (if pressed) admit this is not a pre-trib passage, but few include that fact in their teachings (for obvious reasons).

Amazingly, this is the very verse (v.17) from which the catchy name 'Rapture' was derived! I guess it goes something like this: Caught-up (English) = Harpodzo (Greek) = rapturio (Latin) = Rapture (English) so Yee-haw! (Montana Redneck). *Sorry, I could not resist the jab.* But quite the linguistic gymnastics that was employed to concoct a flashy new name for their new doctrine! (And it very much IS a modern *not a historical* doctrine.)

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Please briefly ponder the fact this context about the Second Coming we are discussing is *the only place* in the Bible this phrase on the catching away is found!

DO you get the significance of that? I mean SERIOUSLY!

Think about that! The name rapture came from a passage of the Bible clearly discussing the Second Coming of Christ and the catching away of the Church at *that* time! It comes from a stolen snippet! **Even the very name 'rapture' cannot be tied to the pre-trib theory by the Scriptures!** What a joke that is! Excuse me but I find that quite laughable!

Why did they have to steal a snippet of verse from a Second Coming passage, and use part of it to fabricate the name rapture? Why did they not use a verse dealing with the pre-trib Coming of Christ? The answer is simple.

Because there are none! The Bible teaches no such thing! And now let's look at that third stolen snippet which was hi-jacked from this context.

Stolen Snippet 7. 'God hath not appointed us to wrath'

We now read the remainder of this lengthy, but subject specific, context which began in 1Thess. 4:16.

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. 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. 11

Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. 1Thessalonians 5:4-11

SIDE NOTE: Notice the repeating of phraseology in this passage of Scripture. In 5:11 we see the same previous exhortation found in 4:18 that we are to be '**comforted**' by this discussion of the resurrection / catching away at the Second Coming repeated. Also notice the repetition of reference to the dead and the living Saints ('the dead in Christ + we who are alive and remain' in 4:16-17; and also 'whether we wake or sleep' in 5:10). These intentional double references are additional witness these verses in chapter 5 are a continuation of the same context begun in the previous chapter; a lengthy discussion of the things concerning the Second Coming of Christ.

And within this context we find the phrase '*God has not appointed us to wrath*'. Although this phrase is commonly attributed to the (supposed) wrath of the tribulation period, here we clearly see it is in reference to the wrath of God poured out at the Second Coming. We will not suffer that wrath as we will have been gathered unto Christ at his Return! Once again a snippet of verse has been stolen away from its context, assigned an altered meaning, and then misapplied to prop up a feeble fable.

Evidence Of A Hoax!

The pre-trib rapture teaching is just one of many falsehoods of this day that utilizes stolen snippets, unsupported claims, and even subtle lies to seduce the undiscerning into accepting it as truth. It boggles my mind that such evident trickery in its promotion goes unnoticed (or deliberately overlooked) by so many.

What do you think of all these purloined verses being used to promote this fable of escapism? Does not this testify of deception to you? How could we see such evident mistreatment of Scripture and not be alarmed? But sadly some sleep so soundly not even an alarm clock could wake them.

A Salvation Issue? Maybe For Some!

Let me state here that I do not teach that people will miss out on salvation just for believing in the pre-trib rapture theory; but it does present some very grave dangers to those who embrace it. And even more so for those who teach that deception to others! We will discuss the grave danger presented by embracing the pre-trib rapture theory in Section Six Part Two.

There are different levels of deception involved in the promotion of the rapture hoax; and also different levels of accountability. For those who believe an error because someone they trusted taught it to them the consequences may be restricted to whatever hindrance or hardship that belief brings their way. For those now teaching this error unwittingly to others there will be a much greater condemnation.

But not to the level of those who after years of Bible study have repeatedly pushed aside the voice of the Spirit to stubbornly hold on to their pet doctrines. Those who are willingly ignorant will not be excused by that ignorance. Then there is the horror awaiting those who know better but still teach facets of that error they know are false. Whether out of pride, greed, or misplaced loyalty those who deceive others knowingly about the things of God will receive consequences which shall grossly out-weigh any earthly benefit received.

...and **all liars**, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone... Revelation 21:8

Section Three: Deceiving Distractions

1. The Identity Of God's Elect Today

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: **but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.** Matthew 24:22

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in Heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, **and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven** with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, **and they shall gather together his elect** from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other. Matthew 24:30-31

Who Are The Elect Of God Today?

If read in context, and given honest consideration, the words of Christ in Matthew 24 present a very clear picture of the 'catching away' of the believers at the Second Coming of Christ after the great tribulation. In their efforts to obfuscate this truth, and distract you from this assault on their doctrine, there has been some wild notions, and even blatant lies, thrown at us from those espousing the pre-trib rapture theory. You will frequently hear nonsense like:

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1. Jesus was speaking here only to the Jews, and these words do not apply to us the Church.
2. The 'Elect' spoken of here are Jews. *not* the Body of Christ.
3. Some of the references to his Coming in this chapter refer to the Rapture and some to his Second Coming; and God has in this modern age given special revelation to some people to distinguish between the two.

Lets take a look first at the ideas that Jesus was speaking only to the Jews in Matthew 24; and it's not for us the Christian Church. In some circles this has gotten to be a very popular notion. I don't know who dreamed this one up, but all it takes to debunk that falsehood is a little common sense. What made this teaching session of Christ any different from all his others? Of course he was addressing the Jews, he did so all the time. There was no gentile Church yet; and I doubt that too many of the Romans were interested.

He was addressing his apostles and disciples; the very *foundation* of his Church. The ones who would pass on these teachings of Jesus to the Gentile believers in a few short years The same group to which he gave the Great Commission; should we disregard those words also? If you apply their criteria for disregarding this chapter to all his other teaching sessions what would we have left? The few times he addressed the heathen? Come on!

Jesus said we are to 'keep his sayings' (John 14). He didn't say, 'Keep my sayings unless I was speaking to the Jews.' Matthew 24 is sayings we are to keep. Mark ends his record of the Olivet Discourse with Jesus saying, 'what I say unto you **I say unto all...**' (Mark 13:37). Now how could that possibly be interpreted to mean, 'Today's sermon is for national Israel, and no one else!'

One of the keys we receive from the Word of God about discerning false teachers is that they will steal God's Words away from his people and replace them with smooth words that cause you to err from the truth (Jeremiah 23, Ezekiel 13). Rapture theory teachers denying that Matthew 24 is for us is truly a theft in progress. Personally, I believe the entire Word of God was written

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to be received by the Christian Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit who was given to lead us into all truth.

Let's look at the second part of the deceiving distraction they inject into Matthew 24. How many times have we heard a rapture teacher try to convince us that: 'Matthew 24:30-31 is not the Resurrection of the Just because it says 'the elect' and (supposedly) we all know that the Jews are Gods elect; so that cannot be our Resurrection, right?' WRONG!

To say we as Christians are not the elect of God is another falsehood they have to push to keep these Scriptures from exposing their error. If Matt. 24:30-31 is our resurrection / catching away (and it certainly is) any notion of a pre-trib rapture becomes a glaring contradiction to Scripture (and it certainly is)! Thus the pressing need to discredit these verses and present an alternative meaning (the elect of God is the Jews). To 'prove' their point they will quote a couple of Old Testament verses that call Israel God's 'elect' (and they *were* at that time!), and then some will go to Romans and twist a passage to try to garner a New Testament confirmation. But it's all a provable lie. We ARE the elect of God!

If we are going to get to the truth here first we should establish one thing. Israel *was* Gods elect; chosen and favored. But the Bible teaches us they (unbelieving Israel rejecting Christ) were cut off, and the believing Gentiles (Christians) were grafted in to join all the believing Jews (also now Christians) as one elect body in a New Covenant with God. And when the day comes where a Jewish remnant turns their hearts to embrace faith in Jesus they (as Christians) will be grafted back in. God does not have two elections, or two Brides as some mistakenly say; just one elect body in Christ sanctified by his Sacrifice.

If these things are not clear to you please prayerfully study Romans 11. It's stated there pretty plainly. And those of you rapture theorists who try to twist verse 28 and say, 'See they are God's elect it says so right here.' I suggest you back up to verse 7 and read it all in context for a change. This chapter in context plainly states national Israel is not currently in a state of election, but definitely called to repent and regain that status IN CHRIST!

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Something that I did to clear this matter up for me was to do a search and study on the usage of the word 'elect' in the New Testament. It left no doubt in my mind those in Christ are the elect of God; and Matthew 24:30-31 is our resurrection / catching away!

The word elect is used 16 times in the N.T. (KJV). The underlying Greek word eklektos is used 23 times and is always translated 'elect' or 'chosen'. It is also enlightening to search the word 'election'. A thorough look at all the N.T. usages of these words (elect, chosen, election etc.) shows not one reference to national Israel now being the elect. NOT ONE! The fact the believer is now the elect of God is undeniable as you look through the verses in question. Examine each verse and ask yourself if this is a reference to national Israel or those in Christ. Here are a few:

Put on therefore, **as the elect of God**, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Colossians 3:12

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: ... 1Peter 1:2

The children of **thy elect sister** greet thee... 2John 1:13

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of **God's elect**? *It is* God that justifieth. Romans 8:33

Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of **God's elect**, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; Titus 1:1

Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to **the election of grace**. Romans 11:5

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to **make your calling and election** sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 2Peter 1:10

The Word of God clearly teaches we the followers of Christ are 'the elect' of God; and therefor we are the ones being gathered unto Christ in Matthew 24:30-31. If you are still up in the air on this I

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suggest you take time to study this out completely; reading each verse that uses these terms in its context. If you can find one verse teaching that national Israel is at this time the elect of God and those in Christ are not please let me know, will ya?

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; **mine elect**, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. Isaiah 42:1

If you want to look at this spiritually we are God's elect because we are in Christ, and Christ is God's elect. It's all about our identification with him. He in us, us in him; making us the elect. Should we think the Head (Christ) would be God's elect, but not us the Body of Christ? The subject of election is one of the many places dispensation / pre-trib theology seriously parts way with the Word of God. I'll stick with Romans 11!

The third misguided statement from our list above is so hyper-spiritual it is not even worthy of comment other than to say it seems like this 'rapture' stuff is getting weirder and weirder as it progresses. I think old number three just kind of rebukes itself. We'll leave it at that.

To sum it up, saying the Body of Christ is not God's 'elect' is quite clearly a lie against the multiple witnesses we have in the N.T. writings declaring that we most certainly are. And to say we should not consider the teachings of the Olivet discourse as relevant to us carries no clout whatsoever. Reading Matthew chapter 24 (and the corresponding accounts in Mark and Luke) with the understanding that the Body of Christ is God's elect leaves no doubt our Resurrection and catching away to meet Christ takes place at his Second Coming after the tribulation. The claim of an earlier event is a man-made ear-tickling fable; and speaks contrary to the clear teaching the Scriptures give on election.

But in those days, **after that tribulation**, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, 25 And the stars of Heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in Heaven shall be shaken. 26 And **then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds** with great power and glory. 27 And then shall he send his angels, and **shall**

gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of Heaven. Mark 13:24-27

Anyone who says this passage from Mark isn't describing our gathering together unto Christ is a false teacher, and is in danger of standing before God as one. Truth sanctifies, but error defiles. If you have embraced the error of the pre-trib rapture theory you have allowed yourself to be defiled by a pack of lies.

The Lord desires to cleanse you from that error, and is calling you to repent, and turn from it today. Please don't harden your heart against his voice. This pre-trib rapture hoax has brought great schism into the Bride of Christ, and is one of the spots, wrinkles, and blemishes the events of the near future are going to remove from her garment. Why not seek to remove that blemish now, so God is not forced to do so himself?

For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. 1Corinthians 11:31-32

2. The Parable of the Fig Tree

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; **When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves,** ye know that summer *is* nigh: 33 So likewise ye, **when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near,** *even* at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, **This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.** Matthew 24:32-34

Is The Fig Tree Parable About The Rebirth Of Israel?

It is amazing how deeply a false concept can embed itself into your beliefs; and also how fragments of error can remain behind, hidden away hindering the flow of truth, even years after your rejecting of that false concept in general. I rejected the notion of the pre-trib rapture theory early on, but it took some thirty years

for me to come to the point where I could read the Parable of the Fig Tree free from distraction. I could go there and read it and get the gist of it, but never a solid, 'This is what I'm saying, and this is what I want that information to do for you.' Without realizing it I would wander away to another train of thought and never get a fullness of revelation from the parable itself. It took a prompting from the Lord to show me this, and finally get free from that distraction.

The Lord showed me the problem was I had listened to a popularized error about this parable so many times that I thought the error was the real deal. The deception was that this Parable of the Fig Tree had to do with the rebirth of the nation of Israel; that a fig tree symbolizes national Israel and the new growth on the fig tree was a prophetic image of Israel being reborn. This is a total fabrication, and a distraction from the true purpose of this parable.

This falsehood causes your train of thought to jump track in the middle of the parable and head for a different destination. With a rapture preacher at the controls you start off down the track receiving the imagery of the fig tree and its new growth; and the next thing you know you are completely sidetracked; being told because the fig tree blossomed (Israel reborn 1948) we are now in the generation which will not pass away before the rapture happens! This parable has now somehow become a promotion for the pre-trib theory. And have you ever heard a rapture preacher go back to the parable and finish the true allegory of it? No, and they won't; because the purpose of the distraction is to prevent you from arriving at that station in the first place. You are being hindered from receiving what Jesus intended you to get from this parable,

What is the purpose of a parable? To highlight similarities of two things to help give you understanding about one of them. What are the two things Jesus was paralleling in the parable? Did he mention, or even hint at, the subject of the rebirth of Israel? Is there any thing about this passage that would point you in that direction? The answer is no. The two integers of this equation, if you will, are 'new growth on the tree' and 'when you see these things'; but before we discuss the allegory of the parable let's ask a question; the answer of which surprised me a great deal.

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Is the fig tree truly the symbol of the nation of Israel in the Bible? After researching and studying this matter I would have to answer an emphatic NO. We have been sold a falsehood and gladly paid for it with our love gifts, offerings, and product purchases.

When prompted to question this idea of the fig tree being a type or figure of Israel I looked up every passage in the Bible using the words 'fig tree' expecting to see a repetitive theme of such. It is nowhere to be found! After being told over and over and over by such 'great' men as Hal L., Jack V., Tim L., Jimmy S. etc., etc., etc., that the fig tree symbolized Israel I was quite surprised to see it does not. The symbolism is not there! And when you do see a fig tree mentioned in a verse with Israel there are usually other trees listed also in the rebuke or allegory. Israel is not the fig tree!

Ponder this: If the fig tree represented Israel would Jesus have cursed the fig tree and condemned it to never bear fruit again? It withered up from the root and died. How does that fit the picture of Israel's prophetic rebirth? Not a match; and I don't think Jesus would have given us an image so out of sync like that if Israel was typified by the fig tree. He's sharper than that.

If you were going to say any tree in the Bible is used to represent Israel it would probably have to be the Olive Tree; and yes, Wikipedia does say the national tree of Israel is the Olive Tree.

Finding a fig tree and the nation of Israel in the same verse (Oh look, here's a 'proof text'!) is no excuse for stretching that out into the lie we have been told all these years. There is just as much support for the Palm, the Pomegranate, the Olive tree, or the Vine; all are used to speak in regard to Israel in one fashion or another. If the Scriptures do not portray the fig tree as the symbol of Israel, and there is no historical usage of it as such, where did this false idea come from? I guess maybe someone desperate for doctrinal support saw some similarity in new tree growth and the rebirth of Israel; and thought it was a straw worth grasping at.

But back to the parable of the fig tree. Now that we are delivered from the distraction that caused us to jump track in the middle of the passage maybe we can stay on the rails long enough to see what Jesus was really trying to teach us. I find it very helpful to read Luke's account as it contains wordage carefully avoided by

pre-trib preachers. You may have never noticed they will gladly preach this parable out of Matthew or Mark, but it's unlikely you have ever heard one of them expound on these verses from Luke:

And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, **and all the trees**; 30 When **they** now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves **that summer is now nigh at hand**. 31 **So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand**. 32 Verily I say unto you, **This generation** shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Luke 21:29-32

Notice he said and '**all the trees**'. If the fig tree is Israel then all the trees would be what; all the nations? Are all nations to be rebirthed? Surely not. The pre-trib crowd has a serious problem there, and that's why most stay clear of Luke on this parable. They can't quite squeeze their distraction into it. The allegory is not about **a type** of tree but about something common to **all trees**; and that is they all show signs of new growth in the latter part of spring right before summer begins. Nothing to do with the fig tree exclusively, and definitely not anything to do with the prophesied rebirth of Israel; a wonderfully fulfilled promise, **but not one of the signs Jesus said would herald the season of his Return**. Read for yourself the indicators he gave. The rebirth of Israel is not mentioned among them; and to introduce that notion into the text is deceptive!

Jesus was saying in plain language that just like new growth on a tree signals you the season of summer is at hand; when you see 'all **these** things' the season of my Return is at hand. We need to get a grip on what all those things are and watch for them, instead of focusing upon something that took place nearly a hundred years ago. He said the *season* of his Return, not the century! Let's watch for the signs HE spoke of, and not be distracted away from what they really are.

If you add up the 'all these things' given in Matthew 24, (and Mark and Luke) it's quite a list! We're not left in the dark about the season of his Return. What you are being distracted from by being occupied with the fig tree = Israel deception is that we are being told to watch for signs that herald the immediate season (the

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season, not the day or hour) of his Return; and many of these signs we are told to watch for **take place within the time-frame of the great tribulation!** (No! No! Don't look at *that* look at *this* instead!)

I hope now you have an understanding of why pre-trib rapture theorists are forced to steer you to an altered meaning outside of the text.

- **First:** If we are to watch for any signs which must yet be fulfilled before Jesus returns their doctrine of his 'imminent Return' is shot in the head, and must be laid to rest. Jesus would not have told us to watch for signs the Church was not going to be around to see.
- **Second:** If we are told by Jesus to watch for events which transpire during the final three and a half years that would mean the Church would have to still be here, and then their pre-trib rapture myth is also gunned down. (R.I.P.)

Jesus gave us distinct indicators to watch for that clue us in to the season of his Return, and the rebirth of Israel is not on that list. Let's leave the rebirth of Israel (as wonderful as it is) out of the Parable of the Fig Tree and accept what is clearly taught there.

...when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. Luke-21:28

3. The Restrainer

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...
2Thessalonians 2:7-8

One of the greatest hindrances to Bible study in the area of end-time prophesy is the mess many people make out of the 2nd chapter of 2nd Thessalonians. The distraction they introduce into the text has you asking and answering questions, which not only promote a falsehood in themselves, but so occupy your attention

that you lose track of what the Apostle was truly saying in the first place. This subtle beguilement is so effective that it replaces a solid rebuke of the pre-trib rapture theory in these verses with a 'proof text' promoting it instead!

The element of deception here centers around a notion that **the main focus** of this text is the appearance of the man of sin (Antichrist), who has a 'restrainer', and that this restrainer is the Holy Spirit. Therefor the Holy Spirit (along with those he indwells) must be removed before the evil one can be revealed. But a proper reading of this chapter, without that attention absorbing distraction, shows something quite different! Let's first develop some discernment about this distraction, and divorce ourselves from it; then we can receive the truths Paul was really presenting.

Who Is Hindering Who?

Something I have noticed is that pre-trib preachers most often do not read the entire context, but jump right into verse 8:

'And then shall that Wicked be revealed' (2Thess. 2:8) Here's the Antichrist! Then they back up to read verse 7:

'only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.' (2Thess. 2:7) The Holy Spirit and the Church removed! And then they back up again to read verse 6:

'And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.' (2Thess. 2:6) Now ye know! That's all folks!

They act as if Paul had written these verses in reverse order, and verse 6 was referencing verse 8 which it is absolutely not. Paul would not have been explaining in verse 6 a point not presented until later. This mistaken notion comes from reading the text in the wrong direction. Most people reason this text backward because that's what they have been taught to do. Verse 6 is referencing the subject of the passage up to that point:

The hindering of Christ's arrival!

Most people are confused a bit by the wording of this passage, and when you add in the distraction presented by the pre-trib theory it becomes so slurred it's easy to just give up and accept

whatever you are being told to believe. But if read properly you see it is actually the appearance of Christ being restrained that is the primary focus of the first 6 verses of this chapter. That can be hard to grasp when you have been told to focus elsewhere all these years.

But please bear with me a bit here and try to understand **that pre-trib theory cannot have anything hindering the coming of Christ, or their doctrine of 'imminent return' is proven bogus.** And thus the extreme focus placed upon Antichrists restraint. It keeps you distracted from what this chapter says about the restraint of Christ's appearance! That is the purpose of this distraction introduced into the chapter by pre-trib theory.

We shall read the chapter in question in proper order; but for now, do we see *anything* about this passage of Scripture, or any thing taught elsewhere in the Bible that would lead us to believe verse 7 is a reference to the *Holy Spirit? Where do they get that idea? It is always a healthy practice to ask, 'Would I get that understanding from this verse if no one had first given it to me?' Not likely!

* The Holy Spirit truly restrains sin in the life of one who is submitted to that influence. But I cannot see anything here, or in anything else I have ever studied on the Spirit of God, that would even hint I should think the Holy Spirit in the Church restrains evil men from rising to power in the world. There is no biblical or historical indication of such. In truth MANY have risen up in the spirit of Antichrist and slaughtered countless millions with a large segment of the Body of Christ dwelling right in their midst! Mao Zedong, Pol Pot, Hitler, Stalin, and on and on. Why were they not restrained by the Holy Spirit in the believers? Did God have to remove the Church for them to rise to power? No! And on that basis alone I reject the notion of the restrainer of Antichrist's appearance being the Holy Spirit in the Church. But there is much greater reason for doing so, as we will see.

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In language studies there is a term called 'cognitive scaffolding' which simply means that in literature we receive a progression of understanding as each new sentence adds information to the previous ones. The fullness of meaning in any verse of Scripture is not found only in that verse itself, but also in the contributing information of the verses around it. Let's keep that in mind as we see a progression of thought built here.

Now we beseech you, brethren, **by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him**, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, **as that the day of Christ is *at hand**.
2Thessalonians 2:1-2

(* The Greek word here 'enistēmi' is used only 7 times in the N.T., and always in the present or future tense, never to refer to something of the past. The primary meaning it conveys is of something that is or will become 'impending' or 'at hand'. Those who render this as a past tense event are in error.)

Many times have I heard it preached that Paul wrote these verses because some were teaching the resurrection had already happened; and he was reassuring them it had not. End of story; nothing else to see here. A reasonable sounding explanation. But no, if you read carefully that's not even close. I had to hear this mistaken rendering of 1Thess. 2:1-2 quite a number of times before I understood it to be a clever distraction and not a simple mistake.

They are trying to put these verses to bed, so to speak, that they be not contemplated any further and become bothersome to their theory. Paul was not warning here (as he had elsewhere) of a false claim the resurrection was past, but instead warning them not to listen to them who were saying the Resurrection was **at hand**. Some were preaching the Return of Christ was impending; and thus many thought the great tribulation was now upon them! He was rebuking a claim of imminence; a falsehood addressed elsewhere. We need to understand this. This correction is

foundation for the very important progression of understanding (cognitive scaffolding) to be built upon it with his next words.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for **that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed**, the son of perdition...

2Thessalonians 2:3

After warning them not to believe our gathering together unto Christ was at hand (imminent) he went on to teach **there are a couple of things restraining Christ's coming; a falling away and the man of sin rising to power**. The lack of fulfillment of these two things is restraining the Second Coming! That's the 'restraint' being discussed so far in this chapter, not the Holy Spirit; and it's Christ's appearing that is being restrained; that is the primary subject at hand thus far.

Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, **I told you these things?** (*What things? The things he has just said about Christ's coming being restrained, NOT the things he would say later*) **6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he (JESUS CHRIST) might be revealed in his time.** 1Thessalonians 2:5-6 (words in parenthesis mine)

The subject here is still the appearing of Christ being restrained; (*'now you know what is restraining the appearance of Jesus because I just told you, as I also told you before'*), namely those two unfulfilled events must be fulfilled. **Verse six is not about the man of sin** (that focus has not been introduced yet)! It makes no sense to say verse 6 is saying: *'now you know what restrains Antichrist'* when no information has been given to let you know what restrains him. The information they were previously given was about the restraint of Christ's appearance! It is about Jesus, our focal subject so far, being restrained from being revealed in his time. Go over it again if need be, this is important to grasp. Now here is where the big distraction is introduced by those promoting the pre-trib theory:

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:
2Thessalonians 2:7-8

Now a *secondary* focus of this chapter is briefly touched upon: Antichrist and his restraint. I think most understand the word 'let' here does not mean allow, as we would use it in modern English, but to hold down or hinder. Now at this point I ask again, 'Why would anyone assume this hindrance is the Holy Spirit, and that He must be removed for Antichrist to come forth?' There is no evidence here (or anywhere else) for this reasoning. Where is the Scriptural foundation for this? I invite anyone to explain this from the Word of God.

Yes, there is truly a restraint of Antichrist's appearance expressed here; but it is a MINOR concern overshadowed by the **MAJOR** factor of Christ's Return being restrained.

FOOD 4 THOUGHT: Should we not question why so much discussion takes place over Antichrist's restraint, and so very little is discussed about the remainder of this chapter, particularly the restraint of Christ's appearance? Has that thought ever occurred to you?

I think that fact is very telling, and speaks of an improper focus to say the least! The distraction introduced to this passage minimizes the major focus and maximizes the minor, and thereby obfuscates important truths. **To properly understand this chapter we need to keep the main focus upon Jesus where it belongs.**

Who Or What Is The Restrainer? I Don't Know For Sure (And Neither Do You)!

