

The Truth

What the Bible really says
about the timing of the rapture

Copyright 2022 by Kurt Olson

Self-published

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188, USA. All rights reserved.

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations taken from the Amplified® Bible (AMP), Copyright © 2015 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. www.lockman.org

Contents

What if we've been misinformed?

About the Author

The reason for writing this book.

David Wilkerson Said:

PART 1

Defining Terms

Differing Rapture Views?

Are We Living in the Last Days?

False Teachers to Jail!

Is the Rapture Biblical?

PART 2

Looking at Revelation?

Where is the Church in the Book of Revelation?

No Tribulation Saints?

PART 3

What does Daniel say?

Could it be The Wrath of God?

PART 4

What does Paul say?

What Paul told Thessalonians.

PART 5

What Jesus Has to Say.

Is it Becoming Clear?

PART 6

In Conclusion

What are the Odds?

Now What?

Exciting Times!

Our Teachers?

Endnote:

STAY CONNECTED

Introduction:

What if we've been misinformed?

God is not confused. The Bible is not confused. And God does not want you to be confused either. Once you look at all the Bible passages that point to the timing of the rapture, You will know exactly when the Rapture will take place, and you will never be confused about it again.

About the Author

I'm Kurt Olson, founder, and president of Go Multiply and The International Disciple-Making Initiative (The IDMI Inc). Our mission is to finish the Great Commission by launching Disciple-Making Movements in every nation and among every people group on earth. Since 2015, through our training in biblical discipleship, we have seen the Lord produce hundreds of thousands of obedient, reproducing, disciples of Jesus Christ in multiple nations around the world. At this point, it could be over one million due to the power of God and multiplication!

I spend a lot of my time working as an international Bible Teacher/Missionary Trainer. Recently, at a breakfast in Lagos, Nigeria, I was being introduced to a church leader from that city. A friend from South Africa introduced me by saying, "This man (me) has planted tens of thousands of churches around the world." I looked into the eyes of the man I was meeting for the first time and said, "Actually, I haven't planted any. The disciple-makers who've gone through our training have planted tens of thousands of New Testament churches around the world."

I have been following Jesus and reading the Bible daily for almost 35 years. I do not have a PhD or any other of this world's credentials. I simply claim to be an unschooled, ordinary man who has spent some years learning from God. And in those years of learning from God, through the Scriptures, the Lord has shown me some things that are absolutely essential for maintaining your faith and walk with God in the last days of this age. I feel a heavy burden (like the Lord *requires* me) to share these things with you. What you do with what you learn here will be up to you.

The reason for writing this book.

I have a great concern that many people will miss heaven and fall away from Jesus because they are misinformed on this issue. And that, my friends, is what motivates me to cover this critical topic. Look at what Jesus said in Matthew 24:

Matthew 24:10 (AMP) At that time many will be offended *and* repelled [by their association with Me] *and* will fall away [from the One whom they should trust] and will betray one another [handing over believers to their persecutors] and will hate one another.

I have a ministry acquaintance in Nigeria who has a prophetic gift, and he declared at a pastor's conference, "The reason many will fall away in the last days is because they will find themselves *in* the tribulation that they didn't prepare for."

What if the reason people fall away from Jesus and betray and hate each other is that they find themselves in the tribulation period that their professional religious leaders promised them they would miss. The promise is that all believers will be removed by a pre-tribulation rapture before the tribulation starts and they experience anything difficult? But is that a false promise?

What if the pre-tribulation rapture teaching is less of what the bible teaches and more wishful thinking? Could it be what our itching ears want to hear in these last days? What if the reason this teaching is so popular today is because it keeps the teacher popular, the hearer comfortable and complacent, and keeps the money flowing into the ministry?

You may not know this, but it has happened before! That's right, we actually have historical examples of people turning away from God in huge numbers because they found themselves experiencing suffering, persecution, and martyrdom when their greatly misinformed teachers told them they would never experience difficulty or persecution for Jesus.

David Wilkerson Said:

Recently, I was listening to an old message from the late David Wilkerson on YouTube called *Resting in Jesus* (I highly recommend it) and he shared about two tragic examples of many Christians falling away from Christ in the last century. Here is what he said, (modified for clarity):

Jesus said, "There'll be wars coming, pestilence, earthquakes in various places. You'll be afflicted and some will be killed. Iniquity will abound. False Christs and false prophets are going to arise, many will be deceived. The sun will be darkened, and the stars are going to fall from the heavens." And Jesus said, "Behold I have told you before. I've told you these things." And there's a reason He said these things; not to scare them. He's not trying to motivate holiness through fear. He's not saying in so many words, "You better toe the line because look what's coming." No, no, no, no. He later explained it to them. He said, "I told you all these things so you would believe, when you saw them coming, that a Christ who had the foreknowledge to warn you has the power to keep you." He said, "So that your faith would not be shaken." He said, "I've told you all these things so that you would not be shaken when you see them come." Now folks, I want to tell you something, and I want you to listen closely. We don't want to hear this kind (of thing). We want to go to the Bible, and we want to lay hold of every promise there is. But I want to open your eyes tonight. And listen closely please.

In 1949, just before the Communists took over China, they were already moving on the eastern provinces. They were coming. And already reports were, that they were murdering and maiming the people and confiscating property. But almost

all evangelicals were telling the Chinese Christians, "The Lord is going to come and rapture you away. There's not going to be any suffering." And they quoted the Scriptures. And the people (were) in their churches raising their hands praising God on these promises. And they were told they would not suffer because, "Jesus is going to come and keep you from the hour of temptation." The Communists came in. (They came) into their churches (and) burned them. (They) murdered and maimed (the Christians) and took the children! And this can't be denied. It's a historical fact! And then the Christians, millions of Christians, became absolutely shell-shocked. They didn't want to hear about Christ. They said, "We were told that we would not have to endure any of this." They endured it.

Their faith was shattered for many, many years because there were no prophets; there were no watchmen trying to remind them what Jesus said. Jesus said, "Some of you will be killed. Some of you are going to be cast in prison. In fact," He said, "some that kill you will think they're doing God a favor."

(In) Rwanda, there were many, many Christians. And many of those evangelicals, especially Pentecostals, who sat in Rwanda listening to a prosperity gospel saying, "You don't have to suffer if you come to Christ," their eyes were blinded. And then when the war broke out, their churches were burned. The same thing (happened). It was one murder after another. They had to run (and) flee as refugees. And then, (while they were living) in the refugee camps, many, many pastors got together in churches (in neighboring countries). They (those pastors) released, first in one camp, twelve hundred Bibles. (Bibles were offered in) Camps in Tanzania, Uganda, and Burundi but they (the persecuted Christians) wouldn't take them. They didn't want to hear about the Word. They said, "We were told we would be raptured, and we weren't raptured!" We weren't ready for this. We weren't told we would suffer. (We) weren't warned!" They said, "We've been failed. Where was our God?"

As we enter the final days of this age, persecution like this will be common all over the planet. And if you take nothing else away from this quote, please always remember this one thing: if our Jesus has the power to foretell these things, then He also has the power to guide and protect us through them.

As nice as it would be to just agree to disagree on the tribulation issue, if there is ***any chance it endangers even one person's soul***, I feel a strong obligation to point out what the Bible actually says on the subject.

PART 1

Defining Terms

Rapture

The Greek and Latin words (*harpazo* and *rapturo* respectively) mean “quick snatching away.” Think of it as the Rapid-Departure (RAP-TURE) of the followers of Christ (the church) from the earth to meet the Lord in the air. The rapture IS biblical, and it will happen. The real question is when it will happen. Look at what Paul said to the Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 4:12 *Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be **caught up in the clouds (raptured) to meet the Lord in the air.** Then we will be with the Lord forever.*

The Great Tribulation

The greatest time of anguish and difficulty the world has ever known. This will be a series of extinction-level events! Jesus said, no one would survive unless those days were shortened. And the angels in Daniel 12 said that it will be the greatest time of trouble since the world began.

Matthew 24:22 *In fact, unless that time of calamity is shortened, not a single person will survive. But it will be shortened for the sake of God’s chosen ones.*

Daniel 12:1 *...then there will be a time of anguish greater than any since nations first came into existence....*

The Church

The Greek word is *ecclesia*, means called out or separated ones and was simply an “official gathering for an official purpose.” Jesus’ church is any gathering of Jesus’ followers for Jesus’ purposes. It doesn’t need involve religion or Holy huddles in Holy halls.

Here are some biblical synonyms for “church”: the Bride of Christ, the Body of Christ, the saints, the Holy ones of the Most High, the elect, and the chosen ones. Maybe you can think of some others. These terms can all be used interchangeably, and all simply refer to the followers of Jesus.

Differing Rapture Views?

Pre-tribulation Rapture Position

States that all true believers in the world are taken to Heaven **before** the tribulation even begins. (This is the position that is the most popular in the church in the West today).

Mid-tribulation Rapture Position

Says all believers will exit the earth halfway through the tribulation, which is three and a half years into the seven years of the tribulation. Some people refer to this second half of the tribulation as the “Great Tribulation” because that is the portion of the tribulation when the trouble will increase to the level where not one person would survive unless God shortens the days.

Post-Tribulation Rapture Position

States that all believers on earth will be gathered to meet the Lord in the air at the end of the great tribulation. People who hold this belief tend to believe that the rapture and the return of Christ happen on the same day!

Which position do you hold? Why do you hold that position? Is it because you have sufficient biblical evidence to support it? Or is it because human teachers have made a convincing argument to support their position? Also, honestly ask yourself, “Do I believe what I believe simply because it’s what I want to be true?”

Are We Living in the Last Days?

Look at what the Apostle Paul said about the last days:

2 Timothy 3:1-5 You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. ² For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. ³ They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. ⁴ They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. ⁵ They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!

Is what Paul said a fair description of what the world is like today? Sure, seems like it to me.

Most believers I ask lately, think we are living in the “last days.” What about you? Do you think we are living in the final days that lead to the return of Christ? Notice what Paul says about a day that would come:

2 Timothy 4:3 For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear.

Well, isn’t that happening right now? Think about it, was that even possible before the invention of cable TV? The internet and YouTube have made the problem worse. What about the COVID lockdowns? Did they make this better or worse? Worse, for sure! People literally have gathered to themselves groups of teachers that say what they like to hear. In contrast, far too many aren’t studying the word and learning directly from God for themselves.