As to what restraints Antichrist, I feel (only speculating here) it could be as simple as unfulfilled events awaiting the fullness of time to be fulfilled. Then at the appointed time they *are* fulfilled. And when the restraint (lack of fulfillment) is taken out of the way, naturally the man of sin will now arrive. (Before you scoff at that

idea please remember we just saw a similar restraint expressed concerning the appearance of Christ. His appearance is shown to be restrained by two events needing to be fulfilled! So there IS a biblical precedent for this possibility, and right in this very chapter!) I am not dogmatic on that idea. I am just saying it could be that simple, and not the big distracting issue most make it into.

Many others feel this restrainer is the Archangel Michael. And as I have heard some very convincing arguments in favor of that idea I am open to the possibility. All in all we do not have enough Scriptural input upon which to base a firm statement as to who this restrainer is. **All we can do is speculate.**

I actually think it is not that important we know, or God would have given us more info on it. But my main point here is that making Antichrist's arrival the main focus forces an inflated, and distracting, importance on his restraint. And keeping Christ's Coming (and its restraint) as the main focus is paramount to a proper rendering of this chapter. Keep the focus on Jesus!

This chapter so far is definitely difficult and if you don't jive with my speculations of the restraint expressed here I don't mind. The important thing is that you see this chapter clearly brings forth the truth that the coming of the Lord and our gathering together unto him will not happen until after the appearance of the Antichrist. **And thus it absolutely could not happen before the great tribulation!** That is the truth being clouded over here. This is stated in such plain terms in verses 1-4 it is no wonder such lengths have been undertaken to hide that truth in a fog of muddled reasoning.

The distraction they introduce turns you around to where instead of focusing on what is hindering Christ's Return, and what that says about the timing of that event, you become preoccupied instead with things you were never meant to scratch your head over.

The presence of the Church is not hindering Antichrist's appearance; the wait for Antichrist's arrival is hindering the Coming of Christ and our catching away! Let's get it right!

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That is the truth presented in this chapter! Some of us need to take this chapter to the LORD and ask him to breathe upon it; and to blow away the deceptive cloud of false reasoning that is hiding the truth we ought to be receiving here. Seriously.

If you have to place a piece of paper over the rest of the chapter, and study the first six verses over and over until you get it; please do so! This was the purpose of the distraction introduced into these verses; to steer you away from the clear and concise statement that Jesus will not return, nor will we be caught away, until *after* the great falling away and the man of sin is revealed! The deceiver wants you in and out of this chapter before that light comes on. He wants to keep you from what is plainly stated, and how that truth demolishes his pre-trib rapture deception with a great big wrecking ball.

Don't let the distracting over-emphasis on what is restraining the appearance of Antichrist keep you from what the Father intends you receive from this chapter of the Bible. Read the chapter from the beginning, **keep the focus on Jesus**, and you will see truth that is consistently missed by those jumping into the middle of this chapter, focusing only on the restraint of the man of sin, and then jumping back out again.

And I reiterate, that truth you will see is that Christ will not come for us until AFTER the man of sin is revealed. And if the Church can not be caught away until after Antichrist is revealed, then the Church / Holy Spirit **cannot be** what is removed in order for him to *be* revealed! PERIOD!

And also according to verse 8 of that chapter this Coming of Christ destroys the man of sin! So that places Christ's Coming **at the end** of his 42 month reign. Just like it says in Matthew 24:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 **And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven:** and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, **and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and**

great glory. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Matthew 24:29-31

We will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air at his Return to Earth after the time of great tribulation. I honestly wish I could tell you it was before that time of great upheaval and persecution; but that is not what is presented to us by the Scriptures.

May the Lord strengthen you and prepare you; and keep you through the dark days ahead.

I hope you can see that all three of these 'Deceiving Distractions' we have looked at have had that same purpose: To keep you from receiving truth which is contrary to their myth. I hope this chapter has been helpful to you in that regard.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: I sometimes hear people make comments like: 'I'm praying very hard for the rapture to happen soon!' But is that really how we ought to be praying? I'm pretty sure Jesus said to pray:

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, **as in heaven, so in earth.** (Luke 11:2)

Instead of praying, 'Lord, bring your Kingdom here upon us.', the pre-trib rapture theorists are praying, 'Lord, take us away to your Kingdom!' Doesn't that seem a bit out of sync with the words of Christ? Our duty as believers is to travail in prayer for souls to be saved, and for the Return of Christ to Earth. Why are so many casting aside those responsibilities and instead praying for an evacuation before the final conflict? Isn't that desertion; or at the very least dereliction of duty?

What are you praying for: 'Kingdom Come', or 'Cut and Run'?

Section Four: Unbiblical Concepts

The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going. Proverbs 14:15

Unbiblical Concept 1. An 'Any Minute Now' Coming Of Christ

I am not someone who likes to beat around the bush all day. Why waste the time? If there is a bird in that bush, reach in there and nab that rascal! As a researcher and a writer I prefer means and methods which get right at the heart of a matter. And I have a couple of questions I like to present to those who promote the pre-trib rapture theory which do exactly that. I find these two questions thought provoking and enlightening, but amazingly I have had great trouble finding a pre-trib theorist who will address these two questions in an honest and strait-forward manner.

I am either given as answers 'straw-man' arguments, which have nothing to do with my questions, or a sad rerun of 'Discredit the message by discrediting the messenger' (if I can find fault with you I can justify ignoring what you have to say). **I can show where all my beliefs about the Return of Christ are plainly and clearly stated in the Bible.** The rapture theorist (since it is an 'implicit' doctrine) **cannot do so**, and this lack of biblical support often becomes a great frustration to them. Let me pose these two questions to you, and ask you for an answer that is not an end-run around the question:

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

1Thessalonians 5:21

I see questions of this nature as being of vital importance to a proper understanding of eschatology. They cause a person to engage in the type of critical reasoning that cuts through the fog of Scripture twisting, unsupported statements, and outright lies that false teachings are cloaked in. Here are the two questions:

QUESTION #1.

Pre-trib rapture theorists teach that the Coming of Christ for the Church, and our gathering together unto him, is 'imminent' (likely to happen at any second). This concept is a pillar of the pre-trib theory, and without it the theory collapses. They claim the Apostle Paul believed this doctrine of 'the Imminent Return' (because it was revealed to him by God), that he taught this concept to his followers, and wrote his letters (that we know as Scripture) with this notion presented in them. My first question is this:

Exactly when did the Coming of Christ and our Resurrection / Catching-away become imminent? There had to be a time when it was not imminent (before the Cross for example) and then there had to have come a moment when it was now imminent. Exactly when was that moment; **when did the rapture BECOME imminent?**

(If you would like you can post an answer on my blog page (www.pbenson.me), but please NO straw-man (irrelevant issue) arguments that distract from the subject at hand. I ask that you would directly answer the question.)

MY ANSWER:

Let me tell you why the pre-trib rapture theorist will not, and in fact cannot, directly address that question. **It is because the truthful answer is catastrophic to their doctrine.** The truth is that the Return of Christ for the Church could not have been imminent in the days of the early Church, could not have been imminent down through the centuries, could not be imminent today, and will not be imminent until immediately before it actually happens. This is easily provable by examining the Scriptures themselves.

THE PROOF:

There are actually quite a number of prophecies that prohibited the Resurrection / Catching-away from being imminent in the days of the early Church. Let's first look at just one major road block to this concept: **the prophesied death of Peter by being martyred as an old man.** The Lord Jesus himself gave us this prophecy (John 21:18). It is an irrefutable truism.

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Historical writings give us a pretty good idea as to not only when Peter died, but also when Paul died. Smith's Bible Dictionary says, "According to the early writers, **he (Peter) died at or about the same time with Paul**, and in the Neronian persecution, A.D. 67 or 68. All agree that he (Peter) was crucified."

From this information so far we can know the following to be absolutely true:

1. Jesus said Peter would die as an old man, therefore the Resurrection / Catching-away could NOT happen until this prophesy was fulfilled (or Jesus was a false prophet).
2. Paul died in the same wave of persecution as Peter. This means the Resurrection / Catching away was NOT imminent during the span of Paul's ministry to the Body of Christ, and therefore **God did NOT reveal to him that it was!** It was not a possibility until the death of Peter!
3. Paul would NOT have deceived his followers by telling them to be expecting at any moment something that could not possibly happen, nor would he have written something false in his writings to them. The Scriptures were penned by God himself using holy men as vessels. God does not lie, nor does his Word! It would have been a lie to teach and promote as imminent something NOT possible in Paul's lifetime, and the Holy Spirit would not have guided Paul to state a falsehood in his writings to the Church!

There were many other prophetic statements standing in the way of an imminent Return that had to be fulfilled first, and many that still need fulfillment (they are scattered throughout the pages of the Bible). For the sake of time and space let's look at the last one (as far as I can tell) to be fulfilled before the Resurrection of the Just and our gathering together unto our Lord could occur.

Many say Job is the oldest of the Biblical writings. Even he prophesied of the Resurrection of the Dead. *And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God (Job 19:26)*. I have heard many a pre-trib rapture teacher quote that verse from Job, but never this passage:

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But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? 11 As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up:12 So man lieth down, and riseth not: **till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.**
Job 14:10-12

This unspeakable event in which the heavens go away is spoken of in nearly twenty different places in the Bible yet rarely preached on. Job prophesied this event would precede our Resurrection! According to the prophesies of the Bible the Resurrection / Catching-away **could not become imminent until after the heavens vanish.** A thorough look at all the passages detailing this event in the heavens show it to happen either just before, or in conjunction with, the Second Coming of Christ right after the tribulation. Many more prophesies could be cited here.

CONCLUSION:

Thus we see the doctrine of the 'Imminent Return' is a provable lie.

- To say God revealed to Paul the rapture was 'imminent' in his lifetime is a lie!
- To say the Apostle Paul believed this doctrine is a lie.
- To say Paul taught this doctrine to his followers is a lie.
- To say Paul wrote his letters that we know as Scripture with this notion presented in them is also a lie.
- To say the Coming of Christ for the Church has been imminent for two thousand years is a lie.
- To say the Coming of Christ for the Church is now imminent is a lie.

The Return of Jesus to catch us away will not be imminent until ALL prophesies that prevent it are fulfilled. The doctrine of the 'Imminent Return' is not from the Bible; The Bible refutes such a notion.

QUESTION #2.

Please pay particular attention to the wording of the following verses.

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming (Greek – Parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him... 2Thessalonians 2:1

When Paul wrote those words to the Church he earnestly urged them to consider his words about the Return of Jesus and our gathering together unto him; as I also urge you here and now. This second question addresses an aspect of the Coming of Christ and our rising to meet him.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 **But every man in his own order**: Christ the firstfruits; afterward **they that are Christ's at his coming (Greek - Parousia)**. 24 Then cometh the end...

1Corinthians 15:22-24

Some try and split up the Resurrection of the Just into a number of events taking place over a period of time. But here the Bible plainly nails it down to one event taking place at one time. **We are given here the order of the Resurrection**. Christ first, then all they which are his at his Coming (Parousia). First the Head - then the Body. The Resurrection of the Just and our gathering together unto Christ take place **at his Coming** (Parousia). Plainly stated!

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 (Parousia)**: 2Thessalonians 2:8

This verse speaks of the destruction of the Antichrist at the end of his 42 month reign of terror. This brings us to my second question (please take a moment and earnestly consider this):

How could the Coming (Parousia), and our gathering unto Jesus which takes place at that time, destroy Antichrist at the end of his 42 month reign if the Coming (Parousia), and our gathering unto Jesus, happens before the tribulation? **How is this possible?**

(Again you are welcome to answer this question on my site, but PLEASE do not insult my intelligence (or give others an unfavorable impression of yours) by stating an unsupported

element of the pre-trib theory as a non-answer; such as, 'Well, I believe the rapture and the Second Coming are two different things, so there's your answer.' Stating your beliefs as proof of your beliefs proves nothing at all. I am looking for an answer that actually addresses the conflict the pre-trib rapture theory creates with the verses given, and the fact they all point to ONE event.)

MY ANSWER:

This conflict with Scripture disappears if you place the Coming / Parousia (and our gathering unto Jesus) where the Bible rightly does: at the Second Coming of Christ immediately after the tribulation of those days (Matt. 24:29-31). There is NO prior event taught in the Word of God.

Unbiblical Concepts 2. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb takes place in Heaven. 3. Jesus is making the Bride a house in Heaven.

If you ask most rapture theorists to prove the marriage supper takes place in Heaven you will get some statement of no proof like: 'Well it takes place right after the rapture has happened, so if the Church is now in Heaven of course that's where the supper is going to be.' They can't show it to you in the Scriptures; all they can do is quote their doctrine. Believing that a pre-trib rapture takes the Church to Heaven is 'proof' the marriage supper takes place there? Would believing that the moon is made out of sugar prove the moon is sweet? Of course not.

Something that greatly furthered my doubts concerning the pre-trib theory was that in reading and listening to related preaching and teaching I would constantly hear them stating elements of their doctrine as proof of that doctrine. But using your doctrine to prove your doctrine proves nothing at all.

Where is the scriptural proof the marriage supper takes place in Heaven? There is none. In fact when I decided to look into what the Bible expressly says about this event I was surprised at how little is there. When I think of all the preaching I have heard on the marriage supper right down to details on all the various aspects of

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what takes place and when; and all the books that are written on that subject carrying on and on about it. Why you would think there were oodles and oodles of passages in the Bible giving us all this info. But where are they? Have you seen them?

The only time the phrase 'marriage supper of the Lamb' is used in the entire Bible is Rev. 19. In fact it's the only time the phrase 'marriage supper' is in the Bible at all. Many try to force their marriage supper teachings into a couple of parables mentioning a wedding found in the Gospels; but the fit is poor and is little more than seeing what they want to see. Others will preach ancient Jewish wedding customs like they are the Bible itself. But we are warned not to do so.

Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. Titus 1:14

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Colossians 2:8

The only info we have on the marriage supper of the Lamb is found in Rev. 19 where we are given an announcement the Bride is ready, followed by the Groom appearing in all his glory with his holy angels, and then the next image is the fowls being invited to the supper of the great God, and then the battle of Armageddon ensues with those 'invited guests' feeding upon the slain.

Not quite the lovely picture we have had painted for us all these years, is it? I had trouble with it myself, and it took a lot of time to let loose of the rosy seven year feast in Heaven I had been taught; and if you cannot receive that the battle of Armageddon is the marriage supper that's OK with me. But this is the only description of the marriage supper you can take from the Bible without wresting parables to say what you want them to. And there is no biblical foundation for a marriage supper in Heaven.

You can speculate all you want. There is no law against it; it's part of our learning process. But when you say 'the Bible teaches' this or that and it does not you are bearing false witness.

A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish. Proverbs 19:9

That is why preaching all these unbiblical concepts with a claim they are taught in the Bible is so dangerous. Do we want to risk standing before the Judgment Seat as a false witness? If the Bible clearly states something you can stand on it firmly; but it would be far better to say, 'I think maybe this is like this... or it kind of looks like this might be... or here's my opinion...' than to state as Bible fact something that has no Bible behind it. Let's found our beliefs on what is plainly stated in the Word of God and not on unbiblical concepts taught by man.

In 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.**
3 And 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

One common accusation toward those not espousing the pre-trib rapture theory is that we deny the promise of Jesus in these verses from John. Namely that a resurrection and catching away at the Second Coming would not take the Bride to Heaven but keep her here on earth and thereby leave (so they say) the promise of John 14 unfulfilled. I assure you that promise will be fulfilled beyond your wildest dreams, but maybe not in the manner you have been taught. The problem here lies in the way the pre-trib theorists insert their doctrine into John 14:1-2 giving folks a false understanding of what the fulfillment of that promise will actually look like.

As with most things in the Bible that we don't have a lot of verse on it's best not to get too dogmatic about our ideas. But what I want to get across here is that we have been fed this line about the Bride being built a house in Heaven because putting her there lends support to the pre-trib rapture theory. If they can put her in Heaven she had to have gotten there how? That's right, the rapture. But an honest look at these verses shows no promise of a big new house built in Heaven, only Christ preparing a place for us in his Father's house. I wonder just what he means by 'in his Father's house'. Has God got a building he lives in? Must have pretty high ceilings!

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If you have set under the teaching of a pre-trib rapture theorist you have heard time and time again that Jesus went to build you a house in Heaven; and on a certain golden street is a great big mansion with your name on the deed which will be your eternal home. And the rapture is (supposedly) Jesus fulfilling that promise to come get you and take you to your big mansion in Heaven. All part of their myth; just one more example of them stuffing verses full of their beliefs and using these 'enriched' verses to nourish their theory.

Have you ever questioned the correctness of that scenario? Is that really what John 14:2-3 tells us? People read a lot into that promise that is not there; and also I believe, most fall quite short of comprehending what is really being promised. This raises a lot of questions for discussion here. First off does God actually live in a house? Is there any Bible on that other than allegorical usage?

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that **he is Lord of Heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;** Acts 17:24

I will be the first to admit I could barely begin to explain to you who God is and all he is about; but I think it would be safe to say we may be restricting God a little to try and stuff him into a physical house. God is a Spirit and God is omnipresent. Obviously Jesus was speaking allegorically using the image of a house with his promise. Let's look at just what he did and did not say.

He said there were many mansions in his Fathers house. Some would be surprised that a mansion in old English and one in our modern English mean two different things. The proper Bible definition for mansion is a 'stately room' not a giant house. In his Fathers house are many stately rooms. I don't expect to be hanging out in a big mansion for all eternity, but I do expect Jesus was saying we'll be 'living large'. It's going to be awesome!

Here's one that might take you aback: He did not say that what he went to prepare would be in Heaven. Isn't there going to be a new Heaven and Earth? What's going to happen to your house in Heaven? Ever considered that? He said 'in my Fathers house'. We need to ask: 'Where is God's house?' And then let the Scriptures make that definition for us, not someones theory. Do you see any

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reference to Heaven in John 14:2-3? No, the ideas of a literal house being built and that this house would be in Heaven are given to you by the pre-trib theory, They are not part of these verses; but are crucial to their theory so they impose them.

He said 'in my Father's house are many; not will be many mansions. He said he went to 'prepare a place' for us. He did not say he went to 'build a house' for us. The two ideas are not necessarily synonymous. I wonder just how big God's house is?

Thus saith the LORD, **The Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?** Isaiah 66:1

He went to prepare for us a place like a 'stately room' in the dwelling place of the God who inhabits all of creation and all of eternity. WOW! What would it take for the place he has prepared for us to fulfill the Scripture:

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, **neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.** 1Corinthians 2:9

And finally the last part of the promise of John 14:2-3.

...I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. John 14:3

He says he is going to return to earth, receive us unto himself, so we can be with him where he is. The Second Coming and catching away will fulfill that perfectly. I don't see him promising to take anyone to Heaven here. But I do see a wonderful promise we will be with him. If we are going to be where he is, maybe we ought to find out where he is going to be.

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in Heaven, saying, **The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.** Revelation 11:15

And he said unto them, **When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom**

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come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, **so in earth.**

Luke 11:2

Jesus taught his followers to pray that the Kingdom of God would come to earth; not that the Church would be taken to Heaven. Are you praying for the Kingdom to come? If so your prayer as well as the promise of John 14:1-2 will be fulfilled by Jesus returning to earth at his Second Coming to rule and reign. Where he is we will be also; right here on planet earth.

If you think your blessed hope is a big house on a golden street and Jesus is up there sawing boards and pounding nails, you are missing something big. He is not building you a mansion on a street of gold; he is preparing a place for you in his eternal Kingdom; he went to prepare for us a place right at his side!

Therefore let no man glory in men. **For all things are yours;** 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, **or things present, or things to come; all are yours;** 23 **And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.** 1Corinthians 3:21-23

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and **joint-heirs with Christ;** if so be that we suffer with him, **that we may be also glorified together.** Romans 8:17

In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Ephesians 2:22

Don't you see? As joint heirs with him we not only inherit the Father's creation, *we are* the Father's house! The place that was prepared for us is son-ship; adoption into the family of God. We will dwell in the Father's presence as sons and daughters of the Most High God! Him in us and us in Him! We ARE the Father's house; each of us a stately room. There has been a wonderful place prepared for us in Christ purchased by his Cross and by his Blood.

There are no verses in the Bible which teach a marriage supper in Heaven, nor literal houses for the Believers being built in Heaven. This has been fabricated as support for the pre-trib theory. But truly what a wonderful fulfillment of John 14:2-3 we'll see!

Unbiblical Concept 4. The armies coming out of Heaven with Jesus (Rev. 19:14) are the previously raptured Saints, and NOT the angels of God.

And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And **the armies which were in Heaven** followed him upon white horses, **clothed in fine linen, white and clean.**

Revelation 19:13-14

Who Are The Armies In White In Revelation 14?

The pre-trib rapture teachers say the 'armies in Heaven clothed in white linen' following Jesus out of Heaven at his Second Coming are NOT angels, but instead the Bride of Christ! They cite Rev. 19:8 as a 'proof text' because it says in that verse: '*white linen is the righteousness of the Saints.*' And they then go on to suppose that if these Saints in white linen are now *coming out* of Heaven they had to have first *gone in* indicating a previous rapture, and thus (supposedly) disproving the claim that the Resurrection of the Just actually takes place at the Second Coming. But is all this according to the truth of the Word of God?

This sounds somewhat convincing until you put it to the test. Does it say here, or anywhere else, that these armies coming out of Heaven are previously raptured believers, *or that they are even human?* No, this is mere speculation with no scriptural support. Once again we have a verse the pre-trib preachers claim is stating something which it in no way does. There is not one verse that backs up this claim! Does the verse say this is the raptured Church? No it does not! They have once again inserted their doctrine into a text, and then claimed it as support for their theory. And as is the usual case with their 'proof texts' they have proved nothing at all.

Lets look at some other individuals in the Scriptures who are also clothed in white linen:

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And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, **clothed in pure and white linen**, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

Revelation 15:6

It looks to me like these angels in Heaven are wearing the same white and pure apparel as those guys on horses with Jesus. What a shocker! Mary and the others at the tomb saw an angel clothed in a long white garment (Mark 16:5). Daniel also saw an angel clothed in linen (Dan. 10:5). What else would they be wearing, Levi's?

To say the armies following Jesus out of Heaven are NOT the angels because they are clothed in white linen is absolutely ludicrous! This is a prime example of the way the rapture theorists fabricate 'proof texts'; like inserting their beliefs into this Scripture to 'prove' a point, while ignoring other relevant passages that clearly describe the event of Jesus coming out of Heaven with his angels.

So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith **in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God**, for which ye also suffer: 6 Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to **recompense** tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 **And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels**, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10 **When he shall come to be glorified in his saints**, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. 2Thessalonians 1:4 10

Notice it does NOT say: 'when Jesus is revealed from Heaven with his army of raptured warriors'. Notice also Paul said YOU

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who are troubled...; this is the Body of Christ he is writing this letter to here! In this passage when Jesus comes out of Heaven with his armies **the Church is still on Earth** and in need of rescue from the persecution and afflictions they have been enduring. That is clearly shown in the above passage! The Church is finally granted rest from 2000 years of persecution, affliction, and tribulation when Jesus returns to earth, bringing all his mighty angels, at his Second Coming. (*...the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, Daniel 7:21-22*) If the Church is on Earth being persecuted and is rescued by Jesus when he returns in vengeance, how could the Church be the ones coming out of Heaven with him? This is just another element of pre-trib theory which is unworkable.

But regardless of who you choose to believe those persecuted ones are; it clearly describes those with Jesus when he is revealed from Heaven as his mighty angels!

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, **and all the holy angels with him**, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: Matthew 25:31

Again, when Jesus comes in the clouds with power and great glory, and begins his reign on earth, **he will have brought all the angels out of heaven with him.**

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father **with his angels**; and **then he shall reward every man** according to his works. Matthew 16:27

The Bible clearly teaches Jesus is bringing ALL the angels of Heaven with him at his Return. Just how many angels are we talking about here; a sky full?

There is nothing in Revelation 19:14 that describes those in white as the raptured Church; nor is there any other passage which gives a description of such an event. But we DO have many confirming witnesses describing the angels (whom the Bible portrays as wearing white linen) coming out of Heaven with Jesus! Why ignore such a strong witness in Scripture; and instead hold to a nonexistent witness? How reasonable is that?

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Why would you think Rev. 19:14 is describing anything other than the angels of God; unless you are trying to fabricate support for a rickety theory in danger of collapse. When Jesus comes out of Heaven with his army the resurrection /catching away has NOT happened yet! (The Church he rescues is still on earth. 1 Thess. 1) It happens AFTER he appears with the armies of Heaven!

And then **shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds** with great power and glory. 27 **And then shall he send his angels**, and **shall gather together his elect** from the four winds, **from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.** Mark 13:26-27

About this time some of you pre-trib rapture theory believers are wishing you could throw in these verses:

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus **will God bring with him.** 1Thess. 4:14

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, **the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his Saints,** Jude 1:14

... like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD **my God shall come, and all the Saints with thee.** Zechariah 14:5

Many try to use these verses as proof that the rapture *would have to had already happened* in order for Jesus to bring these people 'with him'. But does it say they come out of Heaven? No, it sure doesn't. Jesus will appear in the clouds **with all his holy angels**, then resurrect the believers, gather us unto himself up in the air, and then descend **bringing all of us with him.** The world will in truth witness Jesus coming with his Saints. There is no conflict with these verses.

Also where does it say the Saints are Heaven's armies, and fight against the wicked and destroy them? The Bible does speak of our struggles with evil in this life as warfare, but does that mean we are the 'armies in Heaven' that do battle for God? Isn't that the job of

the angels? I thought the departed believers had 'entered into their rest'?

When the martyred Saints call out to God to be avenged (Rev. 6:10), will He tell them *to go take care of it themselves*? I question the way the rapture theorists turn Christ's Bride into a vengeful army; I guess they must take back all their forgiveness towards their enemies and persecutors, and go kick some major butt on planet earth?

It just doesn't seem in line with the descriptions we have of the Return of Christ that He would hang back and let his Bride do any fighting for him. It gives me this mental image of a loving married couple at home safe in bed for the night when suddenly they hear glass breaking and noise of intrusion downstairs. Can you picture that doting husband turning to his wife and saying, 'Honey, you wanna get that please?' It just don't seem right, does it?

Dearly beloved, **avenge not yourselves**, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, **Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.** Romans 12:19

The righteous shall rejoice **when he seeth the vengeance**: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. Psalms 58:10

We WILL be present at the battle of Armageddon, SEE the vengeance of God upon our enemies, and REJOICE in victory. There is nothing in Scripture to indicate we should think that believers are the 'armies of Heaven', but plenty to show **it's the holy angels coming out of Heaven with Jesus in Rev. 19:14**. It is not reasonable to teach this unsupported concept as Bible truth, particularly in light of the facts I have presented here. Let's get it right, shall we?

Unbiblical Concept 5. The Holy Spirit is removed from Earth as part of the Pre-Trib Rapture!

Another pillar of the rapture theory is the belief the Holy Spirit is the 'Restrainer of Evil' and must be removed from the earth in

order for the Antichrist to rise to power. They have unconvincingly inserted this presumption into 2Thessalonians 2 as 'proof' the Church will leave before the time of great tribulation. Where in God's Word or in the history of the world has the Lord ever been forced to remove his Spirit in order for great evil to rise to power?

Just look at the instances we have witnessed in the last century of evil men slaughtering people by the millions. Mao Zedong alone was responsible for over 50 million deaths among his own people! Others like Stalin, Pasha, Pol Pot, Leopold, Hitler, Tojo, etc. have each left a swath of death and destruction across the landscape of humanity. Did the Holy Spirit leave the planet each time we saw great evil rise up and vent itself upon the world? There just is not any precedent in Scripture or history for this notion of the necessity of the Holy Spirit leaving earth prior to the great tribulation. Where do they come up with this stuff?

Further more the Holy Spirit is God himself and as such is omnipresent; meaning everywhere at all times. It is literally impossible for the Holy Spirit to not be present on planet earth.

If I ascend up into Heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*. Psalms 139:8

Lately some have begun to back peddle on this notion and say He does not leave just withdraws to the position he had before Pentecost. With the idea that it's his power in the Church that is the restrainer; and the Church and that Pentecostal expression of the Holy Spirit must be removed or the Body of Christ would rise up in prayer and fasting against the Antichrist and gain victory over him. My answer to that is THEY DO gain victory over him, but not in any fashion the world would recognize as victory.

And it was given unto him to make war with the Saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. Revelation 13:7

And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto Heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and **when he shall have accomplished to scatter**

the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. Daniel 12:7

It says he will overcome the Saints but this will only be in a natural sense. Just as the Cross of Christ appeared on that day to be a dismal failure in the eyes of the world, so too will be the conflict of the body of Christ with Antichrist. It will look like God's people are defeated, but only for a short season.

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Revelation 12:11

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. Revelation 3:21

All Antichrist will have accomplished with his worldwide slaughter of the Body of Christ will be to later see them return with crowns on their heads and an eternal reward for their faithfulness. He will have given them all a promotion in the Kingdom! The rejoicing of the world over the demise of those terrible Christians will be short lived; and then God himself will avenge his children.

The concept of the Holy Spirit as the 'Restrainer who has to be removed' is just more effort to shore up a claim the rapture will remove the Church so they don't have to suffer through the great tribulation. I've yet to have anyone show me in the Scriptures a valid reason for believing such a thing. It is just one more totally unfounded part of the pre-trib rapture myth.

Unbiblical Concepts 6. Christians instantly disappear at the Rapture. #7. Jesus will be invisible at his Coming for the Church.

We will look at two falsehoods in this section because of how they are related; and the same verses apply to both.

One of the many unsubstantiated claims we are asked to swallow by those promoting the pre-trib theory is that the catching

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away happens in an instant. We've all seen the movies or read the books portraying an instantaneous departure of the Church with everyone leaving a pile of clothes behind; and the bewildered onlookers are left wondering what just happened. We know this is in accord with the pre-trib rapture theory, and plays quite well theatrically, but should we accept this and other aspects of their narrative as fact when there is no biblical evidence to support so many of their claims? I want my beliefs to have some Bible behind them! How about you? Is there any other source to be trusted?

I would like to know who first started this 'poof we are gone idea'; and just where did he get that idea from? Not from the Scriptures; it is not in there. We have already shown elsewhere that the phrase 'in the twinkling of an eye' was hi-jacked from a description of the resurrected and living Saints being 'changed in the twinkling of an eye' (1Cor. 15:51-52). It is not about the catching away, which is in fact not even mentioned in that entire chapter. But someone decided to purloin the phrase and apply it elsewhere; namely to describe a pre-trib rapture event. Can anyone show me biblical evidence the rapture trip up to the sky will be a split second journey? It's not there! But I do see some strong indication it will be a gradual ascension, and also quite visible. Please consider the following verses:

But if **the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus** from the dead dwell in you, **he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit** that dwelleth in you. Romans 8:11

Paul informs us here we will be quickened (made alive) by the same means Jesus was – the Spirit of God. Are you filled with that life giving Spirit? If so I'll see you in the Resurrection!

For since by man came death, by man came also **the resurrection of the dead**. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so **in Christ shall all be made alive**. 23 But **every man in his own order**: Christ the firstfruits; afterward **they that are Christ's at his coming**. 24 Then cometh the end...
1Corinthians 15:21-24

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The Bible uses the term 'the resurrection of the dead' to describe both what Jesus experienced and also what we will experience. We shall take part in the same event he took part in! First Jesus, and then later all believers, made alive by the power of the Spirit. Are we not the Body of Christ; and Jesus is the Head of the Body? The order we see here is first the Head then the Body.

For if we have been planted together **in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:** Romans 6:5

This passage says our experience will be *in the likeness* of his. That means what we go through will *look like* what he went through. Should the catching away of the Body look any different than the catching away of the Head? No! Why should we think it would? We'll be following in the footsteps of our 'Forerunner'.

There is no scriptural foundation for teaching the 'poof we are gone' rapture picture. It fails to follow the pattern plainly given in the Word of God. Did the Head disappear in a split-second leaving behind a pile of clothing? We know for sure he did not:

And when he had spoken these things, **while they beheld, he was taken up;** and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And **while they looked stedfastly toward Heaven as he went up,** behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? this same Jesus, **which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven.** Acts 1:9-11

When Jesus was 'caught up' it was a gradual climb up into the clouds. We don't know exactly how long it took, but we can easily see it took at least long enough for the disciples to watch him for a bit, and then listen to some prophetic insight from the angels as they continued to watch his ascension until finally he disappeared into the clouds. Where in all the Word of God is there any suggestion we should be believing in an instantaneous disappearance of the Body when it comes time to meet the Head who is waiting up in the air? That is not the pattern given.

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Which brings us to the next **unsupported claim**: Jesus will be invisible when he gathers the Church up to meet him; the world will not see him. Again, who came up with that notion?

The above passage, Acts 1:9-11, says he is returning in the same manner he left. His ascension was totally visible and he will be visible when he descends from Heaven. This is clearly stated there. Now let's take a look at the Resurrection passage:

For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain **shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air**: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1Thessalonians 4:16-17

It says Jesus **will descend from Heaven** and then we will be taken up **into the clouds** to meet him **in the air**. Clouds and air are part of the physical visible world we live in. I cannot for the life of me see where people see an invisible catching away to an invisible Jesus promoted in these prophetic passages of Scripture (or anywhere else). There is not a shred of evidence to support the assumption; and what is described in the verses we have examined contradicts that assumption. The pre-trib theory is plumb full of these false notions; and they are easily proved baseless by the healthy habit of studying the Scriptures in context. The truth sets us free from deception only when we seek out and embrace that truth. This takes time and effort.

Again, where in the Bible do you find any verses in context plainly stating Jesus will be invisible when he returns to raise the dead and catch away the Bride? I have yet to find them; and I have been searching for them for a *very long time*. But I do find many passages which inform us his Coming will be quite visible!

Behold, he **cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him**, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Revelation 1:7

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Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? **this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven.** Acts 1:11

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in Heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and **they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven** with power and great glory. Matthew 24:30

For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under Heaven, shineth unto the other part under Heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. Luke 17:24

With so many examples of God's Word clearly showing a Coming that is quite visible, and ZERO verses teaching an invisible one; it's a little strange to me people would support such a notion. Both the invisible rapture and invisible coming of Christ are unbiblical concepts. Let's believe what the Bible plainly states.

Unbiblical Concept 8. Revelation 3:10 Is A Promise Of Escaping The Tribulation!

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, **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

The promise of Revelation 3:10 is perhaps the most frequently quoted verse given as support for the notion of a 'rapture' of the believers before the coming time of great tribulation prophesied by Jesus. The claim is that this promise of exemption means the Christian Church will not be here on earth to face the 'Mark of the Beast', nor the Antichrist and his horrible persecution of the followers of Christ. **But is this verse really promising all they say it is?**

The fact that Revelation 3:10 is cited as one of the strongest 'proofs' of the pre-trib rapture theory shows just how weak, and lacking of biblical substantiation, that teaching really is. Lacking passages of Scripture which expressly state the elements of their theory they resort to inserting their doctrine into texts such as this one in Revelation. Please read the verse and ask yourself: 'Does this verse really say what they are claiming it does? Is it even about the great tribulation in the first place?'

Where Is The Wrath In Revelation 3:10?

First off, is there anything in this verse that says 'wrath'? Does it say, 'the hour of wrath'? Does it say, 'to bring wrath upon all the world'? I sure don't see it, do you? **It says to 'try them' not to 'destroy them'**. Where did anyone get that this promise was about escaping wrath? Quite a stretch folks! I mean really. When the Scriptures talk of the 'wrath' of Almighty God, the Lord isn't using statements like, 'I think I'll try them for a season.' or 'I think I'll give them an hour of temptation.'

Terms like temptation, trying, or testing suggest a hope for success or victory, or maybe even a redemptive work in progress; but God's wrath carries no such hope, The wrath of God is him venting his fury upon his enemies, as in the days of Lot and Noah (Luke 17:26-29). Its purpose is destruction; a plowing under of the field, so to speak (not the call to repentance we clearly see given time and time again during the time of great tribulation). Does this verse convey that imagery of an outpouring of God's wrath? No, it absolutely does not.

The verse is obviously a promise about a time of testing; but strangely, rapture theory folks think they can claim this as a solid promise God is going to rapture them off this planet before the time of great tribulation begins. The real question is not whether the words 'keep thee from' in this verse mean 'out of' the tribulation or 'thru it', as many have argued over the years; but is this verse even talking about end-time events in the first place?

Is there anything in this verse, or the context in which it is found, that plainly states a promise of leaving this planet, or even mentions the great tribulation itself? If you had never heard of the

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pre-trib rapture theory would you read this verse and say: 'Hey cool, God is going to catch away the Church before Antichrist and the Mark of the Beast gets here!' Would you honestly receive that meaning from this verse if no one had first taught you to think that way? I highly doubt it.

Also, did God **remove** the Philadelphia believers (the promise was written to them after all) from this planet to fulfill his promise to 'keep' them? Obviously not. And we have no reasonable expectation he would have to remove us to keep this promise to us also. God is all powerful; let's not limit the Holy One with our unbelief.

In concern for the hardships his disciples would face Jesus prayed:

I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst *keep them from the evil.
John 17:15

Jesus seemed to be of the opinion God does not need to take us out of this world to 'keep' us! I'm sure God was faithful to this promise he made to those Philadelphia believers right in their situation, as he will be for us also. God will keep us.

(*The Greek word for 'keep' in the above verse is the same one used in Rev. 3:10.)

Who Was Revelation 3:10 Written To?

One thing that helped me see through the presumptions promoted concerning this verse was asking myself: **“Who was this promise written to, and just what did it promise them?”** Let's look at that, shall we? This verse is found in the words Jesus told John to put in a letter and send to the Church in Philadelphia. This was an actual fellowship residing in an actual city by that name. I am pretty sure John obeyed the Lord, and sent them an actual letter.

Do you expect me to believe they received those words as a promise from Jesus they would not have to go thru the cataclysmic end-time events 19 centuries in the future if they would keep his

Word and not deny his name? It would be ridiculous to think so. Did the ones in that fellowship who were not faithful receive the reciprocal of this promise? Were they transported into the future to endure the end-time troubles? Neither the faithful or unfaithful in this Philadelphia church would ever have to worry about whether or not they would go through the final years of this age. That cannot be the promise (or warning) this verse was intended to bring forth to them (and therefor NOT to us).

If the faithful of that group were promised to be 'kept' from something that the less faithful among them would have to endure it had to be something common not just to the time in which they lived, but also to ours (if this promise also applies to us). **We have no right to think this promise spoke one thing to those people but something entirely different to us;** but that is what the pre-trib teachers would have you believe! The truths of God's Word do not change from one generation to another. That type of treatment of God's Word creates an atmosphere where error can flourish unchecked,

A Closer Look

A useful key of understanding can be found in looking at what *the purpose* of what they were being 'kept' from was. It says, “**to try them that dwell upon the earth.**” A verse that comes to my mind is one, also in John's letters to the churches, where Jesus tells lukewarm believers to “*buy gold tried in the fire*” (Rev. 3:18). Peter also uses this concept of 'gold tried in the fire' in regard to the trial of our faith (1 Peter 1:7). Think about this: would a goldsmith or jeweler take some pure 24k gold and throw in in the smelting pot to refine it? What would be the sense in that; it is already pure. There is no need to try it. In a similar manner, not all believers need the fires of purification, but sadly many do.

I don't think it is unreasonable to conclude the promise of Rev. 3:10 has to do with faithfulness in the life of a believer causing God to keep them from a process of refining they don't need to experience. Read the verse again; it says an 'hour of temptation' to 'try them'. You 'try' gold to purify it! **This verse is not talking about God's wrath, but a work of purification.** God

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does chasten his children, but not unnecessarily. And I think this verse speaks the same wisdom to our generation as it did to theirs. Keep thyself pure (or you might get a trip to the woodshed).

In Daniels end-time visions we see some of Christ's followers being tried and made white (Dan. 11:35); but we also see others who were strong in the Lord doing great exploits for his glory (Dan. 11:32-33). **Not everyone was being tried; not everyone needed it.** There we see God's wonderful promise of Rev. 3:10 (and its reciprocal) being faithfully fulfilled during the great tribulation! The ones who were faithful being kept from the testing, and the ones in need of purification being 'made white'. Sounds like God is being faithful to all here.

There are times God keeps us from trials and tribulations; there are times he allows them to try us (or maybe even chastise us); and then there are times he allows suffering for his glory such as persecution or even martyrdom. We need to have a heart to trust him in whatever tribulations God allows to come our way.

Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. 1Peter 4:19

When you look at the condition of the body of Christ in this nation do you see a Church that even *qualifies* for the rapture they claim this verse promises? Has this generation of believers been faithful and kept the word of his patience? I don't think so! The Lord is coming back for a Bride without spot, wrinkle, or blemish. Sin is a blemish on the believer's garment. ... *hating even the garment spotted by the flesh (Jude 1:23)*. Personally, I think the Bride could use a trip to the Laundromat! ...*his wife has made herself ready. (Rev. 19:8)*

The elements of the pre-trib theory are *implicit*; meaning some think they seem to be implied by certain texts. Implicit teachings fill the doctrinal structures of the Catholic, Jehovah Witness, Mormon, Christian Science, and other organizations with falsehoods like soul sleep, annihilation, purgatory, a non-divine Christ, infant baptism, and so on. If you want to believe something badly enough you can find plenty of Scriptures that seem to imply it. **The true doctrines of our faith are explicit**; meaning they are

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expressly declared in the Word of God with the confirming safeguard of multiple witnesses. The pre-trib theory can make no such claim.

Here's another thought: How many who think they can *claim Rev. 3:10 as a promise would care to also claim another 'promise' in John's letters. If Rev. 3:10 is for you why not 2:10 also:

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer:
behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and **ye shall have tribulation** ten days: **be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.** Revelation 2:10

Does not this verse also carry a promise to the Church? Why is one a promise to you, and not the other? Because one tickles your ears, and the other does not?

*(The dispensational / pre-trib theory teachers who claim Rev. 3:10 is a promise of exemption to the end-time Church also teach John's letters to the churches represent seven different Church ages down through history (I disagree with this notion), and we are the last one: the Laodicean Church. And they say Rev. 2:10 was only for those of the 'Smyrna Age'. Why would a promise made to those of the Smyrna Age not apply to the Laodicean Church, but one from the Philadelphia Age (Rev. 3:10) can be claimed? How much sense does that make? I guess rapture sense and common sense are two different things!)

Conclusion

There is not a thing about Revelation 3:10, its wording, its context, or even common sense that shows it to be relevant to the supposed promise of a pre-trib rapture, or that it is specific to end-time events in the first place! This unwarranted claim almost rivals the foolish one that says John being told 'come up hither' (Rev. 4:1) means the church will leave before the time of great tribulation. That idea is so baseless and lame I'm almost embarrassed for the person when I hear them say it. These wild unsupported claims of

'proof texts' are nothing more than a grasping at straws, and are the clear hallmarks of unbiblical doctrine.

The teaching of a rapture before the coming great tribulation is nothing more than a fabricated fable; a story concocted to entertain and distract. I wonder if maybe the original draft was signed by a fella named Aesop? (I assume you've heard of 'Aesop's Fables'.)

Unbiblical Concept 9. The Old Testament Saints will NOT be resurrected and caught up with the Body of Christ.

Rapture theorists, and most dispensationalists, teach the Old Testament believers will not be a part of our 'catching away' to meet Jesus. They separate them (and the supposed tribulation Saints) into another 'plan of salvation' with most teaching O.T. Saints are the Bride of Jehovah whereas N.T. Saints are the Bride of Christ. Did you know they teach God has two Brides? Most are unaware of this, and some other of their wild claims, because many dispensationalists don't preach a lot of the elements of their doctrine due to the controversy caused. They freely preach the parts that tickle the ears, but are prone to keep the lid on the stuff they know will raise questions over apparent conflicts with the Scriptures. And these conflicts are many!

But we do not need to go into any profound theological ramblings to get to the facts here. A look at some simple truths found in Scripture will clear this up.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward **they that are Christ's at his coming.** 24 Then *cometh* the end... 1Corinthians 15:22-24

If you completely read 1Corinthians chapter 15 you will see no distinction between O.T. and N.T. believers in regard to the Resurrection. What we see is 'all were dead' then 'all made alive'. Paul contrasts the fall of man with the antidote to the fall; being made alive in Christ and resurrected with him. Paul was plainly

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teaching all who were by Jesus redeemed from the fall would rise at his Coming. Who does it say will be resurrected with Christ? Those that are his! So the question we need to answer here is: do the O.T. Saints belong to Christ? We shall see they indeed do.

Most pre-trib rapture teachers say the O.T. and 'tribulation Saints' are saved in a different manner than us. This is actually a heretical belief; there is no other way into the Kingdom of God than through faith in Jesus Christ, and the new-birth that faith brings!

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.** 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.** John 3:3-6

Jesus stated plainly only those who have found the new-birth will enter God's kingdom. It will not matter what 'era' you lived in; what will matter is did you find the 'Door'? People find that Door through the preaching of the Gospel.

...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.** 1Thessalonians 5:9-10

For for this cause was **the gospel preached also to them that are dead,** that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but **live according to God in the spirit.** 1Peter 4:6

We are not given to understand everything that happened when Jesus descended to the region of the dead, but God thought it important that we know that the Gospel was preached to the O.T. Saints, and that Jesus freed those captives. They had to receive the Gospel of grace through faith in the blood of Christ just as we had to. This is the 'good seed' that once planted in a heart of faith springs up into everlasting life. Receiving the truth of the Gospel

and putting your faith in Jesus, and his shed Blood, places you 'in Christ'. Let's look at the origin of our promise of inheritance:

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, **preached before the gospel unto Abraham**, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Galatians 3:8

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made.

He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one,

And **to thy seed, which is Christ.** Galatians 3:16

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:26

There is **neither Jew nor Greek**, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: **for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.** 29 And **if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

Galatians 3:28-29

We are all made one in Christ! The way that a lot of people preach the plan of God for mankind they make the absurd claim God has one plan for the O.T. Saints and another for the Church. Many actually teach the Church was plan B. That is falsehood. There is only one plan. God's plan to redeem mankind from the fall was preached as early as the Garden of Eden when God provided a covering for the naked man and his mate. Those animals didn't just slip out of their skins and say, 'Here ya go!'. There was bloodshed and a loss of life to provide that covering. The Gospel of Christ's sacrifice was God's plan to 'cover' us with His Righteousness from the beginning and has never changed or needed upgraded.

The promise to inherit the kingdom was given to Abraham **and his seed**. This promise is fulfilled in Christ; and because we are in Christ we also are Abraham's seed, so it is the same promise to us. One promise to all. There is no inheritance outside of Christ.

And this is the will of him that sent me, that **every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.**

John 6:40

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Did not the dead *see him* and *believe on him* when Christ preached to them? Jesus said that every one that believes on him will be resurrected at the last day. Paul said this would happen for all those who are Christ's at his Coming. (1Cor. 15:23)

But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: **for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.**

Luke 14:13-14

The people who were being addressed in this passage were not a part of the post-Pentecost Church. Jesus told these people living under the Law they could take part in the Resurrection of the Just! Their theory says the pre-trib rapture is the Resurrection of the Just, and that the O.T. Saints will not take part in that Resurrection. Who should we believe? I know where my vote is going. How about you?

This is some of the stuff I was talking about that doesn't get preached on much outside of a strict dispensationalist crowd. If you are not already brainwashed into their theology, things like this might not set well with you, and they know it.

There is no rapture before the time of great tribulation; the theory is a man-made invention of modern creation. The Resurrection of the Just takes place at the Second Coming; and will include all believers from Adam's day to that day. The pre-trib theory's claim that the O.T. Saints don't get resurrected with the Church is an unbiblical concept; and is preaching deception.

Some additional thoughts. The pre-trib theory teaches that at the rapture the Age of Grace is closed out. I see all these web sites with advice for those who missed the rapture; telling them to read the Bible for it will show them the way of salvation. If the tribulation Saints are not saved in the same manner we are what good is our Bible going to be to them? It teaches grace through faith, not an alternative way to be saved. It will tell them unless they are born-again they won't enter the Kingdom, and it will also tell them to be filled with the Spirit; both of which will be kind of hard if He left with the Church at the rapture. It will tell them to

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walk in the Spirit, pray in the Spirit, seek for the Spirit to lead them into all truth. It will tell them 'not of works lest any should boast', but the pre-trib theory says they are saved by their being faithful to death, not by grace like we are. I'm sorry, but I kinda think changing faith into faithfulness is equal to changing grace into works. If we could be saved by works why the need for the Cross?

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, **then Christ is dead in vain.**

Galatians 2:21

If the pre-trib rapture theory were true it seems like it would be better advice to tell them to disregard the Bible. Wouldn't it get pretty confusing reading a New Testament full of teachings on how to get saved and live for Jesus in a manner that had already been dispensed with? No, we know the Bible will work fine for those going through those days; us the Body of Christ! We serve a God whose word is true and unchanging; as is his plan of salvation!

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of Heaven, having **the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth**, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Revelation 14:6

There will not be a new Gospel of Works during the tribulation! The Gospel by which people will be saved during that era of tribulation is the 'everlasting Gospel'. It will be preached by the Body of Christ awaiting the Second Coming of Christ. And upon Christ's Return the O.T. Saints will rise along with us!

Unbiblical Concept 10. The Tribulation Saints are defeated; and therefor they are NOT the Body of Christ!

The Tribulation Saints

Much discussion and speculation has taken place over the subject of the Tribulation Saints (those alive during the prophesied Great Tribulation). Who are they? What will they have to endure?

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Are they saved by martyrdom, or by grace through faith like the rest of us? Are they a part of the Bride, or not? The discourse continues with a broad range of opinions tossed into the mix. But I would like to suggest to you that today's Believers **will never become** Tribulation Saints! Does that statement surprise you, considering the fact I embrace the Post-trib viewpoint? Please allow me to explain why this is true.

Tribulation Is A Promise

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. **In the world ye shall have tribulation:** but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. John 16:33

Jesus promised his followers tribulation in this life. Believers *will not become* Tribulation Saints during the Great Tribulation because you cannot become **something you already are!** The Church of Jesus Christ has been in tribulation since its inception. There is no such thing as a genuine follower of Christ who is not already a Tribulation Saint!

Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, **and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.** Acts 14:22

As Paul and Barnabas traveled the areas surrounding Antioch the message they presented was an exhortation to remain steadfast in the faith because we must undergo much tribulation on the road to glory. He was cultivating a mindset in them to expect tribulation as a normal part of Christian life.

Tribulation Is Normal Christianity

For verily, when we were with you, we told you before **that we should suffer tribulation;** even as it came to pass, and ye know. 1Thessalonians 3:4

Paul also spoke of the promise of tribulation coming upon us in his letter to the Church at Thessalonica. Not something that would come along after the Church was 'whisked away', but a very real

part of what all true believers will face as the world expresses its opposition to the life of Christ dwelling in his followers.