Do an honest self-assessment and ask yourself if this describes you. Do you have a group of favorite teachers, preachers, pastors, and prophets? And would you rather learn from them instead of learning directly from God, through His Word, for yourself?

James 3:1 says, “...we who teach will be judged more strictly.”

And Jesus said in Mark 9:42 (NIV) *“If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck, and they were thrown into the sea.”* Whoa!

So, this is no trivial matter! People are going to lose their faith and salvation over this issue. People who teach falsehoods that create stumbling blocks to God's children are in grave danger. May it never be you or me!

False Teachers to Jail!

It is critical that ***we know the Word of God and the God of the Word personally!*** Otherwise, how will we know whether we are being led astray by the teachers we are listening to?

Recently, I was reading a last-days prophecy blog where the author said they believe that all false teachers should be sitting in jail! I can't disagree. That actually seems mild compared to what Jesus said above. But then the author said, “And all those who were led astray by them should be sitting right next to them in the jail!” The author went on to say, “They should be in jail as well because they were too lazy to open their Bibles to see whether or not what they were being taught was true.”

Here is an example of trying to make the bible say what you want it to say.

Revelation 3:10a Because you have obeyed my command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the whole world.

I often hear well-meaning teachers say, “See, look at this verse. See, God is going to remove His followers from the world before the tribulation.” But that's not what it says. It simply says that one of the seven churches of Revelation (Philadelphia), has persevered through some severe trial or hardship already and because of that, God will protect them from the difficult days that are coming.

But protection does ***not necessarily*** mean removal. A fire suit and a roll cage protect race car drivers from the fiery effects and impact of a crash. They still go through the flames and the crash; they are just protected from the major effects of them. Therefore, for God to protect someone from something, does not prove He is removing them from it.

Remember Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They had to go **through** the fire. They were not removed from the fire. They were protected **IN** the fire (Daniel 3). Is it possible that we will be protected by God **IN** the fires of the tribulation instead of being snatched out of them? Keep reading to find out.

Compared to the persecuted church (which primarily believes the rapture will take place at the end of the tribulation), what has the church in the West really persevered through? I could see Jesus making the above statement to the church in Afghanistan, Pakistan, North Korea, China, or Somalia. That would make sense because they have really persevered through terrible hardships. Have we?

The church in the West has really persevered through very little. Yet, western evangelicals and Pentecostals (primarily the ones that believe in a pre-tribulation rapture) embrace this verse as a proof text for their position. They like to apply it to themselves. But does it really apply to us, or do we simply like it because it feeds our flesh? It feels nice to think God will remove us from the world before things get really bad. And that ***is*** something our itching ears (flesh) want to hear.

Let's contrast this with what Jesus said to the church of Laodicea. Imagine Him saying this to you. How would you feel if Jesus said this to you?

Revelation 3:15-17 I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

If we are honest, we'd have to admit that it would not feel good to have Jesus say that to us. But in truth, the church in the West is more like the church of Laodicea than we want to admit. This is not a popular verse because it doesn't appeal to our flesh. It is NOT what our ears want to hear! So, we choose not to use or apply it to ourselves. But the question we really need to ask is, "Does Jesus think this applies to us?"

The reason I'm showing you these verses is to point out that it is simply human nature to accept verses we like while avoiding verses we don't. That is how people end up teaching what itching ears WANT to hear instead of what they NEED to hear.

BONUS MATERIAL: I'll let you in on a little secret: if your spiritual input appeals to your flesh, then it's **not** from God because the goal of God in your life is to crucify your flesh, not to feed it! Look at these words of Jesus.

Luke 9:23 Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."

This is **death to self**, my friends. There is no middle ground. In the New Testament people are either a disciple of Jesus or they are lost! In the New Testament church there were NO Christians who were not disciples! This is critical to understand because Jesus says that to be his disciple (i.e., a saved follower destined for Heaven) it is critical that that person is taking up their cross DAILY! Jesus was crucified on a cross, and his hearers would have known what he meant by that statement. He meant, "live like you are on your way to your execution."

I'm telling you this because I care about your soul. Jesus' prescription for people to follow Him is that they must live every day as if they are on their way to their execution. You see, if you are the lord of your life, then Jesus isn't! But if you are living each day as if you are on your way to your execution, then you live each day with Jesus as your Lord and with nothing to lose. And a person with nothing to lose is dangerous to the enemy. Therefore, Jesus requires that His followers live with nothing to lose so they are dangerous to the devil.

Is the Rapture Biblical?

How many times is the word "rapture" in the English translation of the Bible? It is found exactly ZERO times. And you might be thinking, "Then why are you teaching about it if the word isn't found in the Bible?" That's a good question. Even though the word "rapture" isn't found in our English Bibles, the concept of the rapture **is there**.

The Greek word *harpazo*, which is the word that is used when someone or a group of people are caught up to Heaven or to some other place, is used thirteen times in the New Testament alone. So, this concept of being caught up or snatched away is VERY biblical.

PART 2

Looking at Revelation?

In this section we will look closely to see if the church is found in the book of Revelation, and we will discuss why that is important. Now, if you aren't familiar with the book of Revelation, you are not alone. Many people have been told by professional Christians not to read it. Others have read it once and didn't understand it, so they never read it again. Still (far too many) others have been told that they won't be here for the events of Revelation so they don't need to bother reading it. They simply assume it doesn't pertain to them. Therefore, if you haven't read Revelation recently, please consider reading it before reading this little book, or even better, read Revelation AS you read this book. Why not read each chapter in Revelation as I reference a passage from that chapter? I believe that is how you will get the most out of reading this book.

The other day our accountant showed up for work and he said to me, "I was listening to Christian radio on the way over here and (a well-known radio personality) said, 'The rapture takes place in Revelation 4:1 because the church isn't present in Revelation after that.'" Then, he looked me in the eye and asked, "Is that true?"

If I'm being totally honest, I could feel my blood pressure increase a little bit and I said, "That is a false, ignorant, and misleading statement." The radio preacher is telling people what they **want** to hear. He is NOT telling them the truth. Let's begin by looking at the verse he is quoting and see if he's correct.

Revelation 4:1b *Come up here and I will show you what must take place after this.*

Is there any way, in your mind, that this verse is talking about the rapture of all the believers on earth? John was caught up into Heaven about two thousand years ago and placed back on earth when the vision was done.

Why on earth would we think that it's acceptable to attach a future snatching away of the church to a specific event that actually happened to the apostle John around two thousand years ago?

Again, *harpazo* is the Greek word used here and it means "to snatch away," and as we've said, it is used thirteen times in the New Testament alone. Enoch, Elijah, Jesus, Philip, Paul, and John were all "snatched" away. And the church of Jesus will be snatched away one day in the future.

It is true that the **word** "church" is not found in the book of Revelation after chapter 3. But it is NOT true to say that the church isn't present in the rest of the book! **Other names** for the church are found all throughout the book of Revelation.

In fact, if I was doing a book report (remember those?) on the book of Revelation and someone were to ask me, "What is the theme of the book of Revelation?" I would say, "**The theme of the book of Revelation is the persecution of the followers of Christ during the tribulation!**"

Where is the Church in the Book of Revelation?

The body of Christ is actually seen throughout the entire book of Revelation.

Let's look at **all** the appearances of the church in the book of Revelation together. And let's keep count as we go.

Example 1

Revelation 6:11 Then a white robe was given to each of them (the Martyrs). And they were told to rest a little longer until the full number of their brothers and sisters—their fellow servants of Jesus who were to be martyred—had joined them.

All people who have ever lived, are in one of three places. They are either in Heaven, Hell, or they are alive on the earth. But a person can only be martyred from the earth. If you are in Heaven or Hell, martyrdom is not an option for you. It is something that can only happen to someone who is alive on the earth.

Again, the pre-tribulation position is that the church is gone after Rev. 4:1, but in this passage, we see potential martyrs on the earth **after** 4:1.

Keep in mind what they are given. The martyrs under the altar are given a white robe. More on that in a minute.

Here in 6:11 John is told that there are still more people that need to glorify God by dying a martyr's death and those people can only be in one place. They must still be alive on the earth! Otherwise, they are NOT potential martyrs.

Example #2

Notice this passage. This is a command that is spoken to four mighty angels that have been given power to harm the earth. But they are commanded to wait until something happens first.

Revelation 7:3-4a "Wait! Don't harm the land or the sea or the trees until we have placed the seal of God on the foreheads of his servants."⁴ And I heard how many were marked with the seal of God—144,000 were sealed from all the tribes of Israel.

Some people think that this passage indicates that only 144,000 people receive the seal of God and all of them are Jews. Others believe that verse 3 is referring to all the servants of God worldwide and that verse 4 is referring to a smaller subset of Jewish believers within the larger, innumerable, global number of His servants. So, this could be counted as 1 or 2 mentions of servants of God on the earth after Revelation 4:1.

I'm counting it as 2 because, to me, "his servants" seems to refer to ALL of his servants alive on earth at that time, and the 144,000 seems to refer to the number of Jewish people who are also servants of Jesus in the final days of this age.

If you think that it is referring to the same group of people and that only 144,000 will receive the seal of God, then simply subtract 1 from the end total of appearances of the followers of Christ we will see in Revelation.

This event takes place between the opening of the 6th and the 7th seal. When the 6th seal is opened, there will be a great earthquake, and these four angels will be given authority to harm the land and the sea and the trees. But they are commanded not to harm the land or the sea or the trees, until a seal is placed on the forehead of the servants of God. How can God's servants be sealed on the forehead if they have been raptured already? There are still servants of God present on the earth and they are not to be harmed when the land and the sea and the trees are harmed by those angels.

Example #3

We also see that 144,000 Jews are followers of Christ on the earth when this event takes place. Notice they haven't been removed from the earth yet either. They're simply sealed in the forehead and not to be harmed.

Revelation 7:9-10 After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they were shouting with a great roar, "Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!"

These people are in Heaven, right? We know this because they're in front of the throne and they're before the Lamb. That must be a scene in Heaven. And how do people get to heaven? Today people get to Heaven through death, right? And notice they are saying, "salvation comes from our God," so they are safe and in Heaven when this takes place. Now, let's look at where they came from and how they got there.