Yea, and **all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.** 2Timothy 3:12

Much of the tribulation a true believer faces in life will be the direct result of a testimony and lifestyle which confronts the unbeliever with the sinfulness of their own life. As we move closer to the end, and the iniquity of man comes to a fullness, so shall the opposition to the believers increase like never before. Jesus said then shall be 'great' tribulation (Matt 24:21). The word tribulation itself actually carries the meaning of pressure, affliction, and persecution. A look at Strong's Definition for this word is very enlightening. Tribulation equals persecution! The great tribulation could rightly be called the great persecution.

Tribulation Sifts The Wheat!

But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. **13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.**
John 10:12-13

When the day soon comes where speaking in the name of Jesus will carry an enormous cost to it the wolves will no longer seek position over the sheep. In the final days of this era we will see a return to the true pure Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the opposition to it will rise to a fever pitch. Tribulation and persecution weeds out the halfhearted or compromised (as well as false believers); they are offended and fall away. The Mark of the Beast will see to that. I fear many with a shallowness of faith will not be willing to pay the price of following Christ in that day, and will turn from the truth.

Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: **for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.** Matthew 13:21

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The lukewarm and compromised believers of that day will get off the fence on one side or the other. In the coming great persecution, as all of the organizations and denominations either defect to the enemy's camp or cease to exist altogether, their gospel of mixture will also vanish. The Hirelings will abandon the flock and flee, just as Jesus said they would (John 10:12).

Tribulation Has Additional Purpose

The lines between truth and error will soon no longer be blurred by the teachers of modern opinion or man's religious philosophies. Truth will light up the path of the Righteous while error will call out from the darkness; seducing those without a love for the truth. In the interest of self-preservation the tares will distance themselves from the wheat, a division that is all according to God's divine plan.

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also:

knowing that tribulation worketh patience; Romans 5:3

Like it or not tribulation is beneficial to us as Christians; but most don't have ears to hear such truth. They feel anything negative could have no usefulness or benefit to us so why would God allow us to go through the time of great tribulation? Mention God using the great tribulation as a means of perfecting the Body of Christ and many folks are liable to pitch a fit. Believe me I have seen it! (He's a loving God, they say, not a mean one!) But fuss as you might the Bible very clearly presents the truth that going through tumultuous times will work out a patient endurance in us. It is good for us!

Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

James 1:3-4

In fact this patient endurance is a mark of perfection or maturity in a believer's walk. It only comes our way through trials and tribulations, and is vital to our spiritual well-being. *In your patience possess ye your souls. Luke 21:19* I think the popular notion that Christians will not see the great tribulation is indication

of a larger problem. An unbalanced image of God that denies any facet of his character that doesn't fit a liberal view of how a good God ought to behave himself.

This liberal mindset has taken root in modern Christianity and declares it's wrong, even cruel, to spank your children (even though the Word advises us to). This in turn produces a mistaken notion that God would also embrace this mentality, and thereby not impose any chastisement or perfecting tribulations upon his children. But in fact the Bible says that if we are not chastened by God we are not even his children!

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, **despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:** 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 **But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.** Hebrews 12:5

I hope our little study on tribulation in the life of a believer has been food for thought. So let me ask you now: Are you a Tribulation Saint? I sure hope you are, there really is no other kind of true Saint! Let's have a heart to face the tribulations of life, even great tribulation, with a confidence in the keeping power of the Lord. A confidence evidenced by these words from someone who knew much about going through tribulation:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? **shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution,** or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 **Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.** 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other

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creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:35-39

Who Wins The War Against The Saints?

Recently someone stated to me the following reasoning as evidence the Body of Christ will not be here on earth to face Antichrist and his war on the Saints:

QUOTE: Jesus himself clearly says the Church is NOT overcome; that the gates of Hell **will not** prevail against it! (Matt. 16:18), and therefore **the Saints overcome by the Antichrist in Rev. 13 are not the Church Saints**, but are Jews and Gentiles who come to Christ during the tribulation. The Church has left Earth in the Rapture before the Tribulation. END QUOTE

This is but one of the numerous 'proofs' of the pre-trib rapture theory I have been given that upon an initial hearing sound like they may have some validity, but when put up against the standard of God's Word they fall apart like the proverbial house of cards. Let's take a good look at what the Scriptures really have to say about the apparent defeat of the 'tribulation Saints'.

The Great Tribulation (Persecution)

First let's look at some verses in Daniel **which do show** the Antichrist rising up against the Body of Christ, and apparently having great success in his fierce campaign of persecution against them. It is not a pretty picture!

I beheld, and the same horn **made war with the saints, and prevailed against them**;... 25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall **wear out the saints of the most High**, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. Daniel 7:21+25

And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall

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stand up. **24 And his power shall be mighty**, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and **shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.** Daniel 8:23 -24

And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: **yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.**

Daniel 11:33

And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and **when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.** Daniel 12:7

If we were to view these verses to the exclusion of the rest of the Scriptures it might very well convince us the tribulation Saints do in fact suffer a total defeat at the hands of Antichrist; that he has indeed gained an ultimate victory over them! And if we were to stop our investigation into this matter here it would seem the pre-trib rapture 'proof' we were given just may be valid. But let's be diligent, and consider the rest of the verses that provide info on this battle between the Antichrist and the followers of Jesus Christ.

We will now address this supposed 'proof' that: the tribulation Saints are NOT the Body of Christ because they are defeated; but the Bride never is!

The battle against the Church will be fierce and relentless, and many (probably many millions) will lose their lives in the name of their Lord. The world-wide slaughter of Christians will be on an unimaginable scale. The words of Jesus tell us people will even be turning their own family members in to face the consequences of confessing Christ in those days. (I suspect a sizable bounty on Christians in a time of wide-spread poverty and famine would help foster this trend.)

But if you think the tribulation Saints are defeated by Antichrist you are quite mistaken.

In the natural most will be overcome. It clearly says he will be given power over them, make war against them, scatter the power of the holy people, and put them to death. In the eyes of the world it will appear the Body of Christ has been defeated and eradicated. But this battle is not the end of the war. In his campaign of slaughter he has NOT gained an ultimate victory over them; all he has done is given them a promotion in the Kingdom of God: to the status of martyr! **They will return for the final skirmish**, and he will see crowns upon the very heads he removed from their bodies. That does not sound like defeat to me!

This notion of 'proof' given that their apparent defeat means they were not a part of the Body of Christ would have to apply also to all the groups of 'defeated ones' down thru history who fell prey to the spirit of Antichrist. The Anabaptist were slaughtered by the tens of thousands in an attempt to remove them from society. Were these 'defeated ones' not of the Body? Or the millions martyred by the purge of Mao in China? Were they not the Body? Or how about our Brothers and Sisters in Christ who are being persecuted in the middle east today? Towns and even entire regions are being cleared of any evidence of Christianity. Is there a separate category for them also (maybe Pre-Tribulation Saints?); one that precludes *them* from being the Body of Christ due to their apparent defeat?

Jesus himself was overpowered by the satanically controlled priesthood, arrested, imprisoned, mocked, tortured, and made a public spectacle by an agonizing death which left a lifeless corpse hanging on a cross (the death of a cursed one). In the eyes of the world the leader of this new religious sect had been vanquished! By the definition given by our pre-trib rapture theorist friend the Cross of Christ would be a defeat. But we know that it was not a defeat, but a victory! As is, and will be, the death of all who follow in his footsteps, no matter what time frame they live in.

The Tide Turns!

The Antichrist does not defeat the tribulation Saints!

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Revelation 12:11

They overcame him! And Antichrist only prevails for a season!

I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; **22 Until the Ancient of days came**, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; **and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.** Daniel 7:21-22

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and **them that had gotten the victory over the beast**, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. Revelation 15:2

The Scriptures clearly show the tribulation Saints in victory over the Antichrist! They ultimately prevail over him, and as a result of this successful conquest they will rule the world he once did! My pre-trib brethren, if any of you hold the notion the defeat of the tribulation Saints is evidence the Body of Christ will not face Antichrist, you have embraced another unsound pre-trib ‘proof’ that is no proof at all.

The pre-trib theory is not correct doctrine. If you have received and believed the teaching of a pre-trib rapture, the Lord is calling you to repent of this, and seek his forgiveness for the part you have played in promoting this damaging error. He will abundantly pardon all who forsake this falsehood, and confess their involvement with it as a sin. I am praying the Body of Christ will be purged of this deceiving and damaging doctrine.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1John 1:9

Section Five: Outright Lies

Outright Lie 1. The Great Tribulation Is God's Wrath!

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. Matthew 24:21

The Great Tribulation

When Jesus was teaching on the end-time events which would precede his Return he spoke of a period of tremendous woe upon mankind. He described a coming time of war, famine, plague, natural disasters, great religious deception, and persecution of the followers of Christ on a scale never seen before.

Many Bible teachers are claiming this time of great tribulation is actually the wrath of God being poured out upon mankind. And that because God has promised to '*save us from the wrath to come*' the Church will be taken to Heaven before this woe begins. But where did anyone get the idea that when the Bible speaks about being saved from God's wrath it is referring to the 'great tribulation'? Is this a notion that is actually presented by the Scriptures? Let's take a look.

Is Tribulation Wrath?

For **God hath not appointed us to wrath**, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 1Thessalonians 5:9

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... even Jesus, **which delivered us from the wrath to come**. 1Thessalonians 1:10

One of the most popular reasons given for supposing that the Church could not possibly go through this time is that the 'Great Tribulation' *is the wrath of God*; with one of the above verses of Scripture normally quoted as support for this line of thinking.

In the first verse we see wrath and salvation are presented as being diametrically opposed to each other: 'not appointed us **to wrath**, but to obtain **salvation**'. Now let's ask ourselves: is 'tribulation' the opposite of salvation? No, it is not. I would say damnation is the opposite of salvation, wouldn't you? Also, is tribulation synonymous with damnation? I don't think we could properly say that either.

Neither of these verses in the context which they were given speak of being removed from the danger of tribulation in this life. It is not proper to assign a 'new' interpretation to them. In the second one Paul had just spoken to them of receiving *the Word in much *affliction* (1Thess 1:6). The word affliction there is translated from the Greek word 'thlipsis'; the exact same word which is translated 18 times as 'tribulation' including 'great tribulation' in Matthew 24!

(*SIDE NOTE: Matthew gave us Jesus' comment on the period of trouble as '*a time of great tribulation*'. How did Mark word it?)

For in those days **shall be affliction** (Thlipsis), such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. Mark 13:19

This verse describes a day of *affliction* worse than the people of God had ever experienced or ever would; nothing about a time of God's wrath. The Church was already in affliction (1Thess 1:6), just not yet the coming 'great affliction' (Thlipsis). **Quite a leap to go from affliction to the vengeful wrath of God, don't you think?)**

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Here is the listing in Strong's Definitions for the Greek word from which we get the words tribulation and affliction in our Bible:

G2347 θλίψις thlipsis thlip'-sis

From G2346; pressure (literally or figuratively): - afflicted, (-tion), anguish, burdened, persecution, tribulation, trouble.

Total KJV occurrences: 45

There is nothing in this definition that points to the wrath of God. A word study on thlipsis and its usage in Scripture is very enlightening! It clearly shows we are not exempt from tribulation as believers, but rather called to endure it!

...and that **we must through much tribulation** (Thlipsis) enter into the kingdom of God. Acts 14:22

That no man should be **moved by these afflictions** (Thlipsis): for yourselves know that **we are appointed thereunto**. 4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that **we should suffer tribulation** (Thlipsis); even as it came to pass, and ye know.

1Thessalonians 3:3-4

Paul said that we are **appointed to thlipsis** and that we **will suffer thlipsis!** With this in mind let's look once more at the words of Jesus:

For in those days **shall be affliction** (Thlipsis), **such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be**. Mark 13:19:

For **then shall be great tribulation** (Thlipsis), **such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be**. Matthew 24:21

As we shall see, the very words of Christ himself dismiss the notion the 'great tribulation' is the wrath of God! Sometimes I wonder if those who insist that it is his wrath have ever really given these verses a good looking over. Seriously!

Whatever this 'great tribulation' is, **the Lord Jesus said it will be the worst expression of it that ever has been or ever will be!** Could this possibly be describing God's wrath? Absolutely not! Please pause and ponder this:

1.) If the great tribulation WAS the wrath of God, according to the words of Jesus (like never was before), it would have to be worse than the wrath of God which destroyed the entire world in Noah's day leaving only eight people alive. How could that be true? Where would the armies at Armageddon come from, or the wicked upon whom Jesus vents God's wrath at his Return, if the tribulation was God's wrath worse than ever been before?

2.) If it were God's wrath it would have to exceed the wrath to be poured out at the Return of Christ:

...when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, **8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;**
2Thessalonians 1:7-9

The Second Coming of Christ is when the vials of God's wrath are poured out (Rev. 15:1), This is the day God visits his wrath upon his enemies (not before). What events listed as occurring during the great tribulation are greater than the wrath of Christ's Return? I sure don't see any in the Bible, do you?

3.) Finally we must ask here: Is the great tribulation going to be worse wrath than Hell, or the eternal Lake of Fire? Remember Jesus said: *'such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be'*. Do you honestly believe that the events of the great tribulation, as fearsome as they might be, could ever compare to the wrath of God expressed by eternal damnation? Come on, let's get real here. Let's get it right!

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I think maybe someone has deceitfully inserted a false definition into Jesus' teaching on the great tribulation. Let's insert Strong's definition into it and see what that speaks:

For then shall be great tribulation (*pressure, affliction, anguish, burden, persecution, tribulation, trouble*) such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. Matthew 24:21 *Italics mine.*

There is nothing in the definition of the word 'thlipsis' that has not always been common to true Christianity. The Body of Christ has been in tribulation for nearly 2000 years! Jesus was saying that at the end of this age would come a time when the tribulation (*pressure, affliction, anguish, burden, persecution, tribulation, trouble*) his followers will endure would be magnified to such an extent it would be like none ever seen before or ever will be. **This was a heads-up warning, NOT a promise of exemption!**

Satan's Wrath

But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, **and wrath upon this people.** Luke 21:23

Some folks point to this verse from Luke and say, 'See, there is God's wrath being poured out during the tribulation!' But is this passage referring to the wrath of someone other than God during the great tribulation? I believe it most certainly is!

... for the devil is come down unto you, **having great wrath**, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. 13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. 14 **And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness**, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, **and went to make war with the remnant of her**

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seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Revelation 12:12-14+17

We see it is the wrath of the Devil coming down on these folks, and the place of refuge is to keep them from Satan's wrath. Would God pour out his wrath upon them, and at the same time make a place of refuge for them to be safe from it? How much sense does that make? I call that an unreasonable facet of pre-trib theory!

FOOD 4 THOUGHT: Notice God does not remove the Jews from this planet to keep them safe. The pre-trib teaching states the tribulation is the wrath of God. But then they say the Jews have a place of refuge from that (supposed) wrath. What the pre-trib theory is stating there is that God does not have to take his people off world to 'keep them' from his wrath! But then they will turn around and boldly teach God **MUST** remove the Church because the tribulation is the time of God's wrath and he must remove his people to 'keep them' from his wrath! Good Grief! Make up your mind will ya? More unworkable theory!

If God made a place of refuge for the Jews to be safe during the great tribulation why couldn't he do the same for us Christians? Why would we have to be taken out of this world; should we think God can preserve the Jews but not the Gentiles?

God's Wrath Is AFTER The Tribulation!

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, **seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.** 2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and **them that had gotten the victory over the beast**, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. Revelation 15:1-2

Here, at the end of the great tribulation, we now see the Wrath of God; and as we see in Rev. 15 the vials these angels have contain this wrath. But nowhere can we find support for the notion the

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‘great tribulation’ itself is his wrath. Notice that when this wrath is being prepared to be poured out heaven is filled with the spirits of those who had gotten the victory over the Mark of the Beast and are awaiting the resurrection. The battle of the Church with the Antichrist is coming to an end; and now it’s time for payback!

The book of Revelation does speak of God’s wrath AFTER the Tribulation; but what takes place DURING that time are extremely serious Judgments along with a call to repentance. This call to repentance is plainly shown during the time of tribulation. The wrath of God is not a call to repentance, its purpose is vengeance! Don’t let anyone deceive you into thinking you won’t be here because the time of great tribulation is the vengeance of God. The Bible teaches no such thing. That mistaken notion came from man.

FOOD 4 THOUGHT: And what about the (supposed) tribulation Saints the rapture teachers speak of who are found to be on earth during this horrible time; has God appointed THEM unto his (supposed) wrath? Did not the Cross of Jesus deliver *them* from the wrath to come (1Thess. 1:10)? Are they not the same blood bought children of God we are? Is 1Thess 5:9 'God has not appointed us to wrath' no longer true; did it expire? **Do the promises of God's Word not apply to them?**

If one group of believers has to endure this time why not another? Is God going to remove the lukewarm Church of our generation, who have had such an abundance of light given them, before this tribulation; but make a new generation of baby Christians go through it unsupported by any seasoned elders, mature teachers, experienced prayer warriors, or the guidance of the Holy Ghost (without whom they could not even properly grasp the truth of the Scriptures) because they have all been given an exemption and left the planet? **Gee, thanks God!** (This is all just more unreasonable pre-trib theory!)

A Purified People

Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

Daniel 12:10

Although referring to the hardships of the ‘great tribulation’ as a means to chastise a lazy and lukewarm Church is a very unpopular concept (few even dare to raise the point for discussion) it is not without Scriptural support.

There are many passages in the Bible which seem to indicate a purification taking place during this time in regard to the Body of Christ. And who could deny this to be needful, considering the state the Church is in today? Is the Bride ready for the Groom? Not hardly; but nobody wants to face that issue; they just want their ‘rapture’!

The truths the Bible teaches about the last-days are being thrown aside to make room for the fables of escapism!

Those who say the great tribulation is the wrath of God are turning the truth into a lie! Jesus was NOT saying that before the Second Coming there would be a time of God's Wrath like never before or ever will be. **The notion is not even a possibility!**

Let's not be putting our faith in made-up fables, but in what is actually taught plainly in the Bible. The Word of God clearly teaches the wrath of God is brought upon the wicked at the Return of Jesus Christ to earth *immediately after* the great tribulation! (Matthew 24:29-31, 2Thess 1:7-10, Rev. 11:18)

The Bible does NOT teach that the great tribulation is the wrath of God!

And neither should YOU! If you have been promoting this error you now know better, and had better stop it and repent; or you will stand before God as a deceiver. I hope you can now see the folly of believing the great tribulation is the wrath of God, and will cast that falsehood in the trash can where it belongs.

Outright Lie 2. The Bible Teaches 'The Imminent Return Of Christ'!

Another one of the first-string players on the pre-trib rapture team is the doctrine of 'The Imminent Return of Christ'. This pillar of the pre-trib theory firmly states that Christ *may come at any moment to snatch away the Church.

The true meaning of the word 'imminent' implies an impending or 'overhanging' event that *will happen very soon. Someone whose death is imminent will not be alive weeks from now. The deception of this doctrine begins with its very name.

*They change the definition of the word imminent from 'will' happen at any moment to 'may' happen at any moment. (let's just make words mean whatever fits our story!) Something that 'may' happen is **not** considered imminent. This is not a correct usage of the word, but using the word imminent impacts you with its true 'impending' or 'over hanging' definition, and gives more clout to their teaching. This improper usage of the word 'imminent' in the pre-trib rapture theory is missed by most people. Quite subtle, huh?

I have a question which makes rapture theorists uneasy because of where it leads to. When did the rapture *become* 'imminent'? I would like to know if it became imminent in modern times, in medieval times, in the days of the early Church, or was it imminent from the day Christ ascended? This is a very important consideration because they all say, *'The Bible teaches the doctrine of 'Imminent Return' and the Church has always believed it!'*

The point of my question is that in order for the Scriptures to have always taught the rapture is imminent it would have to had been imminent when they were written. That may take a moment to sink in, but please let it do so. Because if it did not come from the Scriptures where DID it come from? If we can absolutely prove it did not, that means their claim the rapture has always been imminent is just one more bald faced lie of the pre-trib theory!.

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First off, if it *was* imminent at that time it would have happened at that time! (Oops! I forgot they changed the meaning of imminent from 'will happen' to 'may happen'. Sorry, move along people!)

But seriously, the reason we know the Scriptures were not written from a viewpoint of imminence is they were given us by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit knew that many events must take place before Jesus could return. And it would have been out of accord with the truth to give the Church the impression Christ's Return was imminent. .

The Holy Spirit, who guided the writing of the Scriptures, knew *many* things must transpire before the Coming: Peter dying as an old man, a dearth prophesied by Agabus, the Gospel preached in all the world, chariots with flaming torches (headlights?) that can run like lightning, the rebirth of the nation of Israel, rise of a religion that forbids marriage and meat eating, false Christs, false prophets, a falling away and the man of sin being revealed, and so on, and so on. If all these things, and many others, had to come to pass first the Scriptures could not have been written to teach his Return was at hand because it absolutely was not.

To say the Scriptures were written to declare a standing doctrine of 'imminent return' is serious error; and to say the Apostles were led by the Spirit to teach this concept to their disciples, and include it in their writings, is a flagrant lie. I have sadly heard that lie so many times from pre-trib preachers. And I have to wonder how many know better. Honestly.

How could you study the Bible for years and not see the great number of prophesies which must be fulfilled before the Church departs? But to turn loose of this concept of imminent return unravels a large section of the pre-trib theory; so a willful ignorance must be adopted by those confronted with the truth of this matter. An allegiance with a doctrine is chosen over an allegiance to the truth. How sad that so many make this choice!

Here is something you may have never caught on to before. Paul and Jesus both warned us against listening to people preaching an imminent return of Christ! Here is Paul's warning:

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...**be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled**, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is **at hand**. **3 Let no man deceive you by any means...** 2Thessalonians 2:2-3

The words **at hand** in this passage mean 'impending' which is also the meaning of the word 'imminent'. You can take out the words 'at hand' and insert the word 'imminent' without altering the meaning of the verse an iota. Paul was saying, Don't let *anyone* tell you the Return of Christ and our gathering together unto him is imminent!' He goes on to explain what must transpire first.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;
2Thessalonians 2:3

Here is a similar warning from the Lord Jesus himself:

And he said, **Take heed that ye be not deceived**: for many shall come **in my name, saying**, I am Christ; and **the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them**.
Luke 21:8

This was not a warning about following false Christs; but about those coming in Jesus name, claiming Jesus is Christ, and preaching deception about his return

Do you get that? This is a warning from Jesus about deceived believers proclaiming the time of his Return is upon us! This is very clear instruction from the Lord we are **not** to follow people preaching falsehoods like the doctrine of his 'Imminent Return'. What did he say if they come preaching imminence? '...go ye not therefore after them'. He said, 'don't follow them!'

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, **Behold, he is in the desert**; go not forth: behold, **he is in the secret chambers; believe it not**. 27 For as the **lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be**. Matthew 24:26

Here's something else that is hard to be swallowed by many Christians. **Jesus also told us not to believe preachers proclaiming anything other than a visible Coming of Christ!** Why have these words been cast aside by so many today?

Any one promoting an invisible or secret visitation of Jesus is not to be believed. He said believe them not! Jesus and Paul both taught against immanency; and Jesus also taught against believing anything other than a visible Return. Have you been sitting under or following those preaching these falsehoods that Jesus and Paul warned about? Might want to reflect on that one a bit.

Now we see the true purpose of the parable of the fig tree given by the Savior later in this discourse. He was telling them in this sermon not to follow those preaching various deceptions about his return, but to look for the signs he gave as indicators of the nearness of that event.

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: 29 So ye in like manner, **when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors.** Mark 13:28-29

Although not written from the viewpoint of immanency; the Scriptures do present a time when the Return of Christ **will become** imminent. But his Coming will not be truly imminent until the season of his arrival. Jesus gave us many signs to recognize that season; and we are to let the signposts tell us how far we are along that road not the opinions or doctrines of man.

The doctrine of the 'Imminent Return' does not come from the Bible, and should be rejected by the Body of Christ.

Outright Lie 3. Christ Comes For Us Before Antichrist Arrives!

Little children, it is the last time: and as **ye have heard that Antichrist shall come...** -*John an apostle of Christ*

The Darkness Before The Dawn

One major matter which I feel does not get the discussion it deserves is that those promoting the concept of a pre-trib rapture are declaring the Body of Christ will NEVER face the persecution of Antichrist's 'war on the Saints'. Nor the hardships and possibly life-forfeiting stand one must endure to avoid the damnation of the Mark of the Beast.

A repeated truism found throughout the pages of the Bible is that in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. In our search for truth, to base our beliefs and teachings upon, an assembly of true and faithful witnesses should always be given greater regard than the mere theories and speculations of man. Let's take a serious look a just what witness we actually do have as to whether or not the Church of Jesus Christ will face Antichrist and the Mark of the Beast.

An Overwhelming Witness The Church WILL Face Antichrist!

The Witness of the Word

Now we beseech you, brethren, **by the coming (Greek -Parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,** 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 **Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed,** the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.
2Thessalonians 2:1-4

This is one of the most mistreated passages in the entire Bible in our day. It is under a constant attack, for the truth it presents is contrary to the deceptive teachings many are promoting about a pre-tribulation 'rapture' of the Church. But, although great lengths are gone to in order to ignore, obfuscate, or alter this passage, in the end it clearly says what it clearly says! The coming / Parousia

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of our Lord and our gathering together unto him will NOT occur until *after* the appearance of the Antichrist. A second witness to this truth is given in verse 8 of the same chapter.

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 (Greek - Parousia):** 2Thessalonians 2:8

This verse, coupled with the first segment of the chapter, clearly ties the coming / Parousia of Christ and our gathering together unto him with the destruction of the Antichrist at the end of his reign of terror. This could not be so if that event was a pre-trib event as the Antichrist is destroyed at the return of Christ immediately after the tribulation (Matt.24:29). Here is one more witness that ties this together.