Example #4

*Revelation 7:13-14 Then one of the twenty-four elders asked me, "Who are these who are clothed in white? Where did they come from?" ¹⁴ And I said to him, "Sir, you are the one who knows." Then he said to me, "These are the ones who **died in the great tribulation**. They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and made them white.*

This is amazing! "These are the ones who **died in** the great tribulation." So, they made the journey to heaven **during** the great tribulation. And the only way to do that is through death! Also, they might be martyrs. They might be martyrs because they're wearing white robes and in Revelation 6:11 we saw that white robes were given to the martyrs. The Bible is crystal clear that followers of Christ will be killed during the tribulation.

Of course, people will also die of natural causes, and natural disasters during the tribulation. But the way all the members of this massive group got to Heaven was through death. Not through rapture. This means that there were more believers on the earth DURING the tribulation than could be counted. WOW!

I know that the pre-tribulation rapture position says these are "tribulation saints" who got saved after they realized they had missed the rapture. That idea was made popular by the *Left Behind* series of novels and movies, but it is pure speculation and not found in Scripture. The Bible never actually says

some people will be raptured and others will get saved after they realize they have missed the pre-tribulation rapture. There is **not** one single passage that shows the followers of Christ exiting the earth **before** the tribulation. It is simply wishful thinking that people **want** to be true.

Example #5

Here is another passage which indicates the followers of Jesus will be present on the earth during the tribulation:

Revelation 8:3-4 Then another angel with a gold incense burner came and stood at the altar. And a great amount of incense was given to him to mix with the prayers of God's people as an offering on the gold altar before the throne. ⁴The smoke of the incense, mixed with the prayers of God's holy people, ascended up to God from the altar where the angel had poured them out.

Here we see that people are still praying. And, as far as I can tell, people in Heaven don't pray, they just talk to God. People on earth pray. So, if the angel has the prayers of God's people to offer as an offering before the throne, this indicates there are still people on earth during the tribulation who are speaking to the Lord in prayer and have not yet been taken to Heaven. Right?

Example #6

Revelation 9:4 They were told not to harm the grass or plants or trees, but only the people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

This event definitely takes place during the tribulation! At this point, something like "locusts" come out of the bottomless pit to torment people. Notice who they are allowed to torment. Only people who **do not have** the seal of God on their forehead. Well, doesn't that imply that there are still people on the earth who **do have** the seal of God on their forehead? You bet it does.

Otherwise, it would say, "Don't harm the plant life, only harm the people." But that is not what it says. If the rapture had already taken place, then people with the seal of God on their forehead would not be present on earth either, right?

Example #7

Here is yet another example. This is a well-known passage. You may have heard it before. Often it is quoted on how to defeat the devil but in context, it is speaking of the church of Jesus Christ overcoming the devil **during** the tribulation.

Revelation 12:11 And they have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony. And they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die.

This is right after the devil and his angels are thrown down to earth. (Revelation 12:7-9) People who follow God must still be present on the earth at that time as well. In this verse, the followers of Christ overcome the devil by the blood of Christ and by the word of their testimony. How can the followers of Christ overcome the red dragon of Revelation if they are no longer here?

We also see that one of the ways the followers of Jesus can defeat the devil is to be willing to die rather than deny Christ. What can the devil do to someone who is willing to die for Jesus?

Does this describe you? Are you prepared to overcome the evil, Antichrist, and beast of the last days by the blood of Jesus, the word of your testimony, and by **not** loving your life in this world so much as to shy away from death? Are you willing to die for Jesus? If not, ask the Lord to strengthen you.

Example #8

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was angry at the woman and declared war against the rest of her children—all who keep God’s commandments and maintain their testimony for Jesus.

After the devil has been thrown down to earth (no longer operating in the third or second Heaven) he declares war on all the obedient followers of Christ. Who are still on the earth! How would it be possible for the devil to declare war on followers of Jesus if he is confined to the earth and Jesus’ followers have been raptured away to Heaven? If you are thinking, “That isn’t possible,” you would be correct!

Example #9

Revelation 13:7 and the beast was allowed to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And he was given authority to rule over every tribe and people and language and nation.

Here we see the beast (the satanic, Antichrist-led, world-dominating system) warring against and defeating the followers of Christ. The Antichrist is ruling over the nations of the world and defeating God’s holy people. That means God’s holy people are still living in and among all the nations of the world while they are being persecuted!

Is it possible that they are anywhere other than on the earth? The antichrist can’t wage war against people in Heaven and he’d have no reason to wage war against people in Hell. The only other option is that these faithful followers of Christ are still alive to be persecuted on the earth!

Example #10

Revelation 13:10 Anyone who is destined for prison will be taken to prison. Anyone destined to die by the sword will die by the sword. This means that God’s holy people must endure persecution patiently and remain faithful.

Two of the ways (there are others) the followers of Christ will suffer during the tribulation are through prison and the sword. Jesus’ followers are told to endure it patiently and remain faithful. How can the followers of Christ endure persecution faithfully if they aren’t here? And if the followers of Christ were raptured away seven chapters ago, who is this passage speaking about? Who are God’s holy people who endure persecution if the church has been raptured already?

What if this passage is speaking about us? What if you and I will still be here for this? Are you willing to endure persecution patiently for Christ? What if it means going to prison or meeting death through a sword? Will you endure that and remain faithful to Christ no matter what?

Example #11

Revelation 13:15 He was then permitted to give life to this statue so that it could speak. Then the statue of the beast commanded that anyone refusing to worship it must die.

Most people who refuse to worship the statue will be refusing because they worship Christ instead! Especially since this beast will be waging war on the saints of God and will be allowed to defeat them, right? We are not told that any other religion will be persecuted, only the saints. So, this passage indicates that a group of people will be resisting the Antichrist and refusing to worship him or his image. God's people must still be here. Otherwise, who is refusing to worship the statue?

Example #12

Revelation 14:12 This means that God's holy people must endure persecution patiently, obeying his commands and maintaining their faith in Jesus.

Again, God's holy people are still on the earth and God expects them (us) to endure persecution patiently while obeying Jesus and maintaining their (our) faith in Jesus. Will you patiently keep the faith while enduring persecution? Who is this verse speaking about if not the church?

Example #13

Revelation 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this down: Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, they are blessed indeed, for they will rest from their hard work; for their good deeds follow them!"

How is it possible for anyone to "die in the Lord" during the tribulation if all believers have been raptured? If all the followers of Jesus have been snatched away already, who is dying in the Lord? And if you are tempted to say, "That's the Tribulation Saints," I'd like to challenge you to consider that there may be a better answer than that. Could it be that the church has not been raptured and that's why we keep on seeing believers in the book of Revelation and interacting with the Antichrist?

Example #14

Revelation 15:2 I saw before me what seemed to be a glass sea mixed with fire. And on it stood all the people who had been victorious over the beast and his statue and the number representing his name. They were all holding harps that God had given them.

These people are in Heaven and they're standing on a glass sea mixed with fire. Sounds kind of cool. I'm looking forward to that myself. And it also says, they were victorious over the beast. So how do believers get to Heaven who are victorious over the beast if the believers will never encounter the beast? Again, the only way to get to heaven during the tribulation is through death. So, these are the people who refused to worship the beast or his statue and, as a result, the beast sent them to Heaven through death.

We read the Bible so that we know what it says, and hopefully, we apply that to our lives. But it is also extremely important to recognize what it does not say. For example, I'd like to show you what's missing from our discussion!

So far, we've seen people enduring persecution for the sake of Christ; we've seen a massive crowd in Heaven of people who died during the great tribulation but what have we NOT seen? We have not seen any reference to a large group of believers that was raptured from the earth to Heaven before the persecution of the tribulation began. That group is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible! I challenge you, as you read Scripture from this day forward, to ask the Lord what it is not saying as well as what it is. And keep looking for any mention of the raptured church. I do not think you will find it.

Example #15

Revelation 16:15 "Look, I will come as unexpectedly as a thief! Blessed are all who are watching for me, who keep their clothing ready so they will not have to walk around naked and ashamed."

This verse is literally sandwiched in between the 6th and 7th Bowls of wrath! Just 2 verses later we read the words, "IT IS FINISHED" which is a declaration of the final end of this age!

How can people be watching for Jesus when He comes as unexpectedly as a thief right before the 7th bowl of wrath if they've already been snatched away to paradise? They can't! In truth, His followers are still on the earth watching for Him right up until He returns.

Example #16

Revelation 17:6 *I could see that she (Mystery Babylon) was drunk—drunk with the blood of God's holy people who were witnesses for Jesus. I stared at her in complete amazement.*

Mystery Babylon is a last days, world power that will corrupt the whole world, make the merchants of the world wealthy, and will kill the followers of Jesus along with many other deeds. You can read all about this entity in Revelation 17 and 18.

How could Mystery Babylon spill the blood of God's holy people during the tribulation (I'll admit I'm assuming this happens during the tribulation) if they aren't here to have their blood shed? This obviously takes place after Revelation 4:1. If it takes place during the last days, then it hasn't happened yet. So, again, when anyone tells you that the rapture could happen at any moment, ask them who the saints are that Mystery Babylon will kill if all believers on earth have been snatched away already?

Example #17

Revelation 18:4 *Then I heard another voice calling from heaven, "Come away from her, my people. Do not take part in her sins, or you will be punished with her."*

At some point during the last days, Mystery Babylon is going to be destroyed on a single day and in one hour. Yet, in this passage, we see God telling His people to come out of her. We know for sure that it hasn't happened yet, and many people believe we're living in the last days now. We know for sure that this "coming out of her" will happen during the last days and that it will happen either before or during

the tribulation. (Don't be surprised if this event is the kickoff of the tribulation.) And once again, this verse is in Revelation after 4:1.

Example #18

Revelation 18:20 Rejoice over her fate, O heaven and people of God and apostles and prophets! For at last God has judged her for your sakes.

Isn't that interesting? The apostles, prophets, and the other people of God are told to rejoice at the fate of Mystery Babylon along with Heaven. These people of God must not be in Heaven, because if they were, it would simply say, "Rejoice O Heaven." But that's not what it says, it says Heaven **and** God's people and apostles and prophets. And since they aren't in Heaven, and they certainly aren't in hell, the only other option is that they are still here on the earth and told to rejoice when they see the destruction of Mystery Babylon.