For since by man came death, by man came also **the resurrection of the dead.** 22 For as in Adam all die, **even so in Christ shall all be made alive.** 23 **But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming (Greek -Parousia).** 24 Then cometh the end,... 1Corinthians 15:21-24

The resurrection of ALL those who are the redeemed of Christ takes place at ONE time: His coming / Parousia. All believers including those alive at his return as well as those who have died down through the ages (Old Testament as well as New Testament believers) will be changed to glorified bodies and caught up to meet Jesus in one glorious event. This is the Resurrection at the Last Day also referred to in the Bible as the Resurrection of the Just.

Please notice the Greek word 'Parousia' is the underlying Greek word for 'coming' in all of these quoted passages. We see three things clearly associated with this word that all transpire at this 'coming':

- **First.** The resurrection of all who belong to Christ. Those who have called out to God for his salvation from all ages.

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- **Second.** The gathering together unto Christ at his coming of all those believers he gave his life on that Cross to redeem.
- **Thirdly.** The destruction of the man of sin who we know to be the Antichrist who seizes control of the planet for three and one half years at the very end of this age.

These events ALL transpire at ONE TIME. This is also the same Coming / Parousia of Christ after the tribulation in Matthew 24:29-31! To try and chop up this clear Biblical truth into a series of events which take place at various times is to disregard the true teaching of the Scriptures, and to promote error in its stead. Believing what is plainly and clearly stated in the Bible is the standard we should apply to base our beliefs upon; but sadly many cast aside that safeguard and follow instead the theories of man.

That is why we have so many people believing so many different things about the end-time scenario. **The Bible is not teaching different things to different people.** Some are following the truth presented in the Scriptures, and others are following the wayward teachings of man.

But the witness of God's Word clearly declares to us that BEFORE the coming of Christ will come the appearance of the Antichrist / Man of Sin.

FOOD 4 THOUGHT: Here is an additional witness from God's Word which speaks loudly to me. A main theme of the book 'The Song of Solomon' is the return of Christ for his Church. If you read chapter two carefully the return of Jesus for his people is **portrayed as a Spring-time event!** Notice how it states **that winter is over and past,** and the 'time of flowers appearing and of the singing of birds is come'. It is the beginning of the millennial reign of Christ!

If this event was to precede the final period of darkness to be faced by mankind it would be worded differently. Notice he does NOT say, 'Rise up my love! Winter is coming and I better get you out of here before the

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hardships of that season!' No, in line with the rest of the Scriptures which describe the Church enduring a final season of darkness and persecution before Jesus returns, Song portrays the Bride as just coming out of the darkness of a 'winter season' when she rises up to meet her Beloved'! This is just one of *many places* the pre-trib rapture theory is out of sync with what is presented in the Word of God.)

The Witness of the Fathers

We have the writings of thousands of authors and commentators to compare stretching clear back to the early believers of Christ. If the Pre-trib rapture doctrine were true, and the apostles and their disciples believed and taught it, the record of that fact would be clearly evident in the writings of the early Church Fathers, as well as those down through the centuries. **This is absolutely NOT the case!**

Although many claim to have solid evidence the pre-trib rapture doctrine has been a part of the beliefs of the Church since its inception, they are basing this claim upon a mere handful of 'quotes' from antiquity, easily half of which could just as well be a reference to escaping God's fury in a post-trib catching away before that wrath is poured out at the Second Coming. They are grasping at straws and reading their doctrine into any place they can stuff it. *But is this really the witness we receive from the quotes by the early fathers?*

The question we should be posing here is this: If this was 'Bible truth', and the belief of the Body of Christ down through the ages just how evident would that doctrine be in the extant writings of those folks? The only reasonable answer is that it would surely be a large part of those writings considering the significance of that doctrine. It would not be just a smattering of quotes; but a remarkably evident theme of doctrine addressed in an overwhelming manner in their writings down through the years!

There should be a multitude of quotes to draw from that show whether or not the Church was expecting to encounter Antichrist.

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And there are! And these quotes clearly show they were! Here are just a few:

Barnabas (40-100): “The final stumbling-block (or source of danger) approaches...for the whole [past] time of your faith will profit you nothing, unless now in this wicked time WE also withstand coming sources of danger....That the Black One [Antichrist] may find no means of entrance...” (Epistle of Barnabas, 4).

Hermas (40-140): “Those, therefore, who continue steadfast, and are put through the fire [of the Great Tribulation that is yet to come], will be purified by means of it...Wherefore cease not speaking these things into the ears OF THE SAINTS...” (The Pastor of Hermas, Vision 4).

Jerome (340-420): “I told you that Christ would not come unless Antichrist had come BEFORE” (Epistle 21).

Justin Martyr (100-168): “The man of apostasy [Antichrist], who speaks strange things against the Most High, shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against US THE CHRISTIANS...” (Dialogue With Trypho, 110).

Tertullian (150-220): “The souls of the martyrs are taught to wait [Rev. 6]...that the beast Antichrist with his false prophet may wage war on the CHURCH of God...” (On the Resurrection of the Flesh, 25).

Would you like to see more? For scores of similar quotes showing the Church has **always** expected to face Antichrist please see [THIS PAGE](#) on the rapture page at www.paulbenson.me.

The Witness of History

For as long as God has had a people on this earth there has been a Satanic opposition to those people. And we have a vast historical record of that persecution that continues to this very day with the terrible things Christians are suffering in the Arab nations (and elsewhere). The Church has long suffered under the spirit of

Antichrist. This fact is undeniable. And God has always met this persecution with a supply of grace to endure.

Where Is The Witness The Church Will NOT Face Antichrist?

The Witness Of The Word?

Where is it? There is not one Scripture that expressly states the Church will not face Antichrist! But what we DO have is a large number of passages describing that they surely will! This is clearly seen in Daniel, Revelation, 1Thess. 1, as well as many other places which detail Antichrist's war on the Saints.

The Witness Of the Fathers?

Where is it? A small sampling of quotes which seem to suggest a pre-trib event (with half of them steeped in ambiguity) versus an overwhelming witness that undeniably shows the Church has fully expected to face Antichrist since its inception! *Which should we believe?*

The Witness Of History?

Where is it? Where in all of history has God removed his Church in order for evil to rise and reign? History records many tyrants who have risen in the spirit of Antichrist and slaughtered millions. The Church has always been given the grace needed to endure whatever persecutions and tribulations it has faced.

The Witness of Man?

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater... -John an apostle of Christ

When questioning, down through the years, why individuals believe the Church will not face Antichrist, the most common reply I have received is: 'I believe it because Pastor (or some other 'trustworthy' figure) says it is Bible truth; and if he says it is so, then I believe it!' They believe it because somebody they trusted *told them* to believe it. How reliable of a witness is that?

Should we listen to what our preachers and teachers are telling us? Absolutely! Should we accept what they are saying without question (or a demand for confirmation)? **Absolutely not!**

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

Matthew 24:4-5

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. 2Timothy 4:3-4

Considering the fact Jesus, as well as his Apostles, sternly warned of those who would come speaking in Jesus' name and deceive others with their words, I see basing your beliefs solely upon the teachings of others as pretty shaky ground to build upon.

Have YOU been deceived into believing a fable by trusting the words of someone who was misled themselves? It happens!

Laying aside the fact I personally believe the pre-trib rapture teaching is a provable hoax; and looking specifically at the question of whether or not the Church will face the evil day of Antichrist's reign, I find myself asking: 'Why should the Body of Christ believe we will not see that day?' We are surrounded by a very strong and reliable witness that we certainly will!

And I believe there will come a day of great accountability for those who are teaching we will not!

Outright Lie 4. A Secret Coming Of Christ!

A Secret Coming?

I have heard many a speaker proclaim a secret invisible Coming of Christ to 'rapture' the Church' as an integral part of the teachings of God's Word, **but I have never heard anyone quote a passage which actually says such a thing!** Try as they might to garner Scriptural support for this notion, there is none. There is not one

passage in the Bible which explicitly puts forth this concept. It has to be presupposed, and then collaborated by bits of verse pulled out of context. Let's look at what the Scriptures really do have to say about the Return of Christ.

The Coming Of Christ Will Be Visible!

When the Scriptures speak of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ there is a reoccurring theme which is quite evident. The plain truth that his Coming will be out in the open, and visible to all, is taught in a great number of places. But what is not taught in the Bible is a secret non-visible coming of Christ as proposed by those preaching the 'pre-trib rapture theory'.

Behold, he cometh with clouds; **and every eye shall see him**, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Revelation 1:7

And Jesus said, I am: and **ye shall see the Son of man** sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Mark 14:62

Looking for that blessed hope, and **the glorious appearing** of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Titus 2:13

And **when the chief Shepherd shall appear**, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 1 Peter 5:4

When Jesus was giving us the rundown on end-time events, he gave us a wealth of information on the subject of his Return. He made some comments on this issue that many have purposely chosen to ignore. They just don't jive with their story.

Don't Believe A 'Secret' Coming!

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, **he is in the secret chambers**; believe it not. 27 **For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall**

also the coming of the Son of man be;

Matthew 24:26-27

I know we recently used this verse but it also speaks to this nonsense of a **secret** non-appearance of Christ. When Jesus was teaching about these things he gave us some very straight-forward instruction about the possibility of someone coming to us who would be trying to convince us of a *secret appearance* of Christ. He said, “**Believe it not!**” He was telling us not to believe anything other than a completely visible event. If Jesus instructed us so clearly not to believe in a non-visible Coming; what in the world are people doing preaching such a thing? **They do so in direct disobedience to his words!**

His Coming will be as visible as a flash of lightning! But the ‘pre-trib rapture’ doctrine has us vanish to meet an invisible Jesus in a ‘secret chamber’ for a 7 year wedding feast. (I hope you're hungry!) This is just the type of falsehood Jesus was warning us of.

Plus don't you think the Father would wait to throw a wedding feast for the Bride and Groom until the Bride has completely arrived? There are going to be believers on earth right up until the Second Coming! Only after the great tribulation and the Return of Christ could the wedding supper rightly take place.

The ‘pre-trib’ teaching has part of the Bride missing out on her own wedding feast (although some actually teach the Old Testament and 'tribulation Saints' are not a part of the Bride of Christ and don't rise in the Resurrection of the Just. They say they are Jehovah's Bride. *Yes, they teach God has two Brides!* You might be surprised at all the elements of dispensational theology you never hear about because of the controversy preaching them causes!)

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; **then sudden destruction cometh upon them**, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4 **But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.**

1Thessalonians 5:2-4

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When preachers are using the phrase ‘like a thief in the night’ to teach their ‘rapture’ they seldom include these last two verses. That is because they describe sudden destruction immediately following the catching away. That doesn't fit the rapture story, but it does fit the true teaching of the Resurrection and catching away taking place at the Second Coming. **Jesus will visit this world with sudden destruction at his Return!**

And also the passage says Christ's Return will not take the awake believer by surprise; the Bible says **we are not in darkness that that day should sneak up on us!** That doesn't fit their fable either. Jesus gave us a great number of indicators to watch for that would herald his Return. We CAN know the season (though not the day nor hour). Here are a few Luke listed:

The Signs of Christ's Coming

And there shall be signs **in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars**; and upon the earth **distress of nations**, with perplexity; **the sea and the waves roaring**; **26 Men's hearts failing them for fear**, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for **the powers of heaven shall be shaken**. **27 And then shall they see** the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. **28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.** Luke-21:25-28

Christ will not come for the Church until these signs come to pass! A similarity many prophecies concerning the Lord's Return share is their description of the signs in the sun, moon, and stars. Some unbelievable things are going to take place that are going to literally scare people to death! These signs are always given as preceding the Coming of Jesus. When does our redemption arrive? **When we SEE him coming after the signs he gave us.** That is NOT a pre-trib rapture!

Notice that when Jesus gave these signs he said **when you see them** look up for your redemption draws near. He said *when you see them* because **we will be here to see them**; and **look up**

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because that's where he will be: visible in the sky! Not a secret coming of an invisible Jesus, but a visible Return in the clouds for all to see.

His Coming Will Be The Reverse Of His Departure!

And when he had spoken these things, **while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.** 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? **this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.** Acts 1:9-11

The angels were very specific in pointing out the fact that when Jesus descends again it will be a **visible event**. Please take a moment and think about something here. If the pre-trib rapture theory was correct, and it is the event we are to be looking for, would not the angels at this time have commented on *that* event, and *not* on a visible Return the Church would *not* be on earth to look for (if the pre-trib theory were true)?

What would be the sense of describing something believers wouldn't be here waiting for, while giving no information on the event that they (supposedly) would experience: a secret pre-trib coming? **The angels in Acts 1 would not have spoken the way they did if there was going to be a pre-trib rapture!** They were saying, 'Here's what to expect when he returns again; the reverse of what you are seeing here! He rose visibly, and he will descend visibly.' Any other story is a hoax!

Believing What The Bible Says Not Man

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 **And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven:** and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, **and they shall see the Son**

of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Matthew 24:29-30

We can thumb through the Scriptures and find verse after verse after verse which give us an account of a visible and glorious Return of Jesus to this earth; and the Church being resurrected and caught away at that time. But any passages thoroughly expounding on the aspects of a secret non-visible non-return seven years earlier? Zero, zilch, zip, nope, nyet, notta single one!

The question: Why should we be believing a teaching you cannot find in the Bible?

The answer: We should not!

Outright Lie 5. The Known Day Versus Unknown Day Myth

**But of that day and hour knoweth no man... -
-Jesus Christ**

Two Comings Of Christ: Fact Or Fraud?

How many times have we heard the words '*of that day and hour knows no man*' spoken in connection with the pre-trib rapture theory? It is one of the most commonly used phrases in promoting that doctrine. The notion we are expected to swallow is that Jesus was specifically speaking of the *supposed* pre-trib event when he spoke those words. But just what day was Jesus actually referring to? Some might be quite surprised by the answer to that question!

Open And Shut Case?

Frequently cited as 'absolute proof' the Rapture and the Second Coming are two separate events is a portrayal of two days called the 'Known Day' and the 'Unknown Day'. This depiction has become quite popular among those who espouse the pre-trib theory. Their story usually sounds something like this:

There is a day which is absolutely known and a day which cannot be known; two separate days that cannot be the

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same day. The first is the day of the Rapture before the tribulation, of which (they claim) Jesus said 'no man knows the day or hour'; this is the 'Unknown Day'. The second is the day of the Second Coming which (they claim) the Bible says will be exactly 1,260 days after the Antichrist begins to rule. Therefore if we can figure the day of Christ's Coming by the 1,260 day countdown it is a 'Known Day'.

THE CONCLUSION: Since an unknown day and a known day cannot be the same day; and the day of the Second Coming is known whereas the day of the Rapture is unknown the two cannot be the same day. End of story.

Case closed!

I have heard this notion preached very convincingly; but it was merely the *enticing words of man's wisdom (1Cor. 2:4)*. And for many this sounds like a solid open and shut case. But is it? Or has some deception taken place here? Let's engage the safeguard of Critical Examination, and see if we can discern the truth of this matter.

The Jury Deliberates

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, **that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.**

Revelation 12:6

The entire validity of this 'known day / unknown day idea rests upon an assumption the day of the Return of Christ can be pinpointed exactly (supposedly by the 1,260 days given in the above Scripture coupled together with references to 42 months and 3½ years spoken of elsewhere). But Is this assumption valid? We shall see it is certainly not!

Having had for many years a deep interest in Bible prophesy the time-spans of 3½ years, forty two months, 1,260 days, 1,290 days, and 1,335 days found through out the Scriptures have always

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caught my attention. There is no doubt they are given to us as a framework in which end-time events are to transpire.

FOOD 4 THOUGHT: Who knows *absolutely* when this 1,260 day period will start? **Or that the final day of it is *absolutely* the day of the Second Coming?** I sure don't! (Who's to say Jesus doesn't come **before** the 1,260 days of the woman hiding in the wilderness are over? Wouldn't she stay hidden until after Armageddon? The Antichrist rules for that 1,260 days /42 months. Armageddon and the destruction of Antichrist don't necessarily happen the very day of Christ's appearing. The armies have to gather together to fight against Jesus. Don't you think that will take a bit of time to accomplish?)

And is the start date the day Antichrist takes control, the day he announces his control, the day the abomination is set up (this could take several days! Which one is the day?), or maybe the day it's revealed to the world? Or maybe the day people are required to begin worship of him? To claim to know for sure the start date of the 1,260 days, or that Jesus will even come on the last day of that 1,260 days, is quite presumptuous! **Without a firmly fixed start date there is no firmly fixed end date; and we don't even know that end date is actually the day of Christ's return anyway!** This 'rock solid proof' is jiggling like a bowl of Jello!

But as to this 'known day' and 'unknown day' theory there is another serious flaw in the reasoning of those touting this supposed 'proof' of two separate comings of Christ. Let's look at the context this snippet '*But of that day and hour knoweth no man*' was pulled out of.

Heisted Jargon: Evidence Of Deception

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of Heaven, but my Father only. 37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Matthew 24:36-37

But **the same day that Lot went out of Sodom** it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.30 **Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.** Luke 17-29

The major problem with this 'absolute proof' they're asking us to ingest is this: **The phrase '*of that day and hour knoweth no man*' is a snippet stolen from a passage we can prove is definitely referring to the Second Coming!** Jesus, in the Olivet Discourse, clearly ties the unknown day to his Return. His pointing to the sudden destruction of the days of Noah and Lot as a picture of his Return proves this. I urge you to read these verses in your Bible and see the context. Even pre-trib theologians admit Matthew 24:36 37 is a passage about the Second Coming!

To steal this snippet out of its true context, and apply it to a pre-trib event, is nothing short of outright deception!

Jesus labeled, here in Matthew 24, the day of his Return as an unknown day! And that makes all the wrangling and fussing over counting 1,260 days (or is it the 1,290 in Daniel 12:11? or the 1,335 in Daniel 12:12?) a completely moot point. It is a non-issue! Why attempt to pinpoint a day Jesus clearly said was an unknown day? What folly! I've seen some pretty *'fancy footwork'* dancing around this problem with their theory, but nothing that stays on its feet after close scrutiny. Once again, the context of this verse plainly rebukes their usage of the verse. **The Lord Jesus said the day of the Second Coming is an unknown day. PERIOD!**

* (I am referring here to a notion some put forth of a systematic 'dual reference' in Matthew 24 pointing to two comings of Christ in the end-times. I have read page after page of theological ramblings on this subject but nothing that is anything more than supposition forced by the pre-trib rapture theory. What greatly amazes me is they ignore

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the fact that even if Matthew 24:36 *was* a dual reference (and it's not) it would be referring to TWO unknown days! **It would still be declaring the Second Coming an unknown day!** What kind of 'proof' is that? More of their proof that proves nothing at all!)

The Verdict Is In!

I don't care how rock solid any assumptions seem about reckoning the days from Antichrist's arrival to Jesus' Coming; we see Jesus was absolutely not referring to a prior event, but to his Return in Matthew 24:36. The day of Christ's Return is an unknown day; and this makes their 'proof' go 'poof! Calling the day of his Return a 'known day', and saying Jesus was speaking of the pre-trib rapture when he said '*of that day and hour knoweth no man*' **are both a big fat lie!** The context in which this phrase belongs clearly makes that accusation.

The portrayal of a known day versus an unknown day proving two separate comings of Jesus is clearly just one more deceptive facet of the pre-trib rapture theory. That theory is nothing more than a bucket full of holes. I really hope you are not counting on it holding any water.

This farce is a clear example of the cunning craftiness employed to promote the hoax of a pre-trib rapture. This subtle deception seemed quite plausible until we took time to give it some close scrutiny. When we apply that scrutiny to *each* aspect of the pre-trib theory it is exposed as the deceitful fable it really is! There is only ONE coming of Christ in the last days. The Second Coming (immediately AFTER the tribulation). And that is when we are caught up to meet Jesus. There is no prior event! Case Closed!

Outright Lie 6. The Story Of Lot Teaches A Pre-trib Rapture!

A bald faced lie I have heard stated by many Bible teachers is that the story of Lot is a type / shadow of the 'rapture' before the time of great tribulation. Their reasoning is that because God took Lot out of Sodom before he destroyed it this testifies of the pre-trib

theory. **But in reality the story of Lot is one of the strongest rebukes of this myth found in the Bible.** Most of us know the story of Lot but I would encourage a refresher if you think it paints any picture of a pre-trib rapture.

When Abraham and Lot became so increased with herds and flocks that the land could not bear it they decided to split up. Lot chose to dwell in the plain of Jordan.

And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Genesis 13:10

It's helpful here to pick up a little understanding of the geography of this area. I also found it very interesting to study not just the history, but also the findings of the extensive digs and studies archaeologists have done in this area.

The plain of Jordan was a basin at the southern end of what we now call the Dead Sea. It was a very fruitful valley irrigated (well watered) using the water of five tributaries running into the plain from the surrounding mountains. But, although providing water for the massive irrigation systems of these people, the bitter mountainous wilderness penned in this prosperous area and somewhat isolated them from the rest of the world. (I wonder if this isolation contributed to an introverted culture that led to their descent into debauchery?)

Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. Genesis 13:12

In this isolated valley were five cities stretched out in a line down through the plain. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in the upper area. The two cities of Admah And Zeboim in the lower region; and in the central plain was the city of Bela also known as Zoar. They were known as 'the cities of the plain' with each having a king or governor ruling over them. Lot chose to dwell with his herds and servants in the upper end of the valley at Sodom.

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When God decided to destroy the wicked people of that valley he sent angels to escort Lot and his family out of danger. Here's where many people get the story wrong. Lot did not GO UP into the mountains at this time.

And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. 18 And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: 19 Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and **I cannot escape to the mountain**, lest some evil take me, and I die: 20 **Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither**, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. 21 And he said unto him, **See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken**. 22 Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. 23 **The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. 24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of Heaven;** 25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. Genesis 19:17-25

And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, **like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath:**
Deuteronomy 29:23

God did not just destroy Sodom and Gomorrah as most think, but the entire plain of Jordan and four of its five cities. And where was Lot when God rained down fire and brimstone upon the wicked? Taken UP to the mountains (a picture of the rapture) like

so many have suggested? **No, I'm afraid there is no rapture picture here in the story of Lot.** He was hunkered down right in the center of the valley in a little town called Zoar, which had been slated for destruction but was spared, and became a sanctuary of safety, because of the presence and intercessions of one righteous man.

The wrath of an angry God poured down all around them and destroyed the entire plain of Jordan with its cities, its peoples, all their livestock, and all their crops in a hellish firestorm while Lot, what remained of his family, and the inhabitants of Zoar were divinely protected. **Kept from God's wrath while in the midst of an outpouring of God's wrath.** (maybe they were claiming Rev. 3:10? just kidding.)

The extensive archaeological digs and studies of the plain of Jordan have uncovered clear evidence of the fiery destruction of the entire region, but remarkably a little village in the central area showed none. It had been exempt from whatever destroyed the rest of the valley by fire. Also quite interestingly they found evidence of prior devastation of another sort that had necessitated much reconstruction of those cities. Some sections of the walls of those cities were rebuilt upon foundations of broken rubble and burnt pieces of wooden beams.

They found this evidence of ruin and rebuilding about 20 layers (years) earlier than the devastation by fire and brimstone. This matches the biblical record of the band of four kings looting and ransacking that area and hauling off Lot and all his goods. But God, using his friend Abraham, delivered Lot and got him back home. I wonder if this invasion of the cities of the plain was a warning from God of what was to come? If it was, sadly that warning went unheeded.

I think it is pretty evident after looking at the story of Lot that to say his experience is 'proof' for the pre-trib rapture theory is nothing short of **an outright lie!** It very clearly shows God's ability, and his willingness, to delay or curtail an outpouring of his wrath on behalf of the Righteous. Even if the great tribulation were the wrath of God (and it is not) that does not mean God has to take the Church out first. God is able to keep what is his. He is all

powerful! Heaven is not going to suffer a power outage during the final 3½ years. *Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds (Psalms 68:34)*. Let's preach this thing like God has some power, shall we?

In a similar fashion the story of Noah does not paint a picture of a rapture away to Heaven. **The day the door of the ark closed the wrath began to fall, and it destroyed all the wicked** (that does not fit the pre-trib picture). The righteous man Noah never left planet earth but **floated above the waters of God's outpouring of wrath**, and then descended to a purified world cleansed by God's fury.

I expect our experience at Christ's Second Coming to mirror that of Noah's. We will be quite safe from the wrath Jesus pours out at his Return; safe under the wing of the Most High. If you're looking for a pre-trib rapture you have embraced a false hope. If you are teaching this myth to others the deceived has now become a deceiver. You might want to give some thought to the issue of accountability.

Outright Lie 7. Christians Will NOT Face The Mark Of The Beast!

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, **and saw a beast rise up out of the sea**, having seven heads and ten horns... 11 **...And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth**; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon... Revelation 13:1+11

In Revelation 13 the apostle John saw in a vision two beasts rise that would dominate the world in the final years of this age. A global dictator and a leader of world religion. We will not enter into a deep discussion of all the aspects of what the world will be subjected to under their reign of terror and deception; but rather whether the Body of Christ will be here on earth to face their onslaught. But before we discuss this let's take a quick look at Antichrist's predecessor. We should keep an eye out for this guy.

Then shall stand up in his estate **a raiser of taxes** in the glory of the kingdom: **but within few days he shall be**

destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle. 21 And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

Daniel 11:20-21

When the angel of God was giving Daniel a rundown of the political/military power of the last days he referred to Antichrist as a vile person; and so he will be. But I think it important to note a couple of things about the guy he replaces. We don't get a lot of info on this guy other than his seat of power is short lived and his claim to fame is he will be a 'raiser of taxes'. These two facts might just assist us in recognizing him and therefor his successor; the vile one who will bring desolation to the nations of the world.