Example #19

Revelation 18:24 In your streets flowed the blood of the prophets and of God's holy people and the blood of people slaughtered all over the world.

Here we see that Mystery Babylon is responsible for shedding the blood of the prophets and God's holy people, not only in her own streets, but also all over the world, during the last days and quite possibly during the tribulation. So again, we see God's holy people present on the earth and having their blood shed in the book of Revelation after chapter 4.

Do you think these Holy people who have been slaughtered all over the world in the above passage are not you and me? Have you and I been conditioned to read these verses and somehow think that they don't apply to us? If so, could this be because we've been told that we will have been raptured already? What if that isn't what happens? Will you have the strength to endure the tribulation, resist the Antichrist, and refuse his mark to the point of death if that is what God requires of you?

Here are the last passages in Revelation that clearly show the presence of the followers of Christ on the earth during the events of this book:

Example #20

Revelation 19:2 *His judgments are true and just. He has punished the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality. He has avenged the murder of his servants.*

How is it possible that Jesus would punish the great prostitute for murdering His servants if His servants were no longer here to be murdered?

Example #21

Revelation 20:4b *And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony about Jesus and for proclaiming the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his statue, nor accepted his*

mark on their foreheads or their hands. They all came to life again, and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

How can people be beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus if they have been raptured already? How can they refuse to worship the beast, or its image and refuse to take the mark of the beast if they're no longer here? If all the believers on earth have been raptured by this point, who are these people who are being beheaded for refusing to worship the beast or its image and are refusing to take the mark? Did you know that the pre-tribulation rapture position tells believers that they will never even meet the Antichrist and that they will never be faced with the choice of taking the mark of the beast or not?

Example #22

Revelation 22:7 "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed are those who obey the words of prophecy written in this book."

What does it mean to obey the prophecy in this book? Obviously, Jesus is talking about the book of Revelation because the entire Bible had not yet been compiled and the books were still individual books when He made this statement. Therefore, what does it mean to obey the prophecies in the book of Revelation? And who is required to obey them? Think about what we just read. What are all the things that the saints are expected to obey that are found in the book of Revelation?

In a nutshell, the followers of Christ in Revelation are expected to remain strong and faithful and patiently endure suffering, even unto death, under the most severe persecution imaginable DURING the tribulation!

So, if the book of Revelation is about the time of the end of this age, how in the world can the people of God obey the commands written in this book if the people of God are not here during the events prophesied in this book!?

I don't know about you, but I want to receive all the blessings that God has promised me, so as the opportunities arise, I will strive (in the power of the Holy Spirit) to obey the words of this book. How about you?

That is the last instance of followers of Christ present on the earth throughout the book of Revelation! And we end up with a grand total of twenty-two (22) examples.

After looking at all these passages, do you still have any doubt that the followers of Jesus (the church) will be present on earth all the way through the events of the book of Revelation? I sure hope not.

So, the next time you hear someone say that the church isn't found in Revelation, lovingly inform them that the body of Christ is actually found throughout the entire book of Revelation and seen twenty-two times after chapter 4:1. And make sure they get a copy of this book so they have a record for themselves.

My friends, if it was just one or two times, we were expected to believe that all these followers of Christ found in the book of revelation are "tribulation saints" that supposedly get saved after the rapture because they realize they missed the rapture, I could maybe buy it.

But isn't it difficult to believe that **all** twenty-two examples of the church on earth during the events of the book of Revelation are of baby believers who came to Christ during the tribulation! It's too much for me to swallow! I cannot accept it, can you?

No Tribulation Saints?

Not only that but the Bible does not contain one verse about "tribulation saints." The bible is silent on the topic. Nowhere does the bible mention a group of people coming to faith in Christ after missing a pre-trib rapture. Therefore, I do not think it is too strong of language to say that the concept of "tribulation saints" is extra-biblical if not outright un-biblical!

The pre-tribulation rapture camp expects you and I to believe that every single time (all twenty-two times) we see believers present on the earth in the book of Revelation, that it is actually these supposed "tribulation saints" and **not** you and me. That is dangerous thinking!

It is dangerous because it can lull people into complacency and a false sense of security. Why would anyone prepare for a difficulty they think they'll never face? Why prepare for a battle you'll never fight? On the other hand, why would you **not** get ready for the greatest trouble the world has ever seen now that you know beyond any doubt that you and I (the church) **will** be here to experience those days of tribulation?

We have just seen the followers of God present during the last days and tribulation twenty-two times in Revelation alone and there are many more instances than that in the entire Bible. Now that we know the rapture does NOT take place at Revelation 4:1, let's look at some passages that indicate when the rapture WILL take place.

PART 3

What does Daniel say?

In this section we will look at what the books of Daniel, 1 Corinthians, and 1 and 2 Thesalonians have to say about the timing of the rapture. And we will wrap up this section by looking at the ultimate authority, Jesus Christ Himself, and what He has to say about the timing of the rapture.

Jesus Receives the Kingdom

Daniel 7:13-14 As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into His presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey Him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed.

What Daniel saw in this vision actually took place sometime between Jesus' crucifixion and Jesus giving the Great Commission. Remember that at the start of Jesus ministry, the devil tempted Jesus. The Devil offered Jesus all the Kingdoms of the world which, at that time, he had authority over. (See Luke 4:4-7.)

Then, at the great commission, Jesus said, "All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to Me." (Matthew 28:18) Notice how He says that in the past tense? You see, His Kingdom wasn't officially launched until after He died and rose from the dead. He needed to overcome death first!

Pay attention to the characters in this passage. We see the Son of Man. That's Jesus Christ. He was led, probably by angels, into the presence of the Ancient One, that's God the Father. Then, God the Father gives Him (Jesus) authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world. It is after God has given Him all this authority in Heaven and on Earth that He comes back to His disciples and tells them that they should go and make disciples of all nations because He has been given all authority.

We Receive a Kingdom.

Daniel 7:18 "But in the end, the holy people of the Most High will be given the kingdom, and they will rule forever and ever."

Wait a minute, the prior verse said, "His Kingdom will never end," but this verse says that **we** will rule forever. So, which is it? Does Jesus rule, or do we rule? The answer is "**Yes.**" It is both! He rules **and** we rule. Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords! During this eternal Kingdom, the little kings, and the little lords that He is King and Lord over are you and me. Because we are the holy people of the Most High and we will rule forever and ever with Jesus and under His perfect and almighty direction!

(Additionally, 2 Timothy 2:12a says, "If we endure hardship, we will reign with Him." So, what about those who never endure any hardship for Him? Do you think they get to reign with him too?) I wouldn't count on it.

Also notice in the Daniel passage above that we are given a hint of the timing of when this will happen. It says, "in the end." It does not say, "near the end." It does not say, "sometime after the

rapture.” It does not say, “right before the tribulation.” It says, “***in the end***” we will “be given” the Kingdom to rule forever and ever. And the phrase, “in the end” usually means at or even after the end.

The End is the only time we can get the kingdom because prior to that the antichrist will be allowed to rule the world for a short time. We can’t receive the kingdom until his time is over.

Just use it in a sentence and you will see what I mean. People say, “in the end, everything worked out alright.” So (at least in English) that phrase is used after the fact, looking back on something that has already happened and stating how it turned out.

Therefore, from this passage, it sounds like Jesus will rule us, while we rule the world with Him as our Lord for 1000 years! Won’t that be awesome? Are you looking forward to it? I know I am!

The little horn waging war until?

Daniel 7:21-22 As I watched, this horn was waging war against God’s holy people and was defeating them, ²²until the Ancient One—the Most High—came and judged in favor of His holy people. Then the time arrived for the holy people to take over the kingdom.

Again, the pre-tribulation position states that God’s holy people will never even meet the Antichrist. If that’s true, then who are these holy people of God who are being defeated by the little horn?

You may already know that the little horn is the Antichrist. Daniel 7 (take a few minutes and read the whole chapter yourself) makes it clear that he will be the final world ruler, and he rises to power out of the final beast system which is the final human-led, world government. The antichrist will rule for 7 years right before the beginning of the 1000-year rule of Jesus on the earth! In the above passage, the Antichrist is waging war against God’s holy people and defeating them **until** something happens to stop him.

Try to use the word “until” in a sentence. I sleep **until** I wake up. Or I eat **until** I’m full. I used to tell my children, “Play outside **until** the streetlights come on.” Notice that there is no time gap between the first and second event when “until” is used in this way. The word **until** (when used as a conjunction) is a word that joins two events with no time passing in between them.

This portion of the bible was written in Aramaic because Daniel was living in exile in Babylon where they spoke Aramaic. In the original language, we will find the same thing. We see that one thing is going on (God’s people being warred against and defeated) right up to the moment the Ancient One (Almighty God) puts a stop to it. No time passes between the two events!

Since it says the little horn, (which is the Antichrist) will be waging war against God’s holy people and defeating them **until** the Ancient One stops him; that means there’s no gap in between those two events. The Antichrist will wage war against God’s holy people (who are still present on the earth) and defeat them right up until the moment the Ancient of Days (Almighty God the Father) takes the kingdom from the Antichrist and hands it to those he was persecuting (God’s holy people).

Bully on the Playground

Picturing this scene in my mind reminds me of the bully on the school playground beating up on the smaller and weaker kids **until** the principal sends the vice-principal and the teachers and stops the bullies. The bullies go to detention and the playground is given back to the kids who were being bullied.

There is never really any question who's ultimately in charge of the playground (the principal is) but for a short window of time, the bullies think they are in charge. In the same way, our Heavenly Father is the supreme authority over this world (our playground) but for a brief time the devil, through the Antichrist, will think and act as if he is in charge.

The truth is that the Antichrist will never really be in charge even though it may appear that he is. He's more like a dog on a chain, and he only gets the freedom that Almighty God allows him to have, not one link more.

We will see God!

When Jesus returns, He will be being sent by the Father. Scripture reveals we will see Him at the right hand of His Father. That means that our heavenly Father, God almighty, will be revealed to us at the return of Christ! And I think that's awesome! Our Father in Heaven loves us so much and is so compassionate that He will personally stop the persecution of his faithful servants by the Antichrist! That is so wonderful and amazing to realize!

Notice what it says in this passage.

Mark 14:62b. Jesus said, "...you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven."

We will see, God the Father on His throne with Jesus at His right hand. Then Jesus along with Heaven's armies of angels will come and take the playground (world) back from the bullies (Antichrist and his followers) and give it to the Holy people of God. I can't wait.

God's Bait and Switch

Daniel 7:25-27 "He (the Antichrist) will defy the Most High and oppress the holy people of the Most High. He will try to change their sacred festivals and laws, and they will be placed under his control for a time, times, and half a time. (That is 3 ½ years).

²⁶ "But then the court will pass judgment, and all his power will be taken away and completely destroyed. ²⁷ Then the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be given to the holy people of the Most High. His (Jesus') kingdom will last forever, and all rulers (you and I) will serve and obey Him."

Notice that it says they (God's people) will be **placed** under his control. That means someone does the placing. If you think about it, the only being in the universe who has the power, ability, and authority to place God's holy people under the control of the Antichrist is God himself. You can't; others can't; even the devil can't. Only God can do that. But why would God allow the Antichrist to have control over His holy people and defeat them for 3 1/2 years? You're about to find out. There is a good purpose for it. God doesn't do anything without a good reason.

The pre-tribulation rapture position states that today's followers of Christ are never going to meet the Antichrist. The idea is that all followers of Christ are going to be raptured out of the world before the Antichrist appears. They say that the "holy people of God" mentioned here are "tribulation saints." The belief is that "God's holy people" mentioned in this passage must be a new crop of baby believers who get saved after they realize they have missed the pre-tribulation rapture.

My friends, the Bible simply just doesn't support that position! I cannot find even one verse that says or even implies that an entire second crop of saints will arise after a pre-tribulation rapture and that those brand-new baby saints will be the holy people of the Most High who will stand strong and withstand the Antichrist! Would God remove the spiritual parents only to leave the babies to go through the tribulation? I don't think so.

Abomination of Desolation

Daniel 9:27 The ruler (Antichrist) will make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven, but after half this time (3 ½ years), he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. And as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration, until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured out on him.

This verse is talking about the same event Paul is talking about in 2 Thessalonians when he talks about the man of lawlessness setting up the object of desecration in the temple and declaring himself to be God. (We'll get to that in a bit.)

What have we learned from Daniel so far?

Daniel 7:25 told us that the Antichrist will be given control over God's holy people for 3 1/2 years. Then here, in Daniel 9, we see him make a seven-year treaty (probably with the people of Israel because it seems to involve the Jewish temple). And after half of this time (3 1/2 years) he (the Antichrist) breaks the treaty and puts an end to all worship. He also sets up his object that causes desecration.

The breaking of the treaty and the setting up of the sacrilegious object is the event that signals the beginning of the persecution of the saints and the second half of the tribulation because it clearly states that it lasts only for 3 1/2 years. And we have just seen that the persecution of, and the waging war against, the people of God ends when God personally puts an end to it after just 3 ½ years.

The Great Tribulation

Now notice what the angels say about God's protection of the Jewish followers of Christ during the time of the Great Tribulation.

*Daniel 12:1 "At that time Michael, the archangel who stands guard over your nation (the Jews), will arise. Then there will be a time of anguish greater than any since nations first came into existence. But at that time every one of **your people** whose name is written in the book will be rescued."*

Here we see an angel telling Daniel that there's going to be a time of greater anguish than ever before in history. That's the great tribulation but it also says, "at that time every one of your **(Daniel's)**

people whose name is written in the book will be rescued.” And who were/are Daniel’s people? They are the Jews, or the people of Israel today.

I have heard it said this verse means the Jews are going to be raptured and the gentiles won’t be, but that's not what it says. It simply says that they're going to be rescued (protected maybe), it does not say removed.

I wonder if this is the same event John is talking about in Revelation 12:14. Let’s read it so you can decide for yourself.

Revelation 12:14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time (3 ½ years), out of the serpent’s reach.

The woman in this verse represents the nation of Israel. The people of Israel are the Jewish people and are the same nationality as Daniel was. Also notice that she (Jewish believers) is taken to the wilderness for 3 1/2 years. Isn’t that interesting?

The wilderness is not Heaven. And Heaven is not the wilderness. So, this is NOT describing the rapture, where she would be taken to heaven to be with the Lord forever, is it? And it says they are “out of the serpent’s reach,” so they’re somewhere on the earth where the devil can't get at them because they are protected in the wilderness.

The Shattering?

Daniel 12:7b “It will go on for a time, times, and half a time. When the shattering of the holy people has finally come to an end, all these things will have happened.”

What do you think of when you hear the word “shattering”? It sounds like persecution doesn’t it. And when the persecution (shattering) of God's people ends, **all these things** will have taken place. Therefore, we can clearly see the holy people of God will be present on the earth until the very end of this age. If not, who are these holy people who are being shattered right up until the very end of the age?

We know this is true because Daniel’s visions contain details that take us right up to the return of Christ! And if the persecution of God’s people doesn’t end until all of Daniel’s visions have come to pass then there must still be Christ followers for the Antichrist to persecute on the earth right up until everything in the book of Daniel has happened. Right up until...the end of this age!

Rocky IV

As I think about what’s happening here, it reminds me of a scene from *Rocky 4* where Ivan Drago looks down at Rocky and says, “I must break you.” And Rocky looks up at him and says, “Go for it.” Why was Rocky able to withstand the bigger and stronger opponent? It was because Rocky had prepared himself by getting into fantastic physical shape. He was in such a good mental and physical condition that the attempted “breaking” or “shattering” by Ivan Drago was not enough to defeat Rocky.

In a similar way, if we get ourselves into top physical, spiritual, and emotional shape through the reading of the Bible, prayer, fellowship, and the application of the Word—doing, **actually doing**, what it says—then the shattering the Antichrist will attempt to inflict on the saints will not be enough to defeat them. Those of us who are firmly rooted in and grounded in Christ will be ready for what’s coming. May we never forget that our strength comes from the Lord! And **not** from our own abilities, preparedness, guns and ammo, or any other human strategies.

It's not wrong to prepare for the difficult days ahead. It's wrong to trust in your preparations instead of trusting in God!

Refiners Fire

Why would God allow this shattering of his holy ones anyway? Why would our loving heavenly Father and our eternal bridegroom, Jesus, allow the saints, His bride, to be defeated and shattered by the antichrist? Seems backwards, doesn't it?

To get an idea as to why God would allow it, let's read on in Daniel 12.

Daniel 12:10 Many will be purified, cleansed, and refined by these trials. But the wicked will continue in their wickedness, and none of them will understand. Only those who are wise will know what it means."

So, what if the purification, cleansing, and refining of the saints is God's way of making the Bride of Christ spotless, pure, clean, and right before the wedding?

What kind of a bride does Jesus want? What kind of a bride does our Heavenly Father want for His Son?

Ephesians 5:26-27 . . . to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. ²⁷He did this to present her to Himself as a glorious church, without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.

Do you see it? The shattering needs to happen! Jesus won't marry an unclean, impure bride.

My friends, this thing we call the church today is far from a spotless bride. If we are honest, we'll have to admit that the global church is in great need of some divine purification. I believe THAT is why God is going to allow this shattering.

Think of the last wedding you attended. Picture how the bride looked. She looked her best, didn't she? Hair done just right, makeup perfect, stunning fingernails, beautiful dress, awesome footwear, flowers in her hair, right? And everyone in attendance knows that it took hours (or months) to get her that "put-together" for one of the most important days of her life. And that is how it should be. She has put herself through trials and difficulties to be ready for this important. Leading up to this day, she's probably been exercising, eating right, or fasting.

Now imagine yourself at that same wedding, but the ceremony begins late because the bride arrives an hour late. Then, when she finally arrives, she's in her sweatpants, her hair looks like a rats-nest, she hasn't showered, makeup smeared from the night before, she's hung over and apologizes by saying, "Sorry everyone, I overslept because I stayed up all night partying with my old boyfriend." How

would you feel at that moment? Wouldn't you be tempted to get up and leave? You might seriously consider returning your gift, right? Of course, you would. And that is because you'd feel disrespected. You'd feel like, "If she isn't taking this wedding seriously, then why should I?" Am I right?

So, then the question is, "How seriously are we, the body of Christ, taking our fast-approaching, wedding where Jesus is the groom, and we are the bride? Are we willing to submit ourselves to the Father's beauty treatments (whatever they may be) in order to become the bride, He requires us to be for His Son?

In the last passage from Daniel, I noticed there are two groups of people mentioned. There are those who are being purified, refined, and cleansed and there are also the wicked. And it says the wise will know what it means but the wicked will just continue being wicked.

Oh Lord, give us wisdom. Make us wise and purify, cleanse, and refine us and make us your spotless bride. And Father, please give us the grace and mercy to submit to the process of becoming a bride worthy of Your Son. Amen.

Could it be The Wrath of God?

We all know that God is a God of love, but He also is a God of justice, and He does punish and reserve wrath for the wicked who refuse to submit to Him and obey Him. Consider the meaning of this passage from Daniel 12.

Daniel 12:11-12 From the time the daily sacrifice is stopped and the sacrilegious object that causes desecration is set up to be worshiped, there will be 1,290 days. ¹² And blessed are those who wait and remain until the end of the 1,335 days!

Jesus references this passage in Matthew 24:15 when he tells his disciples that the day will come when they see this object set up in the temple. This is significant because if Jesus refers to anything that is written in the Old Testament, it is generally considered authoritative. I mention this because if Daniel says it and then Jesus mentions it as a real event that will take place in the future, we can be 100% certain that the day is still in our future when this abomination will be set up and disciples of Jesus will still be present on the earth (not yet raptured) to see it with their own eyes.

Let's take a closer look at the numbers. 1290 days divided by 365 days equals 3.5 years which is the second half of the tribulation. That's the same as the "time, times and half a time" that Daniel mentions earlier. So, what is the significance of the 1335 days? Have you ever wondered why there is a difference in the number of days at the end of this age?

Just a Theory

If we subtract 1290 from 1335, we get forty-five. That's 45 extra days between the end of that abominable worship and the very, very end of this age. Notice in verse twelve that believers (those blessed by God) are still here on the earth until the **very** end of the 1335 days. It's impossible to be blessed for REMAINING TO THE END if we are raptured before the end!