In order for the global system of governance to come to maturity it will require major funding. We have for quite some time been hearing a call for taxation on international transactions from those wanting global government. Such a tax will raise the hundreds of billions of dollars necessary yearly for the beast to exercise world dominion. Keep your eye out for a world leader to step onto the scene instituting a system of global taxation; and then die shortly thereafter. The charismatic and flattering deceiver that will fill his shoes will turn out to be the most ruthless dictator the world has ever known; and will eventually be worshiped by all whose names are not in the book of life.

One of the most egregious and dangerous lies of the pre-trib theory is that believers are being told they will not face the Mark of the Beast, nor the consequences for refusing to take it. People teaching this will give an account for the bewilderment and confusion of those who enter this time unprepared for what they will face because they were assured they would never see this day of persecution and testing. Could you imagine giving account for someone who lost faith over what you taught them because it turned out to be false; and now they doubt everything else they have ever been taught? What a frightening prospect! How many will lose grip on their faith and fall prey to the overwhelming pressure to take the Mark of the Beast? *A false witness shall not be unpunished... (Proverbs 19:9)*

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And **he causeth all**, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, **to receive a mark** in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And **that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark**, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Revelation 13:16

Just as we now see economic sanctions imposed upon 'rogue regimes' to painfully force them to yield to the will of the international community; humanity will see this tactic of control refined to the point where individuals not totally submissive to the global tyranny will lose the privilege of conducting commerce in a normal fashion. In a cashless economy where only the identifying mark of enslavement will grant access to the electronic monetary system; those refusing to submit to this control will be outcasts and considered a danger to society. Seen as human vermin, a world wide program of extermination will ensue. Any not willing to take the mark and express worship to the exalted ruler and his image will be seen as unfit to remain among the dominated masses.

And he had **power to give life unto the image of the beast**, that **the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed**. Revelation 13:15

Somehow this image of the beast will be not only able to speak to the multitudes, but also determine if people are dutifully worshipping or not, and cause any dissenters to be killed. The eternal consequences involved are not up for debate.

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, **If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark** in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 **The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God**, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and **he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: Revelation 14:9-10

No follower of Jesus can take this mark and submit to the demand for worship without forfeiting his or her eternal soul and suffering the wrath of God forever. We can see those facing this

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horrible dilemma are the Body of Christ by the descriptive information we are given about them in the following examples.

And it was given unto him to make war with the Saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. Revelation 13:7

It says the Antichrist makes war with the 'Saints'. This absolutely has to be referring to the Body of Christ. On this side of the Cross Saints are born-again Christians; there is no other type of Saint! There are many people who are saying the 'tribulation Saints' are saved in a like manner as those of the old covenant; a combination of works and faith. This displays great disrespect to the work of the Cross, and is actually preaching heresy; except a person is born-again they cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and **took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;** Colossians 2:14

Having **abolished in his flesh** the enmity, even **the law of commandments contained in ordinances;** for to make in himself of twain one new man... Ephesians 2:15

In case you may have not heard it, the Law was abolished; nailed to the Cross and taken out of the way. If you are believing a doctrine that takes the Law down off the Cross and undoes what was accomplished there I fear for your soul. The Saints that Antichrist makes war against are the 'born-again' Body of Christ.

Here is **the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.** Revelation 14:12

And **they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb,** and **by the word of their testimony;** and **they loved not their lives unto the death.** Revelation 12:11

They have the grace to walk in obedience, have the faith of Jesus in their hearts, an overcoming spirit, are washed in the blood of the Lamb and have the testimony of the Gospel on their lips: is this not the Body of Christ? Sure sounds like it to me!

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...no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: **and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.** 11Corinthians 12:3

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now **if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.** Romans 8:9

The pre-trib teachers tell us the tribulation Saints are proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus, but do not have the Holy Spirit because he left at the rapture. Paul plainly states in the above verses that you cannot have the testimony of Christ's Lordship without the Holy Ghost; and furthermore if someone has not the Spirit of Christ he doesn't even belong to Christ. Once again a critical examination causes the pre-trib theory's house of cards to collapse. We can see by all the descriptors of these Saints that they carry the attributes of born-again believers and not some poor schmucks having to tough it out in their own strength without the power of the Holy Ghost. The pre-trib rapture can't have the Body of Christ in the great tribulation so they invented a new breed of Saint; 'the unregenerate (but saved!) tribulation martyrs' who obtain salvation not by the sacrifice of Christ, but of themselves. (Thanks anyway Jesus, but I think I'll just buy my own ticket!)

The Saints spoken of in Daniel and Revelation that are in the great tribulation are the Body of Christ obeying Christ's command to endure until the end. Immediately after the tribulation time Christ will come and receive his Bride. To say the tribulation Saints are a different type of believer thumbs a nose at God's Word and denies what was accomplished on the Cross of Calvary. To say the Church will not face the Antichrist and the Mark of the Beast is lying deception and takes away from the book of Revelation. Please ponder the seriousness of that. It could cost you your soul!

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, **If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues** that are written in this book: 19 **And if any man shall take away from the words** of the book of this prophecy, **God shall take away his part out of the book of life,** and out

of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. Revelation 22:18-19

Outright Lie 8. The Pre-Trib Rapture Is The Mystery God Revealed To Paul

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: Ephesians 3:9

It is getting more and more common to hear preachers and teachers refer to the concept of a pre-tribulation rapture as 'the mystery of God revealed to Paul'. We are led to believe that this concept is right there in the Word of God as plain as day for all to see. And that we need only a little guiding (and a proper understanding of God's plan) to see it for ourselves. But should we take the bait and swallow that hook, or swim right around that notion?

What Is The 'Mystery Of God' Revealed To The Church?

As we shall see the mystery of the ages revealed to Paul was not the future 'catching away' of the Church; but was referring to the resurrection of the dead. Namely Christ's; and our identification with it. That in a similar manner as he was raised up into an immortal glorified body, so will we be. As he is now so shall we be. That is the 'mystery'! It's *not* the catching away.

The concept of a pre-trib rapture is NOT an inherent part of the Gospel of Christ. **It is a notion which has been added in by man.** Peter used the expression 'cunningly devised fables' in his writings (*For we have not followed cunningly devised fables... 2Peter 1:16*). This is an accurate description of the pre-trib rapture theory. Although many facets of that doctrine are outright foolish, and quite easy to discern and refute, other elements of the pre-trib theory evidence a real cunning in the promotion of this error.

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Before you can preach a Gospel that the pre-trib rapture is a part of, you first have to *insert it into* the Gospel. Like a person takes yeast and kneads it into the dough of a loaf of bread they take the notion of a pre-trib rapture and knead it into the Word of God to try and convince you it is an intrinsic part of the Gospel. Many different tactics are used to accomplish this feat. Attempting to establish the pre-trib theory as 'the mystery revealed to Paul' is one of them. But developing a proper understanding of just what the true 'mystery' is will keep that pre-trib leaven from rising, and tainting your beliefs. What do the Scriptures say about this mystery?

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. 1Corinthians 15:51

The idea that the pre-trib rapture is the 'mystery hid from ages and from generations' (Col. 1:26) comes from a misrepresentation of this verse from 1Corinthians. This verse is claimed to be referring to the catching away / rapture, but it is absolutely not. We'll look at that in-depth a little later, but first let's see if we can get a handle on the concept of what the Bible refers to as the 'mystery of God'.

The word mystery is used 22 times in the New Testament in a variety of applications ranging from 'the mystery of iniquity' (2Thess. 2:7); to the mystery of 'Babylon the Great' (Rev. 17:5). Many of these usages have nothing to do with the topic at hand. But there is a very evident focus in the Scriptures on the matter of a mystery involved in God's dealings with mankind to bring about a fulfillment of the promise of inheritance and eternal life,

And he said unto them, **Unto you** it is given to know **the mystery** of the kingdom of God: **but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:** Mark 4:11

The revelation of this mystery is only for those who will be the recipients of this promised inheritance. It remains veiled to those who do not have a 'need to know'.

But we speak the wisdom of God **in a mystery**, even the hidden wisdom, **which God ordained before the world** unto our glory: 1Corinthians 2:7

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Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of **the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began**, Romans 16:25

This hidden wisdom which lies in the preaching of the Gospel is not something God just dreamed up as things progressed. He has had only one plan to redeem mankind from the beginning of the world. The Cross of Christ! (The Church **is not** Plan B as dispensational theology falsely teaches! That theological framework fosters much error, and needs to be rejected!)

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in **the mystery of Christ**)... Ephesians 3:3-4

Here Paul explains how he came about a knowledge of the mystery of God. He does claim it was given to him by revelation (as the pre-trib theorists correctly state). But please notice here he calls it the 'mystery of Christ'. It is crucial to our proper understanding that we grasp that **the central focus of this mystery is not a 'rapture', but a person: Jesus Christ!** Paul goes into greater depth to help us understand this wonderful mystery in the next passage.

Even **the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations**, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of **the glory of this mystery** among the Gentiles; **which is Christ in you, the hope of glory**: Colossians 1:26

Some try and get around the issue of a pre-trib rapture being conspicuously missing from the writings of the Church down through the ages by saying it was a 'hidden' mystery only revealed in modern times (a notion gaining popularity). But notice carefully here, Paul said the 'mystery' was made manifest (revealed) to the Saints of his generation: the early Church. He does NOT give the understanding this 'mystery of God' is a doctrine (pre-trib rapture) that will be only revealed to the end-time generations.

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Again, here he points not to a 'catching away', but to Christ; and the deeper understanding of this all concerns Christ indwelling the believer. This is the glory of the mystery, and thus carries the hope of the believer. That our salvation will come about as a result of Jesus living IN us!

Now back to the passage the pre-trib theorists attempt to twist into a promotion of their false doctrine.

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and **we shall be changed.** 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 1Corinthians 15:51-53

Here is where the deception comes in: they try and garner support for their notion by *inserting* their pre-trib rapture into this passage **where Paul is specifically referring to the Resurrection as the mystery revealed to him.** And now (in their amended version) their teaching becomes the great 'mystery God revealed to Paul' instead of the resurrection!

[SIDE NOTE: Pre-trib Rapture teachers would have you believe both our resurrection and catching away *are one event that transpires instantaneously.* There is absolutely NO biblical support for this 'POOF! - we are gone!' belief. **Resurrection and ascension are two separate events.** Was it only one event for Jesus? No, it was not. His resurrection and ascension were forty days apart! Our resurrection and catching away are two separate events. Exactly how much time will separate them? I do not claim to have that information. Do you? If so I would like to check it out.

Some believe the two will transpire in rapid succession while there are some who teach a period of as much as forty days between the two. We have no Scripture to give us that *specific* information, so all we can do is

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speculate. But what the Scriptures do clearly state is: *...the dead in Christ shall rise first: **Then** we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds (1Thess. 4:16-17).* If one event happens, and THEN another event happens, they are NOT the same event!]

But let's re-state an important fact here: The catching away of the believers is not mentioned even once in the entire chapter of 1 Corinthians 15! That is not the focus here. These are NOT 'rapture' verses! The subject here is the resurrection and transformation of the believer. That is our hope: That Christ in us will on that Resurrection Day bring about a transformation in us that now we shall be as he is! That is the end result of God's plan; that is the fulfillment of the mystery! We will have the same immortal body he does!

The phrase 'in a twinkling of an eye' has been *hijacked from its context* by the pre-trib crowd, and used to promote their 'POOF! ...now the Church is gone' idea. But that phrase has been deceptively applied to their theory. The Bible says it is the resurrection / transformation of the believer that takes place in the twinkling of an eye, not the catching away. I believe our ascension will mirror that of the Lord Jesus. Here's why:

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, **we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:** Romans 6:5

Our experience is to be in the likeness of (look like) his; why should we think the catching away of the Body would look any different than the catching away of the Head? (see Acts 1:9-11 for a biblical description of ascension.)

The 'catching away' as I prefer to call it, is described clearly in 1Thess. 4:17 where it says after the dead rise the living believers: *“shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air”*. This short trip is relatively minor when compared to the amazing transformation of the Resurrection and the eternal consequences that change will bring our way. Our journey from earth up to the sky is NOT the mystery of the ages; it is Christ in

you the hope of glory, and the fact we shall become as he is by the resurrection of the dead. Let's get it right, shall we?

The Last Trump!

But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, **the mystery of God should be finished**, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. Revelation 10:7

There are those who say the seventh and last of the trumpets in Revelation is not the last trump of 1Cor. 15, or the trumpet that shall sound in 1Thess. 4, but only because they are forced to say so; for **to admit they were all the same last trump would prove the pre-trib theory false!** Should we believe God would confusingly place multiple 'last trumpets' in the end time puzzle? (The same folks who would have us think so also tell us there is a resurrection BEFORE the 'First Resurrection' of Revelation 20:5! That pesky passage also reeks havoc with their theory.) But just as we saw in 1Corinthians 15 that the Resurrection brings about the fullness of the promise of the mystery of God, so also here in Revelation 10 we have the testimony of the completion of that mystery. When? **At the Second Coming**, for that is the event that is being portrayed here. The Resurrection of the Just and our catching away take place at the Second Coming of Christ. There is no prior 'rapture'!

Actually the pre-trib rapture crowd are shooting themselves in the foot here by calling their rapture the mystery of God. If it were, the mystery would have been finished *seven years earlier* at the (supposed) pre-trib event, and NOT here at the Return of Christ to earth as the Bible correctly states. The Bible would have been worded differently if their theory were correct! What testimony are you going to believe about this 'great mystery' revealed to us the believer? That of the Bible, or that of the pre-trib theorists?

When pre-trib teachers try to muster support for their theory by saying the pre-trib rapture is the 'mystery of God revealed to Paul' they are telling a lie. There is NOT ONE place in the Bible that refers to a pre-trib rapture event as the mystery of God revealed to the Church, **and it is deceptive to say that it does!** The pre-trib

theory is not correct doctrine. Will you join the countless others who have woken up, and rejected the errors of the pre-trib rapture myth?

For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. **To day if ye will hear his voice, & Harden not your heart**, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:
Psalms 95:7 8

Outright Lie 9. The Exodus Is A Picture Of The Pre-Trib Rapture!

For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God.... -Paul an apostle of Christ

I find it quite sad the way certain Bible teachers try and use the precious stories of the Old Testament to promote the myth of a pre-tribulation rapture. What is sadder yet is how many buy into such nonsense without examining those claims for validity. They accept generalized statements about those events, and even outright lies about them, as solid 'proof' God will remove the Church before the trying times of the final years of this age.

Earlier we saw how totally ridiculous it is to claim the story of Lot in any manner presents a picture of the pre-trib theory. In this writing we will examine the bogus claim that the Exodus of God's people out of Egypt likewise gives us the image of an 'exemption' from the tribulation time.

In the story of the Exodus we can definitely see types and shadows of the Lord's Return and our gathering together unto him. And so we should, as God placed them there for our instruction. But one of the deceptive practices employed by the pre-trib promoters is pointing out this fact while applying it to their errant theory. They say, 'Look there's an image of Jesus coming and catching away the Church. There is our pre-tribulation rapture plain as day!'

Then as confirmation this is a pre-trib event they will make claims of sequence and timing not supported by the context of the story. **In fact the story in reality presents an entirely different picture than what they claim!** Let's look at just two aspects of this Exodus event. The Ten Plagues and the Land of Goshen.

The Plagues

One of the most glaring rebukes of the claim that this story supports their pre-trib theory is the fact the children of Israel did not leave Egypt before God poured out the Judgments on that nation. For this story to support their position they would have surely departed prior to the plagues. But they did not; **they were right there divinely protected from the judgment of those days!**

There is a very striking similarity between the ten plagues God poured out upon Egypt and the Judgments we see poured out in the final few years as shown in the book of Revelation (and as Moses and Aaron were two witnesses against Pharaoh, there will again be two witnesses who pronounce those plagues). Of the ten plagues (water into blood, frogs, lice, flies, dead animals, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and death by divine judgment) we see eight of those clearly listed in Revelation. And remember, some of the end-time events in Revelation (the Seven Thunders) are withheld from us, so these other two (lice and flies) may very well manifest at this time also. It would not surprise me a bit.

SIDE NOTE: One of the major tenants of the pre-tribulation rapture theory is that the Judgments of the great tribulation are God's Wrath being poured out; and since we are not appointed to wrath the Church must vacate earth prior to this time. (I never could see their logic there. They claim national Israel is God's chosen or 'elect' lady, a bride for Jehovah they say, and yet he supposedly pours out his wrath upon her? Isn't God's wrath reserved for his enemies? (*...he reserveth wrath for his enemies. Nahum 1:2*)

The notion that the great tribulation is the wrath of God is a falsehood that does not bear up under scrutiny. It is a time of

judgment, and a call to repentance. The wrath of God is manifest at the Return of Christ. As we have already shown, if the tribulation is the wrath of God then Jesus Christ spoke falsely in his description of the tribulation.

The point here is how could this all be a picture of the Church being taken out before the judgments of the tribulation if Israel was right there in Egypt while these events unfolded? What kind of fit is that? It is not; and that is why pre-trib teachers will only refer to these O. T. stories in general terms; and do not encourage you to closely examine them for a match.

You will hear them declare: 'God took Lot out of Sodom before he destroyed it – pre-trib rapture! God saved Noah – pre-trib rapture! God saved his people out of Egypt - pretrib rapture!' BUT when you closely examine those stories what you truly see is an image of God preserving the righteous in the midst of him dealing with the wicked! Lets look a little deeper into the Exodus story.

The Land of Goshen

Those who had originally fled to Egypt for refuge from a severe famine had eventually come under servitude to the tyranny which later ruled that nation. They were little more than slaves to Pharaoh. They lived in an area called Goshen. This was not just a little village; the children of Israel had grown to over a million strong. Goshen was somewhat of a nation within a nation. And in the day of judgment God chose to show great distinction between what befell the Egyptians and the children of Israel.

Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, **that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.** Exodus 3:9-10

I think it important to notice the sequence here of the judgments poured out upon Egypt and the eventual departing of Israel from that nation and beginning their journey to the 'promised land'. FIRST came the judgments; and THEN the departure!

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And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; **to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth.** 23 **And I will put a division between my people and thy people:** to morrow shall this sign be. Exodus 8:22-23

And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and **there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel.** Exodus 9:4

When God brought judgment upon the land of Egypt in the days of Moses he declared that his judgment would not manifest in the region where the children of Israel dwelt.

Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail. Exodus 9:26

... but all **the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.** Exodus 10:23

We see that the Lord kept that promise! And do you know who else noticed God keeping that promise? The Egyptians!

He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: Exodus 9:20

Even those among the Egyptians who heeded the words of the Prophet were granted a measure of mercy in the midst of this judgment! Seeing the supernatural way God separated and protected his people in the midst of judgment caused many of the Egyptians to turn to faith in the LORD. And God honored their observance of his words. This is the 'mixed multitude' that departed along with God's people.

And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. Exodus 12:38

There had been a work of evangelism taking place in the course of these calamities! **I believe we will see exactly the same effect produced by God protecting his elect Church during the coming tribulation.** This important evangelical facet of the end-

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time events is disregarded by those promoting the pre-trib theory; it is irrelevant to them whose focus is only on their escape. *Where is the burden for souls in that mind-set?*

I don't know how many times I have heard someone say the only purpose for the tribulation is to deal with the unbelieving Jews and to cause them to return to God. That statement displays great ignorance on multiple levels.

First: Just because there is a verse that refers to the 'time of Jacobs trouble' does not mean that is the only thing transpiring on earth during those days. *For as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth (Luke 21:35). And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do. (Rev. 13:14).* The whole planet will be affected by the evils of that day; not just Israel!

Second: The signs, wonders, Judgments, and the Gospel preaching of that day will be a clarion call to repentance to the entire world. *And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, (Rev. 9:20). ...and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. (Rev. 16:9).*

Third: Something many people miss in the end-time scenario is that **God is glorified** by protecting his people in a time of great judgment (*to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. Exodus 8:22 above*). This truth is brought out clearly in the Exodus story; but because it does not fit the pre-trib narrative you will *never* hear them point that out. It also is irrelevant to them.

Fourth: Sifting! As God separated out those who truly believed and followed the LORD and his ways from those who didn't in Egypt; this will also happen at the end. God will use the hardships of that day, and the Mark of the Beast, to sift all nations to see who will truly follow Christ and his teachings or not.

There is also a clear portrayal of the Second Coming in God calling his people up mount Sinai in Exodus 19; and we could also go into great detail of that imagery, but I think you get the point. When you examine these O.T. stories for a pattern of a pre-trib rapture, that pattern is not what is expressly shown. What we see is God protecting and blessing his people in the midst of him passing judgment upon the wicked.

We see this over and over and over again!

Sorry, there will be no pre-tribulation rapture to whisk away God's people before the tumultuous times of the final years. The Church will be right here on earth; and God will be greatly glorified in her midst. Persecuted? Yes! Hard times? Yes, very hard times! Abandoned by God? Never!

When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, **even in the latter days**, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; 31 (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) **he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.**

Deuteronomy 4:30-31

...and, lo, I am with you alway, **even unto the end of the world.** *-Jesus Christ*

God is faithful! **He will not fail us!**

If you can explain how this claim that 'the Exodus presents a picture of the pre-trib rapture' is anything other than an out-right lie, I would love to hear that explanation.

Outright Lie 10. Christ's Coming And Revelation Are Separate Events.

The pre-trib rapture theory centers around the false notion that there are two separate returns of Jesus in the end-time events. To illustrate the difference in these two events we are explained the first is his invisible Coming to 'rapture' the Church, and the second is his Revelation where he is revealed to the world and pours out judgment.

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A question I often raise is this: 1Corinthians 15:23 says we will be resurrected and caught up to meet Christ at his Coming (Greek-parousia). In 2Thessalonians 2:8 it says Jesus will destroy the man of sin with the brightness of his Coming (parousia). How could Christ's Coming (parousia) destroy Antichrist at the **end** of his reign if his Coming (parousia) is **before** the tribulation? DO we not discern a major conflict there? True doctrine does not conflict with the Scripture.

There are a myriad of similar *conflicts caused by pre-trib theory which must be overlooked to embrace that concept. Many are content to ignore such conflicts. But a heart with a love for the truth does not sweep such evidence of deception under the rug in order to safeguard pet doctrines! In the end it really does boil down to having a love for the truth (or not). May God help us all!

*(I hear many people suggest a post trib view creates similar conflicts with God's Word. But in reality these claims are merely conflicts with pre-trib interpretations imposed upon those verses, and not any conflicting with Scripture itself. Using the pre-trib theory as a standard of truth they claim conflict with their theory as conflict with Scripture. A fatal flaw in reasoning.

I have taken each one of these claims to the Scriptures, and watched them fall to pieces. Much of this book is the result of answering those accusations presented to me. I have not found even one claim of a supposed conflict created by post-trib teaching which cannot be resolved in a reasonable manner through examining it in light of the Word of God. This is a must for me! A standard I firmly hold to. If I had to ignore major conflicts with Scripture to hold to my view point I would cast it aside as unworkable theory, and go searching for the real deal!)

There are quite a number of words used to refer to the Coming of Christ: coming (Greek '-parousia'), revelation (Greek -apokalupsis), coming (Greek -erchomai), appear (Greek -phaneroo), coming (Greek -apokalupsis) etc., etc., etc.

And if you take the time to compare their usage in the Bible you will see they are used **interchangeably** to refer to the same event!

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This is crucial to grasp in gaining a proper understanding of the end-time scenario as presented in the Scriptures. They are all speaking of ONE event!

A glaring example is to look at a Jesus' reference to the days of Noah and Lot in Matthew 24 and then compare that to Luke's account. Matthew has Jesus using the word coming (parousia) (Matt. 24:37); but in Luke Jesus speaks of it as the day he will be revealed (apokalupto) (Luke 17:30). Both are describing the same event! The day of his coming is the day he will be revealed to the world!

So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the **coming** (apokalupsis) of our Lord Jesus Christ: 1Corinthians 1:7

In this verse above we have the word 'apokalupsis' there translated as **coming**. The same Greek word is translated in the next example as **Revelation**! Are you waiting for the pre-trib rapture; or waiting for the Coming / Revelation (apokalupsis) of Christ?

The **Revelation** (apokalupsis) of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass. Revelation 1:1

The Coming of Christ for the Church and the Revelation of Jesus Christ are one and the selfsame event! To deny that is a lie.

And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall **appear** (phaneroo), we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his **coming** (parousia).

1John 2:28

His Appearance and his Coming are the same event! To separate into two events what the Word of God plainly shows to be one Coming of Christ is error and deception. It is upon exactly such a deception the pre-trib theory depends. I invite you to study out all the various words which refer to his Coming, and see for yourself they are used interchangeably thus proving ONE event not two.

Section Six: Points To Ponder

1. Why I Believe What I Do

There are many theories being presented in this day concerning the Return of Christ and our gathering together unto him. *Many conflicting theories!* And this conflict has many members of the Body of Christ suffering from a mental fog, and has left them spiritually unsettled. Is there a viable cure for this malady? **Very much so!**

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, **and is profitable for doctrine**, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 **That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.** 2Timothy 3:16

I love this passage of Scripture, and have used it many times in my writings. God gave us his Word to set a standard of truth upon which to base our belief system. I am a firm believer that our Christian beliefs, and the various facets of them, must have a solid and clear expression in the Bible or they have no business being presented as doctrine.

A Love For The Truth Demands Validation Of Beliefs!

You can speculate all you want (and I see nothing wrong with speculation if it is expressed as such), but if you are going to lift your voice and declare this or that as 'Bible Truth' it had better

actually BE IN the Bible, or you are making a liar out of yourself! Nearly everyone claims their beliefs on the end-time scenario come right from the pages of the Bible. But can you actually SHOW the passages which expressly state the various elements of what you believe? I can; but a promoter of the pre-trib theory absolutely CANNOT!

Please, read on, and I will explain why this is.

One of the major reasons I rejected the notion of a pre-trib rapture over 35 years ago was the fact that in my earnest study of God's Word I was not seeing the various elements of that theory which I was being assured were quite 'biblical'. They were nowhere to be found, and boy was I looking!

I could find certain passages ambiguous in the sense of timing; but nothing that put our 'catching away' *before* the tribulation (or presented it as a secret, invisible coming; or as an instantaneous 'poof we are gone' event).

To calm my fears and suspicions I was, instead of being pointed to Bible text which really did teach those things, told I just needed to trust that those preaching this doctrine knew what they were talking about. But that did not set with me very well; and I kept on looking for confirmation of their claims in the Bible, but to no avail.

And in nearly 40 years as a believer, and a serious student of the Bible, I have still not yet found support for the various notions they claim come from the Scriptures (a rapture before the tribulation, an imminent return, a secret invisible coming, the tribulation is God's Wrath, an instantaneous disappearance, the Church removed to Heaven at the rapture, a wedding supper in Heaven, two comings of Christ in the end-times, the Church is not God's Elect today, the Church will not face the Mark of the Beast, and so on and so on!).

Implicit Reference Versus Explicit Statement

Something every Christian needs to understand (but sadly many do not) is the vast difference between teachings founded upon 'Explicit Statement' and those which are taught by means of 'Implicit Reference'. In a nutshell 'explicit statement' means the

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concept is clearly and plainly expressed in the text of the Scriptures (the Bible actually says it). The practice of doctrine by 'implicit reference' means that certain text seems to 'imply' a concept (the Bible does not come right out and say it, the implication has to be read into the text).

FOOD 4 THOUGHT: It should be easily discernible to anyone that explicitly stated facts in the Scriptures are trustworthy. But, although many truths are certainly implied by various texts, the concept of implicit reference opens the door to private interpretation, and creates a great opportunity for error to run berserk! Over the centuries many a falsehood has been thrust upon the Christian Church through this unreliable method. Soul-sleep, annihilation, non-divine Christ, Purgatory, reincarnation, and a large host of other errors have all come our way through this practice of doctrine by 'implicit reference'.

Oh, and let's not forget the beloved pre-trib rapture teaching! Yes, it too is a doctrine based primarily upon the practice of implicit reference!

Even the theologians who promote that pre-trib theory admit that it is NOT something expressly stated in the Bible. That it has to be received through implicit reference; that certain texts seem to imply the different facets of that theory. **And because it is an 'implicit' doctrine one cannot show a clear solid 'proof' of the various facets of that doctrine expressly stated in the Bible.** That fact should give a believer great pause to wonder as to the correctness of it, or ANY theory derived in such a manner.

Another troubling fact also is that, knowing full well it is a doctrine based upon implicit reference, **nearly all promote the pre-trib rapture as though it were something expressly stated in the Bible!** Which is a flagrantly deceptive practice. A flat out lie when told by many who know better. And many do!

This is why I have set a standard for myself that I, as much as possible, will demand a solid Scriptural foundation for my beliefs; or I relegate them to the category of mere speculation. And I do

have many speculations, but try to always present them in that manner and not as doctrine.

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to showing Scriptural foundation for what I believe, and teach, about the Return of our LORD, and our gathering together unto him.

I Believe In ONE Coming Of Christ - NOT Two!

I await the Second Coming of Christ (NOT a pre-trib rapture). Why? Because that is what I see plainly stated in the Bible! And, although a few others suggest Christ has already come in one manner or another, we yet await that event. The Bible tells me the event we are waiting for is the Coming / Revelation of Jesus Christ.

So that ye come behind in no gift; **waiting for the coming (apokalupsis) of our Lord Jesus Christ:** 8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless **in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.** 1Corinthians 1:7

The Revelation (apokalupsis) of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass. Revelation 1:1

apokalupsis: disclosure, appearing, coming, manifestation, be revealed, revelation.

The Coming of Christ we are waiting for and the Revelation of Jesus Christ are one and the selfsame event! You will not find in the Bible ONE passage of Scripture that plainly describes two comings of Jesus in the end-times. That concept is not from the Bible.

And now, little children, abide in him; that, **when he shall appear,** we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him **at his coming.** John 2:28

His Appearance, his Revelation, and his Coming are the same event! And THAT is when his faithful followers will appear unashamed before him, NOT before. Again, I believe in one Return of Christ because that is what is plainly shown in the Bible.

I Believe Only In A Visible Coming

I believe the Return of Christ will be a completely visible event! His Coming will be seen by all. There is NO secret or invisible coming of Jesus detailed anywhere in the Bible.

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and **every eye shall see him**, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Revelation 1:7

And Jesus said, I am: and **ye shall see the Son of man** sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Mark 14:62

Looking for that blessed hope, and **the glorious appearing** of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Titus 2:13

And when **the chief Shepherd shall appear**, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 1 Peter 5:4

When the Scriptures speak of the Return of Jesus Christ there is a reoccurring theme which is quite evident. The plain truth that his Coming will be out in the open, and visible to all, is taught in a great number of places! That is the ONLY description given in the Scriptures, and therefor that is what I believe!

The Coming of Christ And The Catching Away Take Place After The Great Tribulation

I believe that we (the Church) will be caught up to meet Christ AFTER the tribulation, as this is what is quite evidently taught in the Bible.

But in those days, **after that tribulation**, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, 25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. 26 **And then shall they see the Son of man coming** in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 **And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the**

uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven. Mark 13:24-27

This is a clear portrait of the catching away at the Second Coming. This is the precise timing given us on this event – AFTER the tribulation! There is not one place in the Bible that describes a different timing of the catching away.

Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. 4 He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. 5 Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. Psalms 50:3-5

This is another clear description of the catching away at the Second Coming. It is completely in sync with Paul's description in 1Thess 1:7 of when Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance and granting rest to the persecuted Church. The Word of God directly ties the catching away to the Second Coming after the tribulation. There is no other timing given. This is the timing I choose to believe.

We Can Know The Season Of Christ's Return By The Signs He Gave

Many falsely claim there are no prophecies or signs that must yet be fulfilled before Jesus can return for his Church. **I don't buy that as the Word of God declares otherwise.** In his teachings Jesus gave us many things to look for which would indicate the 'season' of his return (the season, NOT the day or hour). Also he strongly warned of those deceivers who would come with a false message of an impending (imminent) return!

And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: **for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.** Luke 21:8

The Lord Jesus taught we are NOT to follow those who preach an imminent return! I know those words are an offense to many, but they are the absolute truth! How much clearer could the

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words '*go ye not therefor after them*' possibly be? Paul also taught this same thing. Addressing the issue of the day of Christ and our catching away being 'at hand' (imminent) he clearly said; '*let no man deceive you by any means for that day shall not come except...*' (2Thess. 2:2-4). I have chosen to embrace and obey those words of Jesus and Paul (have YOU?), and will not follow those deceivers who preach the doctrine of the 'imminent return' of Christ. It is not from the Scriptures!

What I *have* chosen to follow are the plain and clear words of Christ which say WHEN YOU SEE THESE THINGS you will know the day of my Return is NOW at hand (*Matt. 24:33*). That was the true purpose of the Parable of the Fig Tree. To point out indicators we are to watch for that herald this wonderful event. I have examined the words of Christ closely to tabulate that list of things I am to watch for. And I am watching closely!

Quite a few of those things have come to pass, or are in the process of fulfillment, and some are not yet fulfilled. This tells me the lateness of the hour, but also that the day of his Return is not quite yet. But we definitely have entered that season.

The Reward Of The Believer Is At The Second Coming

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Revelation 22:12

I don't know of any Christians who are not expecting to be rewarded by Jesus when he comes. And we should expect it, as he clearly taught he was bringing that reward with him! But I know quite a few who are mistakenly expecting to receive this reward as part of a pre-trib rapture. A pre-trib coming would surely bring the Christian's reward, but I am looking for a rewarding in line with the Word of God. I hope you are also.

There are many places in the Bible which clearly show this reward is given at the Second Coming which takes place AFTER the tribulation. Part of this reward is the promise of entering into rest from the trials, troubles, and persecutions of this life.

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Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; **7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,** **8** In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus
2Thessalonians 1:6-8

Upon his Second Coming Jesus will, according to this above passage (and others), reward the righteous. It is contrary to Scripture to expect this reward to be given in a previous event.

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and **then he shall reward every man** according to his works. Matthew 16:27

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, **shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.** 2Timothy 4:8

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, **The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord,** and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever... +18 **...and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.** Revelation 11:15+18

The kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of Christ at the Second Coming. This passage, as well as the full counsel of the Scriptures, clearly show the day of our reward is the same day the wicked are destroyed. When reading the Bible, if you watch for it, you will only see the reward of the believer associated with the Second Coming, and never with a previous event.

The Wrath Of God Is Poured Out At The Return Of Christ And NOT Before!

Although many teach otherwise, it is clear from what is actually stated in the Scriptures that **the Wrath of God is poured out at the Return of Christ**, and not in the years preceding. A proper understanding of the difference between God's Judgments upon mankind, and the outpouring of his Wrath, is crucial to a proper grasp on end-time prophesy. *Many believers today lack that understanding!*

What precedes Christ's Return is a period of extreme judgments which are a final call to repentance. God's judgments, although at times quite severe, are redemptive in nature and offer an opportunity for repentance (which we clearly see offered to mankind during the time of tribulation). **The Wrath of God offers no such opportunity.** It is not a call to repentance; it is vengeance! It is completely punitive in nature.

Paul described the Second Coming as a time when: *the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2Thess. 1:7-8).* This theme of the wrath of God being expressed at Christ's Return is clearly seen throughout the end-time prophesies.

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; +18
And the nations were angry, **and thy wrath is come...**
Revelation 11:15+18

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, **seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.** Revelation 15:1

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: **and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.** Revelation 19:15

Although the wrath of God is certainly mentioned in the book of Revelation (and else where in the end-time prophecies), we must understand that not everything in Revelation takes place in the final 3½ years (or 7 according to some). Many of these things take place either before or after the tribulation. But there is *not one place* we see the wrath of God expressed in the end-time picture before the Return of Christ. It is clearly poured out at his Revelation.

The Great Tribulation Is NOT God's Wrath

I do NOT believe the time of the great tribulation is an outpouring of God's wrath! The wrath of God comes afterward. The only mention of wrath being poured out during the tribulation is the wrath of Satan (*Rev. 12:12*).

In fact the great tribulation CANNOT be the wrath of God or Jesus spoke falsely in Matthew 24:21! I have raised this point many times; and will continue to do so as **it is irrefutable!**

For then shall be great tribulation, **such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.** Matthew 24:21

Jesus stated in no uncertain terms that this great tribulation (whatever it may be) **would be the worst expression of it that ever had been or ever will be!** This certainly cannot be talking about the wrath of God as it would have to exceed the wrath of Noah's day which destroyed the entire world, the wrath poured out at the Second Coming which destroys the wicked, and also the wrath of the eternal lake of fire, in order to fit what Jesus said.

The great tribulation will be a time of great wars, calamities, and disasters! It will be a time of great persecution against the Church. And it will be a time when Satan visits his evil upon mankind. All like never seen before or will be again! **But it cannot be properly referred to as the wrath of God or Jesus spoke words of falsehood!**

I Believe The Christian Church To Be The Elect Of God!

This is one so many people flat out refuse to listen to (and *they must refuse* as it absolutely destroys pre-trib theory), but is easily shown to be correct and true to the Scriptures. The Bible clearly teaches the Church is the elect of God. But, a major tenet of dispensational / pre-trib theory rests upon a false claim that national Israel is *today* in a position of election (and the Body of Christ is not)! Their erroneous theory firmly states that God deals with his Jewish elect and his (supposedly) non-elect Church separately in the end-time scenario. And then they further declare God must remove the Church to 'deal' with the Jews. (God supposedly pours his wrath out upon his elect Jews? I thought God's wrath was reserved for his enemies? *Nahum 1:2*)

This Separation Theology is so evidently contrary to what is plainly taught in the Bible I marvel that anyone could embrace it as truth. The Bible teaches the Jew and Gentile believers are one new man in Christ joined together in one body! Ephesians 2:11-16 distinctly says so! Read it and believe it! When *anyone* turns to faith in Jesus and his work on the Cross, and are born again, they become a member of the Body of Christ! To state those of national Israel who turn to Christ in the last days will be a separate entity from the Body of Christ flies in the face of what the Bible teaches about election.

Many can sound quite convincing with their Scripture twisting theories, but concerning election the Bible does NOT teach us Separation Theology (nor Covenant Theology), but gives us instead Remnant Theology (a remnant of Jewish believers joined in their election by the believing Gentiles). Sorting this all out may appear to some as a daunting task, but it really is not! We can easily understand our election through the simple illustration Paul gave in Romans 11. (As was explained in the first section of this book.)

In addition, much insight can be gained by a word search on 'elect / election' in the New Testament. This really helped open my eyes. In MANY places the Church is referred to as the elect of God; but not one place in the New Testament is national Israel shown to currently be in a state of election (though they certainly

ARE called to return to that status). I believe the Christian believers (Jew and Gentile) are the 'Elect of God' in this day (and therefor are the elect being caught up to Christ at the Second Coming in Matthew 24:31).

When someone tells you the followers of Christ are not God's elect they are deceiving you. I base that belief upon an overwhelming witness in the Scriptures which teaches we ARE his elect!.

The Resurrection Of The Just Is One Event That Happens At One Time

You will hear many people question: 'When does the rapture happen'? But to talk about the timing of *'the'* rapture is not even in line with pre-trib theory! When a pre-trib promoter mentions 'the rapture' the response should be: 'Which one'? For that theory demands there be two (or more) raptures for it to work out.

Though many don't realize this, the fact the Scriptures teach a resurrection and catching away at the Second Coming is not denied by the theologians preaching the pre-trib theory. The text of Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 17+21 demand a resurrection /catching away at the Second Coming. It is so evident in Scripture it cannot be reasonably refuted. There WILL be a resurrection / catching away at the Second Coming regardless of any supposed previous event! People need to embrace that as an irrefutable part of end-time prophesy. It would dissipate a lot of fog for many.

What they are teaching is an *additional* prior resurrection / catching away. **TWO resurrections of the Just! TWO raptures!** Both a pre-trib catching away to remove the Church prior to the tribulation; and also a catching away at Christ's return to Earth for (in their thinking) the tribulation Saints; those surviving the tribulation. But a major problem to the notion of multiple resurrections and raptures is that this is in opposition to what is clearly stated in the Bible.

Not only does God's Word teach a resurrection / catching away, as we have already seen, at Christ's Return to Earth; it also plainly teaches the Resurrection of the Righteous is ONE event which happens at ONE time.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also **the resurrection of the dead.** 22 For as in Adam all die, even so **in Christ shall all be made alive.** 23 But **every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming** (Parousia). 24 Then cometh the end...
1Corinthians 15:20-24

This passage clearly speaks that ALL those who are Christ's redeemed will be resurrected in ONE event, and that is the event of his Coming (Parousia). The same Coming (Parousia) that destroys Antichrist at the end of his reign! (*2Thess 2:8*)

The Resurrection of the Just *must* precede the catching away. PERIOD! There can be NO rapture before the resurrection of the believers at Christ's Coming (Parousia); and likewise there can be no additional resurrection of believers after this one event (as pre-trib theory demands) if it were *before* the tribulation. Either would be in opposition to what is clearly taught - ONE Resurrection of the Just!! And as the Bible clearly teaches a resurrection / catching away at the Second Coming, this makes the notion of a pre-trib event an impossibility!

If you put the focus upon the resurrection, where it belongs (instead of our quick trip from earth up to the clouds), any confusion about timing is cleared up by the Word. Settle this in your mind! Study it out! Does the Bible expressly show a resurrection / catching away at the Return of Christ after the tribulation? If so, the idea of a prior event is a contradiction to Scripture, and is an absolute farce.

I believe in our ONE resurrection / catching away at the Return of Christ. It's what is clearly taught in the Bible. The notion of multiple 'raptures' is out of sync with the truth of God's Word..

Sudden Destruction of the Wicked Immediately Follows The Catching Away Of The Righteous

Something we can see expressly stated in multiple witnesses is that the catching away immediately precedes the destruction of the

wicked in an outpouring of God's wrath. The context of this passage from Matthew is the Second Coming: *immediately after the tribulation of those days.. (Matt. 24:29).*

But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming (Parousia) of the Son of man be. 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, **until the day that Noe entered into the ark,** 39 And knew not until **the flood came, and took them all away;** so shall also the coming (Parousia) of the Son of man be. Matthew 24:37-39

Notice this is the Coming (Parousia), The same event described in the previous passage on the resurrection we discussed from 1Corinthians 15. Now let's look at Luke's words on this

And as it was in the days of Noe, **so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.** 27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, **until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.** 28 Likewise also **as it was in the days of Lot;** they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29 **But the same day** that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, **and destroyed them all.** 30 **Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.**

Luke 17:26-30

One thing we should take notice of is that whereas Matthew called this appearance of Jesus his 'Coming (Parousia)', Luke referred to it as the day he is revealed. The Revelation of Christ and his Coming are not two events, they are the same event!

But the main thing I want to emphasize in these Scriptures is that Jesus was using an allegorical reference to both the days of Noah and the days of Lot to point out one remarkable similarity to the day of his Coming and our catching away.

Same day – sudden destruction of the wicked!

The same day the door on the Ark was shut - the sudden destruction of the wicked! **The same day** Lot left Sodom and

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entered the safety of the town of Zoar – the sudden destruction of the wicked! The same day of the catching away of the Church at Christ's Coming – the sudden destruction of the wicked!

Same day - sudden destruction!

This was clearly the point Jesus was making here in this allegorical description. In all three events the deliverance of the righteous is immediately followed by the destruction of the wicked! This is the prophetic pattern the Word of God gives of our gathering together unto Christ, but this is NOT a picture of a pre-trib catching away in any fashion. The context of these passages from Matthew and Luke is absolutely the Coming (parousia) / catching away of Christ's Second Coming.

Now let's tie this in with the description of the catching away in 1Thessalonians chapters 4 and 5. This might surprise you!

Why 1Thessalonians 4:17 Is A Description Of The Second Coming NOT A Pre-Trib 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.

1Thessalonians 4:17

The words above are taken from what is commonly called the 'rapture passage'; but again I must protest loudly and say: 'WHICH ONE?' Is this talking about a (supposed) pre-trib catching away or the catching away at the Second Coming? Have you ever pondered this question yourself? This question is easily cleared up by placing that verse back into its proper (and complete!) context; an endeavor few seem to see the importance of. But it is critical to the proper understanding of what is being discussed.

We obviously know this letter of Paul was not written with verse numbering and chapter-breaks. And this is one of the many places a chapter break can cause one to lose touch with the true and complete context of a passage. This context of discussion concerning the Return of Christ, and our gathering together unto him, begins in chapter 4 verse 13 and continues through chapter 5 verse 4 (and beyond actually).

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Let's read the entire passage, without the distracting chapter-break, and ask ourselves: Is this a discussion of a pre-trib rapture or of the catching away at the Second Coming of Christ?

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For **the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.** 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words. 5:1 **But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.** 2 For yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord so cometh as *a thief in the night.** 3 **For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them,** as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

1Thessalonians 4:13 thru 5:4

*(Peter said this 'thief in the night event' was the day the heavens pass away and the elements melt with a fervent heat.)

Once again (mirroring Christ's allegory of Noah and Lot) we have a clear description of the catching away immediately followed by the destruction (v.3) of the wicked. The fact this passage in context ties the catching away to the sudden destruction of the wicked destroys the notion it is talking about a pre-trib rapture! It is for this reason even many pre-trib preaching

theologians will admit 1Thess. 4 is NOT a pre-trib rapture passage (but sadly never discourage the practice of claiming it to be).

And if you follow the same context a little further you will see not only the phrase 'like a thief in the night' but also the ever popular 'God has not appointed us to wrath' are both found to be referring to the 'wrath' of the Second Coming (though both get hijacked and mistakenly applied to the pre-trib theory instead)! A lot of guile goes on in the mistreatment of this group of Scriptures. A whole lot of guile!

I hope you can now see why I believe these verses on the catching away (as well as the phrases 'like a thief in the night' and 'God has not appointed us to wrath') are in relation to the Second Coming, and the subsequent outpouring of God's wrath, and are not speaking of a previous event.

Other aspects of what I believe have been detailed in the previous discussions of these pages. Hopefully by now you can see I honestly try to base my beliefs **upon facts expressly stated in the Word of God**, and not upon unsupported notions like those of the pre-trib rapture hoax.

I have raised issue with the lack of Scriptural validation for the various elements of the pre-trib rapture theory in an article called:

Unanswered Questions About The Pre-trib Rapture.

It has been posted to my site for some time now with a decent readership. In it I ask for Scriptures to clearly show all the various facets of their pre-trib theory. For example, an invisible coming of Christ, or instantaneous disappearance of the Church. But no one has yet provided me with the Scriptural foundation for their various doctrinal claims which I'm questioning. *And they will not!*

There is no such foundation! The Bible teaches no such thing. So all they can do is quote their doctrine as proof of their doctrine; or quote snippets of verse taken out of context.

The Bible teaches the catching away of the Church to meet Jesus upon his glorious Return AFTER the tribulation of those days! Any other teaching is a fraud, and a damaging deception!

The Curse Of The Pre-trib Rapture

Today the Church is being flooded with a tsunami of deception; and one of the greatest areas of false teaching is concerning the Return of our Lord Jesus to this world. It is the desire of the enemy of our souls that multitudes of Christians, seduced by deception, would enter the final 3½ years of this age out of sync with God, and out from under his blessing, If you think this is not possible you are quite wrong; it is not only possible, this seduction is taking place right under our noses.

A good many years have passed since the Lord opened my eyes to the fact the Resurrection of the Just, and our catching away, takes place at the Second Coming; and that the notion of a prior event called the Pre-tribulation Rapture is not correct doctrine. One of the most challenging aspects of teaching on this issue is to get folks to realize the enormous damage caused by embracing that error, and the great danger it presents to the end-time generation. Let me share with you some insights the Lord has given me concerning just how serious a matter this truly is.

I have detailed in other writings some of the more often spoken of dangers connected with embracing the pre-trib rapture theory, and the damage it does. Such as: leaving folks unprepared spiritually and mentally to face what lies ahead, or the defiling nature of false teaching; and how words of error eat away at true faith (2Tim, 2:17), and so on. But there has always been a nagging feeling in my spirit that there was so much more to this danger than I have been able to grasp and articulate.

Knowing that great peril and persecution lies ahead for the followers of Christ, I have for some time been presenting myself before the Lord with this issue in mind; crying out from a heart burdened for the well being of the Body of Christ. Recently the Lord has been opening up to me a deeper understanding of the satanic nature of, and strategy behind, the pre-tribulation rapture teaching, And as I write these words I am asking God for the ability to effectively communicate what he is showing me.

Many will not take kindly to what I say here. But they are words of truth. And you can mock me, get angry with me, or write me nasty comments and say whatever you choose; **but one thing you will never be able to say is that I did not warn you!**

The Blessing And The Curse

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. Revelation 1:3

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, **If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life,** and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. Revelation 22:18-19

The Book of Revelation begins with the pronouncement of a blessing and ends with the pronouncement of a curse. For most of my life I acknowledged them both, as most others do, but saw no direct correlation between them. But now I understand there is a very specific vein of truth which ties this blessing and curse together; and that is the proper regard for, and preservation of, the Word of God.

I had always considered the words of the blessing (*they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things*) in the sense of 'hear and obey', but that's not the proper rendering of the word keep. This word is one of those of which we have kind of lost touch with its proper meaning. Just as the word 'let' once meant restrain (as in 2Thess. 2:7) but now the English usage means allow; in our modern vernacular the word 'keep' would most often mean obey or hold on to, but in times gone by it had a more specific meaning of watching over and safeguarding (a 'keep' was a garrison or a fortress). With that understanding the words of Revelation 1:3 take on a fuller meaning.

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Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, **and keep (*set a watch over, protect from loss or injury, preserve*) those things which are written therein**: for the time is at hand. Revelation 1:3 (words in italics are mine)

With this additional light we can now clearly see the connection of the blessing to the curse. Whereas the blessing is for hearing, and also keeping / preserving the words of the prophesy; the curse is for hearing, and NOT doing so, but instead adding to or stealing away from it, and thus *doing injury* to the prophesy instead of protecting it! Before we delve into the ramifications of how this all applies to the pre-trib rapture doctrine let's take a look at another blessing / curse in the Word of God, and see how it has played out in the lives of God's people.

And it shall come to pass, **if thou shalt hearken** diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: 2 **And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee**, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. Deuteronomy 28:1-2

But it shall come to pass, **if thou wilt not hearken** unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that **all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee**: Deuteronomy 28:15

When Moses brought the people of God out of the wilderness, and they were about to enter into the land of promise, they paused there by the banks of the river Jordan and had a very serious chat. There were given to them by the Lord magnificent words of promise; a promise of blessing upon obedience, and also a promise of cursing upon disobedience (Deut. 27-29). These words were to be received and honored by the people, and set up as a standard to live by. The Blessing and the Curse were not to be taken lightly.

The Lord was true to his words; and as the people of God moved into the promised land, and began to conquer and occupy the

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region, great fear and anxiety was upon those being bested by the armies under Joshua. And as we follow the narrative, as long as the Israelis obeyed God he blessed them, but when they strayed the curse was manifest.