This means that those blessed believers have not been raptured. I get the impression that we are supposed to try and remain until the end. I say that because it says that God will bless you if you do.

Also, notice that the blessing of God accompanies remaining until the end. and NOT getting snatched out early.

But what is happening during these final 45 days?

Let's examine a couple of other passages that may shed some light on this for us.

Not Appointed to Wrath

1 Thessalonians 5:9 says, *"For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Ok, so you and I (and all other believers in Jesus) will NOT experience the wrath of God during the tribulation. But that does not mean that we will not be on the earth during the tribulation.

Lately, the pre-tribulation rapture teachers are saying that the entire 7-year tribulation period IS the wrath of God. But is that what the Bible says? No, it is not. The Bible says there will be seven seals opened then, seven trumpets blown, and then, at the **end** of the tribulation, the seven bowls of the wrath of God will be poured out on the entire earth.

Therefore, I would like you to consider a possibility. What if the seven bowls of the wrath of God are going to be poured out on the earth **during** those final 45 days and AFTER the 3 ½ years of persecution? What if the wrath isn't part of the 7-year tribulation at all? Could the bowls of wrath be poured out after the tribulation?

Jesus even alludes to this in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 when He says, "After the tribulation" (NKJV) and then gives a list of things that will happen AFTER the tribulation. Wow, that's mind blowing to me. I used to think that Jesus return happened right at the end of the tribulation but now I'm seeing a few things that happen between the end of the tribulation and the physical return of Jesus.

Revelation is clear that there will be seven bowls of the wrath of God poured out on the earth **after** the last trumpet is blown. Isn't that interesting? The account of the wrath of God begins in Revelation 15:7 and continues through all of Revelation 16. Here is a summary:

The wrath

The seven angels were given seven golden bowls, filled with the wrath of God and poured them out in quick succession:

1. Ugly, festering sores will break out on those who have taken the mark of the beast. (How long might that take?)
2. Oceans turn to blood and everything in them dies. (In Egypt, in the book of Exodus, it was instant.)
3. All rivers and springs (fresh water) become blood. (Also instant in Egypt.)

Remember the Old Testament story?

Exodus 7:20 *So Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD commanded them. As Pharaoh and all of his officials watched, Aaron raised his staff and struck the water of the Nile. **Suddenly**, the whole river turned to blood!*

So, if it happened suddenly then, don't you think there is a possibility it could happen suddenly in the future? Remember, this all happens **after** trumpet #7. And trumpet #7 is when the beginning of the Kingdom of Jesus is declared.

House Cleaning

It occurs to me that historically, when a new king or kingdom takes over another kingdom, the first thing they do is clean house. It is quite common for them to eliminate all of their enemies and anyone who would undermine or oppose their authority and rule and reign. And it appears to me that Jesus might do the same thing. He will be declared King at the last trumpet and then He will send His angels to purge the earth of everyone who is opposed to His rule. (see Matthew 13:41)

Again, He will be declared King when the last trumpet is blown, but after the last (seventh) trumpet comes the time of the seven bowls of God's wrath. The temple in Heaven will be filled with smoke, (like maybe our loving, heavenly Father doesn't enjoy watching His creation be harmed by His wrath) and then, the wrath of God is poured out on the earth.

But the rapture (rapid departure of the true followers of Jesus) still will not have happened even when the bowls of wrath are poured out. Don't worry, Paul and Jesus tell us exactly when the rapture will happen. (More on that in a minute). So, if the followers of Jesus still haven't been raptured but they won't experience God's wrath, where are they and what are they doing during this time of God's wrath being poured out on the whole earth?

The Wrath Continued

How long do you think it will take for all seven bowls of wrath to be poured out? Could it happen in 45 days? Here are the rest of the bowls of wrath as seen in Revelation 16.

4. Sun gets so intense it scorches people. (Right before it goes out.) This is serious global warming!
5. The beast's kingdom will be plunged into darkness. (Sun and moon go out?) Jesus predicts this in Matthew 24:29.
6. Euphrates River dries up to make way for the kings from the east to attack Jerusalem. (Already happening.)
7. The worst earthquake in human history will strike the whole earth, plus 100lb hailstones will fall on people. (Won't this take an hour or less?)

How long would all this take? How long is an earthquake? How about a hailstorm? Could this wrath fit into 45 days? I can imagine all 7 bowls fitting into a week! By my estimation, all seven bowls of the wrath of God could easily fit into 45 days.

Euphrates River drying up?

I could insert hundreds of pictures of the Euphrates River drying up, but instead of doing that, I think it is better for you to do your own research.

If you are wondering if the Euphrates River is really drying up right now, pause your reading for a second and type the words, "Euphrates River drying up" into your favorite search engine, click on "images," and see for yourself.

According to Revelation 16:12, the day is coming when it will be dried up completely to allow armies from east of Jerusalem can come and invade Israel. One report I saw estimated that it will be totally dry by 2029.

The Hiding

Let me show you an obscure verse from Isaiah that may shed some light on where the remaining followers of Jesus Christ might be and what they could be doing, during the time of the wrath of God being poured out on the earth.

Some have suggested that this verse is only speaking of the children of Israel but since the verses surrounding it speak of the entire world, I think it is possible that it's referring to all God's people worldwide. Here is the verse. Please read it in context and decide for yourself.

Isaiah 26:20 NIV "Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until His wrath has passed by."

According to this passage how long does God's wrath last? That's right, "a little while." Could it be 45 days? You bet it could. In the light of the thousands of years of history of the world, 45 days is a **very** little while.

I don't know about you, but in my mind seven years (the length of the tribulation) or even 3 1/2 years (the length of time that Antichrist will be allowed to wage war against the saints and defeat them) is longer than a "little while." But here in Isaiah, God's people are told to hide themselves for "a little while" so that the time of the wrath of God can pass by and not harm them. How could anybody stay hidden away in a room, or a cave, or a silo, or a basement for several years? But 45 days? Just a month and a half? It wouldn't be fun, but it would be possible.

If you think you are one of the blessed people that God will sustain on this earth until the end of the end of the age, then you might want to begin praying about where you will hunker down and hide yourself and your loved ones in "YOUR room" with enough food and water to make it through those 45 days. I'm serious! God is not playing games here. This is a matter for prayer because all your days were ordained before one of them came into being. But if you get a sense that you will be blessed to have the privilege of remaining until the end, then YOU will need a "room" in which to hide yourself until the wrath is over. Remember, this is just my theory but it's worth considering.

Faith on Earth

Jesus asked this question, "When the son of man returns, will He find faith on the earth?" And my answer is a resounding, "YES," if you and I and others like us prayerfully seek the Lord about how He wants us to make preparations to "hide ourselves" for the time of wrath. Also notice that it does not say, "do nothing and I will hide you." Nope, it says, "hide yourselves" in "your room" which implies that it is a work that we must do, and that God will not do for us.

PART 4

What does Paul say?

Paul is very clear, not only that the rapture will happen, but also WHEN it will happen. Let's start by looking at his first letter to the Corinthian church.

The Last Trumpet

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! ⁵² It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed.

How long does it say it will take for us to be transformed into our eternal bodies? Just a moment, right? Just as long as it takes to blink your eyes. When will it happen? It clearly says it will happen **when the last trumpet is blown!**

What else happens on that day? The dead in Christ will rise to eternal life! Don't miss this! Paul clearly says that **the believers who are still alive on the earth are going to be transformed (that is The Rapture) on the same day as resurrection day which is also the same day that the last trumpet sounds!**

Notice also, that Paul uses the word "**we**" three times. That is extremely significant because it indicates that Paul included himself among those who could possibly still be alive on the earth when the last trumpet is blown. Paul thought he could still be here on resurrection day.

Stated another way, Paul did not think there was any possibility he would be removed from the earth **before** the resurrection of the dead, which takes place at the last trumpet! Paul knew he was not going to be raptured before the resurrection of the dead. Do you know that? Are you aware of the fact that you will not be removed from this earth until the dead in Christ rise and the last trumpet sounds? Most Christian church members I meet are not.

So, when does the Bible say the last trumpet will be blown? We clearly see it in Revelation 11. Let's see what it says and what takes place at that moment!

Jesus' Kingdom Begins!

Revelation 11:15 Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices shouting in Heaven: "The world has now become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever."

This is the last trumpet that is ever mentioned in the Bible, and it signifies what? That God the Father (Our Lord) and Jesus' ("His Christ") kingdom has begun on this earth! This means that the kingdoms of men and the kingdom of the devil will end, and God's kingdom will begin. All that's left to do after this last trumpet is a little housecleaning. Maybe what happens between the last trumpet and

the physical return of Christ to the earth will be the pouring out of the seven bowls of God's wrath which we listed earlier.

Are there two sets of trumpets? Every pre-tribber I've ever talked to about this trumpet issue has told me, "There must be two sets of trumpets." They say that Paul could not have known about these trumpets because Paul wrote about this "last trumpet" before John wrote about the seven trumpets of Revelation. Of course, this is possible, but if that's true, where and what is the other set of trumpets? Isn't it also possible that Paul was informed about these last trumpets before John learned about them? What if Paul was told about these trumpets during his visit to Heaven?

Paul's Personal Rapture

Look at what Paul said in his second letter to the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 12:4 I was caught up to paradise and heard things so astounding that they cannot be expressed in words, things no human is allowed to tell.

Both Paul and John visited Heaven. Both of them witnessed amazing things. Paul had his experience before John did. The difference between the two is that Paul was not allowed to tell what he heard and saw. On the other hand, John was directed to write down what he heard and saw. Do you think it is correct to assume that the Lord didn't reveal the same things to Paul as He did to John? Why would we think Paul hadn't been told about the same set of seven trumpets that John wrote about?

Be honest with yourself right now. Is it possible that people simply want the rapture to take place before the great tribulation because it feeds their flesh? Could it be that the church has invented a theology that caters to that desire? And might that be because humans prefer ease and comfort over hardship and difficulty? Of course. Hardship is never pleasant, and it is contrary to human nature to welcome or to embrace suffering. But in Christ we are empowered to not only endure suffering but to rejoice at being counted worthy to suffer for Him (Acts 5:41).

What Paul told Thessalonians.

Let's look at his first letter to the Thessalonians to see what we can learn.

The Dead in Christ Rise First!

*1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 We tell you this directly from the Lord: **We** who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet Him ahead of those who have died. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will come down from Heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. ¹⁷ Then, together with them, **we** who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever.*

This is **not** Paul's opinion! He is telling us what he received directly from God! Therefore, we have no right to debate or to disagree with this teaching. If we do that, we are arguing with God.

Never argue with God; you can't win anyway!

So, Paul is literally saying, “We will **not** get raptured before the believers who have died rise from the dead.” Again, the pre-tribulation rapture position says that the rapture could happen at any moment. But how is that possible if “We...will **not** meet Him ahead of those who have died?” Wouldn’t you agree that it is safer to believe what God says instead of what man says? And in this passage, Paul is telling us that the Lord says that we will **NOT** meet God (i.e., be raptured) **BEFORE** those who died in Christ ahead of us.

Notice the very clear order of events here. **First**, the dead in Christ rise from the dead; **then**, we are raptured (the “caught up” of verse 17 is the word *harpazo* in the Greek and is the event commonly referred to as “the rapture”) together with them; and **then**, we will be eternally with Jesus. This verse makes it crystal clear that there is absolutely **no way** we will be caught up to God (raptured) before the resurrection of the dead in Christ!

What do the pre-tribulation rapture proponents say? I was discussing this with a pre-tribber in Africa who told me that this passage is speaking of the “second rapture.” I thought, “**Are you serious?** Now you need to invent a second rapture to prop up your position? Now you expect people to believe that there are going to be two raptures (one before, and one after the tribulation)? It seems that they have to believe that in order to create a space in time for the first rapture to take place. The first rapture that the Bible **never** mentions by the way?” There seems to be no limit to the creativity of the Pre-trib folks to try and make the bible say something it just doesn’t say.

Not ONE Passage!

Recently, I was on the phone with a pastor friend who used to work in a denomination that very strongly believes in the pre-tribulation rapture position. I asked this pastor if they would be willing to provide me with a list of the verses that indicate that the rapture will happen before the tribulation. They replied, “I can’t provide you with that list, Kurt.” I was surprised and a little taken aback, so I asked, “Why not?” And they responded, “I can’t provide you with a list of pre-tribulation Bible verses because I don’t believe there are any.” **Wow!** Let that sink in for a moment. What if this pastor is right? What if there are NO passages that actually describe a pre-tribulation rapture?

Do you think it’s possible that pastor is right? Personally, after years of looking, I have been able to find exactly zero passages in the Bible that show the rapture taking place before the tribulation.

What if the whole pre-tribulation rapture teaching is a flesh-feeding invention of man to please men, and not what God’s Word really says at all? How would you respond if that were true?

Recently I was speaking at a pastors’ conference in Lagos, Nigeria, and the man who had started the denomination, Pastor David, was seated to my left. This denomination has over 1000 congregations and over 1 million members worldwide. Pastor David has a photographic memory and knows the Bible better than anyone else I know. I told the group of about 1000 pastors that the Bible indicated the rapture will happen after the tribulation. The place fell silent, and I could sense resistance to that idea. So, I turned to Pastor David for a little validation. I asked him, (because he was highly respected by everyone in the room) “Where does the Bible say that the rapture will take place before the tribulation?” He leaned forward, picked up a microphone from the table in front of him, turned it on, brought it to his lips, and said, “It’s not there, sir.” That statement sent a shockwave across the room.

What about you? What about your denomination? Would that statement send shockwaves across your next church service or leaders meeting?

Thessalonian questions?

The Thessalonian church must have had some questions about what Paul wrote in his first letter. Let's look at Paul's response to the questions they may have asked.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 Now, dear brothers and sisters, let us clarify some things about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we will be gathered to meet Him. ² Don't be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. Don't believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us.

That Day!

Notice which two events are mentioned in the second half of verse one? Paul speaks of the return of Christ **and** the rapture ("we will be gathered (harpazo) to meet him")! Now, let's look at the rest of this passage. Paul continues his explanation in the next two verses.

*2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 Don't be fooled by what they say. For **that day** will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed—the one who brings destruction. ⁴ He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.*

It says, "that day." It does not say, "those days." Therefore, we can be certain that these are not two separate days! "That day" means that the day of Christ's return **is** the same day as the rapture! It's that simple.

Stated more simply, Jesus will return on **the day** we are raptured, and we will be raptured on **the day** Jesus returns! The Bible contains no alternative.

What Must Happen First?

What are the things that Paul says absolutely must take place before there is any possibility that Jesus can return, and the rapture can take place? Paul says the day of the return of Christ and the rapture will not happen until a few things have happened first. Here they are in order:

1. A great rebellion against God will take place. This seems to be beginning now.
2. The Antichrist will be revealed to the world. This has not happened yet but may happen soon.
3. He (the antichrist) will exalt himself over everything that is worshiped in this world. Obviously, this can't happen until the antichrist has been revealed to the world.
4. The antichrist will sit in the temple and claim to be God. This can't happen yet because there is no temple to sit in yet. Yet, the people of Israel ARE making plans to build a third temple right now.

None of these things have happened yet. The rebellion is beginning but hasn't fully happened yet. We don't know who the Antichrist is yet. The Antichrist has not exalted himself above all that is worshipped yet. And he hasn't gone into the temple and claimed to be God.

He couldn't enter the temple today (March 2023) because the 3rd temple in Jerusalem hasn't even been built yet. Remember that Paul clearly said that the rapture cannot happen until **after** all these events take place.

And, as I said, the Antichrist entering the temple can't happen yet because the temple hasn't been rebuilt yet. But today several groups in Israel are planning to build it. That's right plans to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem are being drawn up right now. Just search the phrase "The Third Holy Temple Plans Have Begun" on YouTube and you'll find video that shows the plans and takes you on a virtual tour of the proposed temple.

PART 5

What Jesus Has to Say.

Leave them Here?

John 17:15 *I'm not asking You to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one.*

Does it sound like Jesus praying for or against a pre-tribulation rapture? If He asks His Father **not** to take His followers out of the world, do you think there is any possibility that the Father will **not** answer that prayer? Is it possible that Jesus prayed something contrary to the will of His Father? No way! Jesus only prays according to the will of the Father. So, if Jesus asks His Father to leave us here, then the Father is going to leave us here!

Also, what is the only place we can be protected from the evil one? Earth, right? Not Heaven or Hell? Therefore, these people (who Jesus prayed would be kept safe from the evil one) must be on the earth, right? And, as Paul told the Corinthians, they will **not** be taken out of the earth until the last trumpet is blown. I hope you take comfort in the fact that the Father will keep us safe from the evil one no matter what trouble comes our way. I know I do.

Jesus gives us an even clearer indication of the timing of the rapture in the middle of Matthew 24. Let's look at what He said.

Shorten the Tribulation?

Mathew 24:22 *"In fact, unless that time of calamity (the tribulation) is shortened, not a single person will survive. But it will be shortened for the sake of God's chosen ones."*

How is it possible that God is going to shorten an extinction level (no one survives) event so that all the followers of Jesus, God's chosen ones, don't die, if the followers of Jesus aren't here on earth anymore? In other words, if all believers on earth have been raptured by this point, for whom is He shortening the days?

Some pre-tribulation rapture teachers would like us to believe that the church and the elect are not the same group. They say that the church will already have been raptured by this point. Therefore, they say, Jesus must be referring to (an imaginary group of) "tribulation saints" that will develop after they realize they missed the first rapture. But that is not what the Bible teaches.

The Bible never says that the followers of Jesus will be taken out of the earth before the tribulation. Therefore, the Bible cannot teach about a group of people becoming followers of Christ after missing the rapture!

The Greek word for "chosen ones" in the verse above is *eklektos* and is commonly translated as "elect." This word for the "elect" is found thirty-two times in the New Testament. And in every one of those instances, it is referring to the followers of Christ! Therefore, is it logical to say that this one instance is referring only to the supposed "tribulation saints" while the other 31 times it refers to all believers on earth? I don't think so. Do you?

My friends, we can't have it both ways, either the elect are the collective, worldwide body of Christ; or they're not. We do not have the option of being part of the elect when it's convenient, and **not** being part of the elect when it's not convenient. Doing that is twisting the Bible to make it say what our itching ears want it to say and that is dangerous.

To The End?

Here is another statement of Jesus that gives us a clearer indication of the timing of the rapture.

Matt 24:13&14 (AMP) But the one who endures and bears up [under suffering] to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ This good news of the kingdom [the gospel] will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end [of the age] will come.

Here we see that people who endure **to the end** will be saved. How is it possible that people are expected to endure to the end if they won't be here to the end? Then Jesus tells us that the end of the age will not come until **after** the gospel is preached throughout the world. So, ask yourself this question, "Who finishes preaching the gospel to the world if the current worldwide body of Christ has been removed?" Is the Great Commission going to be accomplished by these supposed "tribulation saints" so new in their faith? Not likely (especially since that group of people isn't even found in scripture).

And, if that were true, it would mean that all the mature believers would have been removed from the earth and that these baby believers would be the ones who God expects to withstand the Antichrist **and** finish preaching the gospel to the world.

It would literally mean that what the global, powerful, institutional church couldn't do in 2000 years, these baby believers will accomplish in 7 years! And they will do it while being hunted by the Antichrist? Hog wash. No way! It is becoming crystal clear that the global body of Christ will remain on the earth and will continue preaching the Gospel to the ends of the earth right up until the moment of the end of the age, the resurrection of the dead, and the return of Christ.

I don't know about you, but to me the idea that God would pull the mature believers and leave a new crop of spiritual babies seems contrary to the nature of God. The idea that He would remove the spiritual fathers and mothers and leave the spiritual children to fend for themselves during the most difficult time in human history is an idea that I can't accept. You see, God gives spiritual parents to aid in the maturing process of spiritual children. It would be out of character for Him to remove the spiritual parents and let a new generation of spiritual orphans face the Antichrist and finish the Great Commission alone. Wouldn't you agree?

What about the parable of the wheat and the weeds (tares)? Look at what Jesus says in this parable and look at how He explains it.