(SIDE NOTE; Previously the king of Moab had tried unsuccessfully to get Balaam the prophet to curse God's people; even offering him great reward for doing so. But Balaam refused and would only bless them (Numbers 22–24). But sadly we see later in (Numbers 31:16, Revelation 2:14) Balaam gave in to the dark-side, and taught Balak how to get the blessing of God taken off of Israel. How? By getting them to move in disobedience to the words the Lord had spoken to them. The disregarding of God's Word brought the Curse upon the people of the LORD. How is it so many today seem to think we can follow their poor example without the same consequences?

The enemy had sent whorish women among the men of Israel who seduced them into fornication and idolatry. The result was the blessing of God was lifted, and the people suffered greatly for it! Many lost their lives for moving in opposition to what God had spoken. God was teaching his people (even in the wilderness) about the notion of blessing and cursing. **That God is the same God we serve today.**)

We see this promise of blessing and curse at work in the lives of God's people down through the centuries. When Jerusalem fell to the armies of Nebuchadnezzar it was once again God being faithful to honor his promises. What a horrible time of death, suffering, and bondage the disobedience of God's beloved Israel brought upon them. But it was exactly what God had said would befall them if they did not hearken to his words of promise. **That God is the same God we serve today.**

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And once again in A.D. 70 the promise of blessing and cursing brought about the destruction of Jerusalem, and the deaths of well over a million Jews! But there was a remarkable aspect of this tragic time many are not aware of. History records that very few Christians, if any, were killed in that massacre! Those who took the words of Jesus seriously were forewarned by them and fled (Luke 20:20-21); and thereby escaped that destruction and carnage!

Those who chose to give the words of Jesus proper regard, and move in accord with them, received great blessing for doing so. Those who disregarded his words did so to their own destruction. **That God is the same God we serve today.**

Now let's go back to the promise of blessing and cursing found in the book of Revelation, and ask ourselves: 'are these words being given the proper regard by the believers of our generation?'

The Temporal Curse

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, **If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:** Revelation 22:18

As I have clearly shown in other writings the pre-trib rapture theory both *adds to and takes away from* the Word of God in general, and the Book of Revelation in particular. The seriousness of this seems to escape those involved in the promotion of that falsehood; but I assure you it has not escaped the God who is absolutely faithful to the promises of his Holy Word. God does not lie; nor does he give idle threats. The Curse as well as the Blessing recorded in Revelation will without fail be visited upon those who qualify for each; just as assuredly as history shows the words of Deuteronomy 27-29 were faithfully fulfilled time and time again.

Among other things the pre-trib theory adds another Coming of Jesus and another resurrection which are not native to the teachings of God's Word. In adding in these elements they deceptively promise God's people they will not see the time of great

tribulation. This perverting of the end-time narrative is a violation of the *clear-cut warning* not to add to this prophesy!

Those who teach the pre-trib error will not only NOT escape that time, but will enter it under a curse for violating that warning. They might choose to ignore that warning, but I guarantee you they will not ignore the consequences! The conditions of that curse will cause to come upon them the very plagues their false doctrine had them convinced they would never be around to witness, let alone experience! *If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:* These words are not an idle threat. They are the promise of a God who cannot lie!

Just as the enemy wanted Israel out from under the blessing of God as they entered in to occupy the promised land (so they would be vulnerable to attack), so Satan desires to remove the blessing off of God's chosen as they enter the final confrontation with him on their way to occupying the eternal promised land. This is the satanic scheme behind the pre-trib rapture doctrine. It is more than just an errant theory. **It is a cunningly devised seduction designed to bring God's people into the time of great tribulation under a curse of disobedience (so they will be vulnerable to attack).** Once again a large segment of God's people have been seduced into moving in opposition to what has been commanded them; and once again God will be faithful to his Word, and allow the promise of the Curse to be manifested!

...What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and **have washed their robes, and made them white** in the blood of the Lamb... **...They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.**

Revelation 7:13 16

In examining this passage I notice two things relevant to this discussion;

- First, these individuals who had come out of the tribulation had gone through a cleansing / purification.

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- Second, why had they experienced hunger and thirst, as well as the ill effects of the sun and great heat? Although we must expect great persecution and even possible martyrdom during the tribulation (and even today for many); we do have very many promises as to personal provision and protection. ...*the sun shall not smite thee by day...* (Psalms 112:6) ... *in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.* (Psalms 37:19). It doesn't sound like all of them had been partaking of those promises. Had maybe (I am just wondering here) some of '*the things written in this book*' come upon many of them due to their disregard of God's Word? I see this as a distinct possibility.

And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. Revelation 13:7

Some questions need to be asked here: WHO gave Antichrist permission to war against the Body of Christ and temporally overcome them during the tribulation; and more importantly: WHY? Could this have anything to do with the curse of Revelation 22? There has never been a time in the history of God's people when the words 'truth lies fallen in the street' were more relevant than today.

Does the Church 'give place' (Eph. 4:27) to the Devil by their lack of regard for the warnings against abusing God's Word? Have they set themselves up for a purging? Rapture theorists refuse to acknowledge the great tribulation as a time of sifting and purification for God's people, but the Scriptures clearly put forth that concept.

And some of them of understanding shall fall, **to try them, and to purge, and to make them white,**...

Daniel 11:35

Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried...

Daniel 12:10

I have noted before that it is quite easy to discern in Daniel's writings two companies of believers in the time of tribulation. One a weak and faltering group being tried, sifted, and purified (of the

which many will not endure to the end). The other a group full of wisdom and strength doing great things in the name of their God. Although not exempt from persecution, and quite possibly destined for martyrdom, these will be about the Fathers business walking in great grace and power; not as many others who will be desperately seeking a supply of 'lamp oil' they had been deceived into thinking they'd never need. It is my sincere goal to be a part of that victorious group!

... but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. Daniel 11:32

The Eternal Curse

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. Revelation 22:19

As frightful as the first part of this curse is, the second part presents a horror almost beyond the grasp of the human mind. To have a part in the Book of Life and then to have your name taken out; all for the sin of *'taking away from the words of this prophesy'*. To lose your eternal soul, along with all the promise of inheritance provided us through the sacrifice of God's Son on that Cross, for disregarding that warning. Words fail me here. What words could ever adequately describe such an eternal nightmare?

Of all the ways the dispensational / pre-trib rapture theory takes away from the book of Revelation, let's look at just one. Those who teach that doctrine are telling the Body of Christ they will not be on earth to face the challenges involved in refusing the Mark of the Beast, and the horrible time of persecution to come as a result of Antichrist's war on the Saints. This literally rips a large chunk right out of the heart of the teachings of the book of Revelation! It is plainly a *'taking away from the words of this prophesy'*.

To tell the Church they will NOT face the 'Mark of the Beast' is a satanic deception! It astounds me that people could state such a thing with no fear of consequence. In doing so they endanger not

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only themselves, but also everyone they convince to embrace that error!

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath. Proverbs 15:24

The serious nature of editing and altering the Words of the Holy Bible is why I harp on all the time about basing our beliefs only upon what we can find clearly and plainly written in its pages; not on hopeful theories and cunningly devised fables. **The truths we are to believe and live by are plainly stated in the Scriptures with the safeguard of multiple witnesses.** Doctrines based upon supposition and implicit reference (like the pre-trib rapture theory) should be viewed as extremely dangerous, and given a wide berth.

So there you have it. **The Curse of the Pre-Trib Rapture is real!** But sadly, the thought of being cursed through deception will be pondered by only a meager portion of those who have been seduced by that deception; as they are firmly convinced their fable is actually true. *And they will disregard this warning.*

Such a thought will cause the proud to retort: 'That could never be me!' *And they will disregard this warning.*

Such a thought will cause many others (deceived by yet another falsehood) to exclaim: 'That cannot happen! You cannot LOSE your salvation; we are sealed and secure!' *And they will disregard this warning.*

But there it is in plain English: *if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.* The question now is: What are YOU going to do with those words? Will you give them the proper regard they deserve, or ignore them to your own peril?

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished. Proverbs 27:12

Breaking The Curse!

If you cannot come to the place yet to embrace the truth that the Church is going through the time of great tribulation: PLEASE, for your own sake, at least back off to a neutral position. Let your

confession be something along the lines of: 'I'm not sure about these things' or 'I'm seeking for more light on this matter, and I don't know for sure what to believe or teach right now'. And ask the Lord to forgive and cleanse you for any error you have embraced or promoted. He will gladly do so (1John 1:9).

That neutral position will not defile you and bring you under judgment for adding to or taking away from what the Bible teaches. It is a safe place where you can apply yourself to seek God, and the truth of his Word, on this most serious matter. If I can convince you to at least assume this safe position I will have made headway in regard to the main burden of my heart in writing these words; and that is seeing God's people removed from the danger of promoting that deceiving and damaging doctrine.

Let's enter the final days of this age under the Blessing of God, and not under a Curse for failing to give his Word proper regard! There very much is a curse associated with taking away from and adding to the Word of God. That curse is a reality!

PLEASE, do not fall victim to it!

Watching For That Day

One of the claims made by the pre-trib rapture theorists is that the thought of an 'impending' rapture keeps Christians on their toes and living right; whereas a belief the catching away doesn't happen until after the tribulation leads to complacency. I think just the opposite may very well be true! Knowing the time of great tribulation could nearly be upon us, and watching world events unfolding, doesn't exactly make me feel like slouching and slacking. I know a good many Christians who have a mindset of seeking to be prepared spiritually for the dark days ahead; and are crying out to God for the '*gold tried in the fire*' and the '*eye salve so you might see*' that Jesus counseled about (Rev. 3:18). This is very wise counsel for all of us.

Asking God to purify your faith is basically asking for endurance fostering trials and challenges to come your way; but a heart that longs to be close to Jesus, and stay faithful no matter

what, will cry out for dealings which would make the compromised and lukewarm shudder and cringe to even contemplate. Seeking a purified faith and the endurance to carry you through the coming persecution and affliction doesn't seem to be on the agenda of those I know who are waiting for their 'any minute now rapture'.

Why bother with all the effort to get that gold tried in the fire if you won't be here to need it? I think *that view* could lead to complacency; and not somebody sensing a rough pitch-dark road ahead and seeking to prepare for that journey. A long dark night takes a lot of oil to keep the lamp ablaze. It's wise to stock up, but why should I if I think it is not necessary? The foolish virgins had not prepared for that long dark night, and it cost them the loss of everything they were waiting for! Buy all the oil you can get while it is still light; it is hard to find in the dark.

Although the words of warning that '*of that day and hour knoweth no man*' may have been lifted from their true context by some, they remain a valid admonishment that is to be heeded by us all.

And **take heed** to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and **so that day come upon you unawares**. Luke 21:34

Many suppose those who don't hold to the pre-trib rapture theory completely disregard Jesus' warnings of the unexpected nature of His arrival, and the danger of it catching you unprepared. I firmly believe in being ready to meet Jesus at any time. I kind of sense in his parables and warnings not just an admonition of the suddenness of his arrival but also something that speaks warning of the often unexpected end of a life. Those believers who die not ready to meet him are just as foolish as those poor virgins. They will appear before him without oil in their lamps also.

Due to the unexpected nature of his coming many claim that it could not be post-trib; but we've already established his Return is an unknown day. Maybe some additional insight would be helpful.

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Therefore be ye also ready: for in **such an hour as ye think not** the Son of man cometh. Matthew 24:44

He said his Return will be at a time when people would not expect him to. How could that be a surprise if it's at the end of the tribulation? It's not! It's *after* the tribulation. *Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.* Daniel 12:12 (1335 = 3½ years + 3½ months) What's the extra time here all about? We don't know for sure.

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 **For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them,** as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 1Thessalonians 5:2-3

Picture this: The events of the great tribulation are now over. Things have settled down to the point people are saying, 'Whew, that was rough times but it looks like it's behind us. Looks like peace and safety! Now we can get back to business as usual.'

I don't know just how it's going to be, but you get my point. In the long awaited calm after the intense and prolonged storm there will be a danger of being lulled to sleep. That's why all the warnings of Christ to watch (stay awake and alert) so his Return doesn't overtake you as a thief (so you won't suffer loss).

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that **that day should overtake you as a thief.** 1Thessalonians 5:4

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. Revelation 3:3

If we are watching we will be able to know not the day, but the season. If you examine all the warnings and parables on his Return there is an evident inference to be made that the awake and watching will not be surprised to see him. Why? They have been watching the signs he said to watch, and staying alert.

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. Luke 21:28

We will be redeemed in fullness at the Second Coming. That's the day we are awaiting. He told the believers to stay awake, watch for the signs, and they would know the season of his Return was *now* at hand. His Return is only going to be a surprise to the ones who are not awake and watching. What's up with this passage:

For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 **Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments,** lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. Revelation 16 14-16

Have you ever wondered why this final exhortation for us to watch is placed right in the middle of a passage on the armies of the world gathering together for the battle of Armageddon? Do you think this might be a clue for those who are awake enough to see it? Could it be the final signpost for us to watch for? If he says to *watch* I feel it's reasonable to believe there is actually something he expects us to see, right?

How can pre-trib theorists say there are no signs to be fulfilled before his Return when he plainly stated so many, and gave us firm instruction to watch for them? The pre-trib rapture theory is seriously at odds with the Word of God in that regard.

The idea of a sudden appearance taking many by surprise is not out of sync with a post-tribulation Coming of Christ, no matter how hard some may try to make it seem that way. Jesus said the day and hour of his Return would be unknown, but he truly taught those awake and watching would be fully aware of the season. Are we awake and watching or living in a religious slumber?

In The Honorable Court of Eternal Truth

Judge Logos-Rhema Presiding

THE WORD OF GOD

VS.

THE PRE-TRIB RAPTURE

The conflict between the pre-trib theory and the Bible is so evident that only one of them can be true. If you go through the Word of God carefully you will find many verses which make statements so contrary to the pre-trib rapture theory (and dispensationalism in general) that either their doctrine is false or the Bible is in error. I am talking about Scriptures that absolutely would not have been worded in such a manner if the pre-trib rapture was a reality. A good many of these conflicts deal with the concept of faithfulness and reward. Let's look at a few:

And when the chief Shepherd **shall appear**, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 1Peter 5:4

In the 5th chapter of Peter the Apostle was exhorting elders to faithfully feed the flock so they could expect a crown of glory at the Second Coming. Why would the Holy Spirit inspire Peter to say this if they would be rewarded seven years earlier at the pre-trib rapture? Did the Holy Spirit not know about this (supposed) prior coming of Jesus?

This idea of being rewarded at Christ's Return is found many places in the Bible. But the very framework of their erroneous theory necessitates the believers' reward be given earlier at the pre-tribulation 'rapture', or it throws other elements of their doctrine totally out of whack. If we are to be given our reward at the pre-trib rapture **it would be a lie** for the Scriptures to say we're rewarded at the Second Coming. Don't you agree?

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead **at his**

appearing and his kingdom;... Henceforth there is laid up for me **a crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me **at that day**: and not to me only, but **unto all them also that love his appearing**.
2Timothy 4:1+8

If you read this entire passage in your Bible there can be no doubt Paul was saying in verses 1-8 the day of his, and also our, reward is the day of Christ's Appearing and Kingdom. If the pre-trib rapture theory were true, with the believers being rewarded at that time, it would have been totally out of line for the Spirit to inspire Paul to write these words; they would absolutely be untrue! Can two opposing ideas both be true? Does God's Word contain lies? Here is another example:

That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, **until the appearing (epiphaneia) of our Lord Jesus Christ**: 1Timothy 6:14

Strong's Definitions: epiphaneia *ep-if-an'-i-ah* From [G2016](#); a **manifestation**, that is, (**specifically**) **the advent of Christ** (past or future): - **appearing, brightness**.

This is another clear-cut case of the Word declaring we will be here right up until the Second Coming! In this 6th chapter of Timothy Paul warns Timothy about coveting and exhorts him we are to obey that commandment right up until Jesus returns and shows himself King of Kings and Lord of Lords. How could the believers be here to obey this instruction until his appearing, if they are not going to be here to see his appearing?

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory **at the appearing (apokalupsis) of Jesus Christ**: 8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 Receiving **the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls**. 10 **Of which salvation** the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of **the grace that should come unto you**: ...

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...Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and **hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation (apokalupsis) of Jesus Christ;**
1Peter 1:7-10+13

Why in the world would Peter be telling us to **hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought to us at the Revelation of Christ** if that was not when we are going to receive that grace? The pre-trib theory teaches we would receive the fullness of our salvation at their mythical event seven years before the Revelation of Christ. Was Peter speaking error, or is the pre-trib theory error?

For the Son of man shall **come in the glory of his Father with his angels;** and **then** he shall **reward every man** according to his works. Matthew 16:27

Their theory says we'll be rewarded at the pretrib rapture; and they also claim there will be *no angels with Christ at that event. Somebody is fibbing here, and I don't think it's Jesus!

*(Pre-trib teachers will take some verses which describe angels in association with Christ's coming, and some which lack any mention of them, and try to build a case they are describing two separate comings. This is folly. Just because they are not described in a verse does not mean they are not there. Would a passage that fails to describe the sandals of our Lord mean he was barefoot?)

And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and **the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the Saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great;** and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. Revelation 11:18

More Scripture here on our reward at his Second Coming. I know, some try to explain this away with the notion of a later judgment, though that notion holds no water. But let's see you explain away this next one.

Which is a manifest token of **the righteous judgment of God,** that **ye may be counted worthy** of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: 6 Seeing it is a righteous

thing with God to **recompense tribulation to them that trouble you**; 7 And to **you who are troubled rest with us**, when the Lord Jesus **shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels**,... 2Thessalonians 1:5-7

There can be no doubt Paul was referencing the Church with these words. This passage shows the Body of Christ being persecuted right up until the Revelation of Christ! Folks who declare the Scriptures don't show the Church on Earth during the tribulation need to give this passage some serious consideration. When Jesus **is revealed** he is going to hand out paychecks (recompense) to both the persecuted and the ones who are persecuting. This is the 'wrath' and the 'reward' promised at the Second Coming. Notice Paul put himself in the same body of believers with these folk: **'rest with us'**. This is the Church being rewarded for their persecution, including that of the great tribulation they are enduring when Christ arrives!

...denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, **we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world**; 13 **Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing** of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Titus 2:12

Some rapture preachers throw a distraction into this verse falsely saying it is speaking of the two comings of Christ. The rapture being the 'blessed hope' and the Return of Jesus being the 'glorious appearing'. This falsity becomes an irrelevant point when you realize we are being told here to live **in this present world looking for the glorious appearing** of the Lord. The Holy Spirit would not have told Paul to have us looking for an event we would not be around to see! The pre-trib theory makes this verse untrue. Or is it the other way around?

My sincere hope is you would recognize these, and so many other verses, being out of kilter with the pre-trib theory should be a big warning sign that something is hugely amiss with their teaching. True Christian doctrine flows with the Word of God and does not necessitate covering up or explaining away confusing discrepancies.

5. The Antidote For Error

We have a historical precedent of the damage the pre-trib theory can cause in the way it adversely affected the Church in China during the persecution, torture, and martyrdom of the believers under Mao Zedong in the early 1950's. Christians, who had been steeped in the errors of the pre-trib rapture theory by Western missionaries, believed they would be raptured out before anything of that sort could befall them. They were left confused and spiritually unprepared to deal with the horrible onslaught of Mao's Red Guard, and many fell away from the faith! Their terrible and tragic end was the result of embracing a false hope instead of the realities presented in the Word of God. They ran out of oil!

Corrie Ten Boom, a survivor of the Nazi concentration camps, spoke of this extensively in her later travels as a speaker on behalf of Christ. It is well worth researching. Can you picture the way the pre-trib rapture theorists were viewed with disdain and mistrust afterward? They had lost their reputations as men of God and were shunned as false teachers who had misled the believers and damaged the Church. What a doleful end to a life of ministry!

This same sad scenario will soon be played out once again in the lives of those who are leading God's people into embracing a false understanding of what lays ahead for the Body of Christ. Will that be the epithet of your life efforts? To be exposed as a purveyor of a message of deception that greatly damaged God's people?

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Psalms 119:105

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Years ago warnings of the Mark of the Beast, and the consequences of receiving it, were a common item of discussion in Christian conversation. And that warning was imprinted in the understanding of the children growing up around this. It seems like today this warning has been replaced with a self centered attitude of: 'Why should I worry about something I will never see'?

What will be the fruit of shelving this topic like it has become obsolete due to modern theory? I often wonder how this will play out in the lives of this generation of children not having been imprinted with that understanding of the consequences for taking the Mark. What will restrain them from later destroying themselves by giving in to the pressure and propaganda convincing them it is all for the good of mankind?

A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin. Proverbs 26:28

A lot of people come across like: 'What's the big deal? Just let people think what they want to about the rapture, end-times, the great tribulation, etc.; why bother people about what they believe?' Why? Because we need to understand that false teachings are not benign; they are malignant and thereby do much damage. Not to mention the fact they are very offensive to God himself.

Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight. Proverbs 12:22

I think the unbalanced focus on the 'catching away' rather than the Resurrection speaks volumes of the self-centered nature of modern Christianity. It's all about what's best or easiest for you, not about pleasing God or identifying with Jesus. When's the last time you heard a message on any one of these verses:

... we told you before that we should suffer tribulation;
even as it came to pass, and ye know. 1Thessalonians 3:4

...unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, **not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;**
Philippians 1:29

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Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, **that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:** 2Thessalonians 1:5

Yea, and **all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.** 2Timothy 3:12

If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: 2Timothy 2:12

All these references are about identifying with the sufferings of Christ to the point where we suffer ourselves; but how many preach at all on this aspect of our faith? It's not *all* about suffering, but should we be avoiding the topic altogether?

But not only do the pre-trib rapture teachers shy away from verses on suffering for Christ, remarkably they even steer clear of many passages about our Resurrection and 'catching away'! Ever heard them preach on this next one?

Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: **a fire shall devour before him,** and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. 4 **He shall call to the Heavens from above, and to the earth,** that he may judge his people. 5 **Gather my Saints together unto me;** those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. 6 And the Heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah. Psalms 50:3-6

The reason pre-trib preachers avoid this passage is that it is obviously a description of the Second Coming, and our gathering together unto him at that time. Some rapture theorists try to explain this passage away with some weak arguments about a later judgment (And now a fourth Coming? Spare me please!), but most just ignore it and hope it won't get brought up. Here's another passage dealing with the Resurrection you're not likely to hear them preach from:

But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? 11 As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: 12 **So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the Heavens be no more,**

they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

Job 14:10-12

What, Job? The Resurrection won't happen until what? This prophetic statement found in Job, as astounding as it may seem, is in accord with Peter's words about the Return of Christ:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; **in the which the Heavens shall pass away** with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 2Peter 3:10

Here is how Isaiah and Revelation put it:

And **all the host of Heaven shall be dissolved, and the Heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll**: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. Isaiah 34:4

And **the Heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together**; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. Revelation 6:14

As with many prophetic end-time events it's hard to pinpoint the timing of this one exactly but the combined witness seems to put it immediately before, or in conjunction with, the Return of Christ; and Job declares it will happen *before* the dead rise! I guess it should be no surprise I've never heard Psalm 50:3-6 or Job 14:12 used by someone trying to promote the theory of a rapture before the great tribulation. They would sink their own ship using these passages on the Resurrection of the Just! Best to leave them lie in obscurity. So they do.

The 'message' of the modern day Church in our nation bears little resemblance to the Gospel of the Scriptures. But ask the 'scriptural illiterate' pew warmers and they would swear they are being fed manna from Heaven. If the overwhelming majority of the Bible teaching you receive is what comes from the apostate 'mainstream' Christianity of today you are not likely to have a proper understanding of what lies ahead for the Body of Christ.

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And we really do need to know the truth of it. Jesus prayed for his disciples that they would be sanctified. How? Through God's truth.

Sanctify them **through thy truth**: thy word is truth.

John 17:17

I feel the believers of our generation have lost sight of a very critical aspect of the Gospel. And that is this: Truth has a sanctifying effect on a receptive heart, whereas error and deception defile a person! This is true for an individual or an entire nation. I believe this has a lot to do with the condition of the Church in our nation today; as well as the nation itself. Our congregations are not being washed with the water of the Word, but soiled with crowd pleasing perversions of the truth! Most are constantly being fed outright lies. How crucial is this issue to us?

Brethren, **if any of you do err from the truth**, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that **he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death**, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

James 5:19-20

Notice how James ties truth to salvation in these verses. Erring from the truth, he says, will make you a sinner in need of being converted and saved from death! Sounds somewhat crucial to me. To be lured away from the truth is to be lured away from Christ. I think we need to wake up to the dangerous condition of the 'not that worried about doctrine' believer. The churches in America are packed plum full of people who would rather agree to disagree than make any sacrifice of time or energy to *'prove all things and hold fast that which is good'* (1Thess.5:21).

I once posed a simple question to a professed believer and received the response: 'I don't know, I'll have to call one of our elders and see what we believe.' And he promptly did so. Sadly, this is the question he could not answer: 'Was Jesus actually God clothed in humanity, or just one of God's created beings? And the response he got from his elder was even sadder; for it turned out he was a Mormon; and they do not believe in the deity of Christ. This devout man had almost no Bible knowledge, but was assured he was being taught properly from good honest people who did. Some

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well meaning folk, who I am sure had his best interests at heart, were feeding him a pack of lies. What are you being fed?

...we have not followed **cunningly devised fables**, when we made known unto you **the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

2Peter 1:16

Even in the days of the apostles there were 'cunningly devised fables' attempting to lure the believers away from the truth. How much more should we beware in a day where so many have lost a love for the truth? Thank God we have a rock to stand upon!

We have also **a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed**, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 2Peter 1:19

The truth of God's Word will always be the antidote for the poison of error and deception. Critical examination of teachings, and the study of Scripture in context, are truly putting that antidote to work to dispel any poison. Don't be afraid to question your beliefs! Put them to the test and see how they stand up. Open your Bible daily and drink deep. It's good medicine!

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

1Thessalonians 5:21

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