Wheat and The Weeds

Matthew 13:24-30

²⁴ Here is another story Jesus told: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. ²⁵ But that night as the workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat,

then slipped away. ²⁶ When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew.

²⁷ “The farmer’s workers went to him and said, ‘Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?’

²⁸ “An enemy has done this!’ the farmer exclaimed.

“Should we pull out the weeds?’ they asked.

²⁹ “No,’ he replied, ‘you’ll uproot the wheat if you do. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.’”

Then, in verses 37-43, Jesus tells them exactly what this parable means.

³⁷ Jesus replied, “The Son of Man is the farmer who plants the good seed. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed represents the people of the Kingdom. The weeds are the people who belong to the evil one. ³⁹ The enemy who planted the weeds among the wheat is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the harvesters are the angels.

⁴⁰ “Just as the weeds are sorted out and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the world. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will remove from his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴² And the angels will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father’s Kingdom. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!

Keep in mind that the person speaking here is our eternal Messiah, Jesus Christ. And let’s just recap for a second. He says the field represents the world where He (Jesus), the good farmer, planted good seed (the people of the kingdom) but then his enemy, the devil, came and scattered weed seeds (people who belong to the evil one) in the same field at night.

When the harvesters (angels) asked if they should pull the weeds, they were told “NO” because they might uproot the wheat in the process.

If you are a gardener, you know that feeling. You see weeds growing right among the good plants you are trying to protect. And sometimes the best thing to do is to leave the weeds alone so that you don’t disturb the good plants. You want the good plants to they can grow and mature and produce a crop.

Until the Harvest

In the same way Jesus tells the angel harvesters NOT to pull the weeds yet. Instead, Jesus clearly states exactly how long they will remain together. Look at verse 30. He says, "Let both grow together **until the harvest.**" (emphasis mine) Since the harvest represents the end of the world, Jesus is clearly saying that the followers of God and the followers of the devil will remain together right up until the very end of this age. The wheat does NOT get harvested before the weeds do!

Also, pay attention to what Jesus does NOT say. He does not say, "Harvest the wheat early (before harvest time) so a new crop of baby wheat can get planted and begin to grow in its place and be choked out by the weeds." You might be thinking, "Well, it sounds kind of silly when you put it like that." If it sounds silly that's because it IS silly. It is silly to think God is going to harvest the wheat from among the weeds before the end of the world through a pre-tribulation rapture. That is the exact thing He told the angels NOT to do! No, this passage clearly shows us that the people of the Kingdom and the people of the evil one are going to remain together on the earth right up UNTIL the harvest.

Also, Jesus says that some of the angels will be gathering the weeds, (sons of the devil) and tying them in bundles to be burned. That means that they will be preparing them to be thrown into the furnace and it's not hard to figure out what that represents. But that's not all the angels will be doing on that day. Some of the angels will be gathering the weeds to be burned and some will be doing something else. They will be gathering the wheat into the barn (v.30). Let's see what else we can learn from Jesus about the timing of the rapture, shall we?

The Gathering

Matthew 24:31 And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Here in verse 31 of Matthew 24, Jesus clearly describes the rapture. When He sends His angels to gather His elect from all over the world, there is no question He is speaking of the rapture. What you may not know is that in verse 29 Jesus had just stated **exactly when** the rapture will happen. The reason you may not know this is because pre-tribulation Bible teachers tend to shy away from sharing these verses together. I have never seen or heard any pre-trib teacher combine these two passages even though there is only one verse separating them. Take a look for yourself.

But When?

*Matthew 24:29 (NKJV) Immediately **after the tribulation** of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

WHOA! How much clearer can it get? Jesus specifically says that the rapture will happen **after** the tribulation!

And once again the pre-tribulation position states that this isn't the church that's being gathered by the angels. They say that these "elect" must be the "tribulation saints" because (they say) the church isn't here anymore because it's been raptured already.

This is another passage that I've been told by pre-tribbers is a second rapture of the "tribulation saints." The assumption is that the other saints are long gone because they left in the "first rapture." It amazes me that they persist in making this claim even though they are not able to produce even one verse that shows a first rapture taking place.

Did Jesus Forget?

Isn't it interesting that when talking about the last days, in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 among other places, Jesus seems to forget to mention a first rapture? Do you think it's even a possibility that Jesus neglected or forgot to mention the "first rapture?" Isn't it more likely there is no first rapture? If there were two raptures, Jesus would have told us. Instead, He only tells us about one rapture. And it happens **after the tribulation!**

Mark says basically the same thing as Matthew.

Mark 13:24 & 27 (NKJV) "But in those days, **after that tribulation**, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light . . . ²⁷ And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

After means after! Not before! Not during! But after. Isn't the timing of the rapture becoming crystal clear? Now that we've looked at all of these passages in unison can there be any doubt that the rapture will take place after the tribulation and at the return of Christ?

The Disciple's Questions

When Jesus gives His teaching on the last days, it is in response to three questions that His disciples had just asked Him. In other words, He is answering their questions when He gives the teaching found in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. It wouldn't hurt you to read those chapters through a few times yourself. (Yes, that is a suggestion).

In Matthew 24:3 we see the disciples three questions:

1. When will this happen?
2. What is the sign of your coming?
3. And (what is the sign) of the end of the age?

It is important to pay attention to what He said and to what He did **not** say. Remember, sometimes what is **not** said is just as important as what **is** said. Notice He doesn't say a single word about a pre-tribulation rapture. But He clearly speaks about a rapture taking place **after** the tribulation!

Is it Becoming Clear?

How many times have we seen the followers of Christ present on the earth during the last days and/or the tribulation? Around thirty? And that is just in this book. And there are more in the entire Bible that we haven't even looked at. I can't overstate the significance of this. If the Bible states that the followers of Christ will be present on the earth more than 30 times during the last days and the tribulation don't you think the church may be here until the end? If the Bible doesn't contain one single passage that shows the church leaving before the tribulation, what is the more likely scenario? The only logical conclusion is that a protected, persecuted body of Christ will be here until the end of the age. The

only thing that makes sense is that the rapture will happen **after** the tribulation, just like Jesus said it would.

In my experience, pre-tribulation rapture teachers avoid the verses in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 that say that rapture happens after the tribulation. It seems to me that they avoid them because they don't know how to handle Jesus saying what is going to happen **after** the tribulation. Oh, they love to quote Matthew 24:40-41 because that passage says two men will be in a field. One will be taken and the other left behind. And two women will be grinding flour. One will be taken and the other left. But they fail to recognize that Jesus clearly says this happens after the tribulation.

They love to quote Matthew 24:33 which says, "When you see all these things, you can know that His return is very near, right at the door." But the "these things" that Jesus is referring to are the things that take place **after the tribulation** like the sun being darkened, the moon not giving light, everything being shaken.

And, of course, pre-trib teaching loves to quote Matthew 24:31 which says He will send out his angels to gather His chosen ones from all over the world because that is specifically talking about the rapture. But again, this is all part of a list of things that clearly Jesus says are going to take place after, not before, not during, but **after the tribulation!**

Let's pause and consider the possibility that you or I could one day be martyred because of our love for Jesus. The believers who make it to their predetermined end during the tribulation will literally be willing to lay down their lives for the sake of their eternal husband, Jesus Christ. Are you willing to do that? Am I?

Listen, the tribulation is coming. And it might be sooner than you think. You can't pray it away! When it comes, if you don't have a faith that can withstand the Antichrist and resist the mark how will you survive? If you don't have a faith that is willing to die for Jesus, you will probably fall away. My friend now is the time to develop that faith! Don't wait! It will be here before you know it, and this isn't something that you can afford to put off for one more second!

So, my dear brother or sister in Christ, I pray that you will have enough faith to make it to the very end of the age and to participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb. May you have enough faith in your heart to stay strong and make it to through whatever Jesus plans to carry you through so that you can stand before the Son of Man.

As I said earlier, my great concern is that many people who follow Jesus today and are truly saved and born again and genuinely have a measure of faith in their hearts will *still* miss Heaven. My concern is that the people who believe in a pre-tribulation rapture are the ones who don't have enough faith to make it through the tribulation.

My heart breaks at the thought of the millions who have not developed a faith that is strong enough to get them through the great tribulation because they were told they'd never experience it. Please don't be one of them.

The Bride Beat Up?

Maybe you've heard this odd teaching. "Jesus doesn't want his Bride to get beat up right before the wedding." Have you ever heard that? It's a common part of today's false teaching about the

pre-tribulation rapture. So, let's unpack that idea a little bit. First of all, man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. So, if trials and tribulation cleanse, purify, and refine the inner person, that's what God is looking at anyway.

This peculiar logic is saying that the portion of the church that has never suffered is more beautiful in the eyes of Jesus than the part of the church that has experienced suffering. But nothing could be further from the truth! People have suffered because of their commitment to Christ since the very beginning of the church.

Martyrs are those who were crucified, burned alive, fed to lions, beheaded, skinned alive, etc. for the cause of Christ. Are they less beautiful to Him than those who have never endured any trials, hardship, or difficulty? Of course not. No, the truth is that it is commendable to suffer for the cause of Christ! I'm not going to list all the passages that prove this but if you want to prove it to yourself, just go into any Bible app and do a word search for words like suffering, persecution, hardship, trials, tribulation, etc.... in the New Testament. That way you can gain God's perspective on the subject.

The Great Falling Away

Now, personally, I've never heard any pre-tribulation rapture teacher quote Matthew 24:10 which says,

"And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other."

But that's exactly what is happening now in 2023. How many people do you personally know who have turned away from Jesus and who have betrayed each other? That's exactly what Jesus says will continue to happen right up until His return (after the tribulation).

Please do not allow yourself to believe that there is no chance you will have to live through the great tribulation, resist the antichrist, and refuse his mark!

Please stop entertaining the flesh-feeding idea that you will get to go to Heaven without experiencing the difficulty, suffering, hardship, prison, and possibly death of the tribulation! My friend, those days are over. That ship has sailed! Time is up!

I'm convinced that believing in the pre-tribulation rapture is the thing that will make a person into a foolish virgin. Is that you? Are you so convinced that you will be raptured before the tribulation that you haven't bothered to develop a faith that could withstand the antichrist and endure the tribulation?

Instead of believing and trusting in the (unbiblical) pre-trib rapture teaching, why not develop a deep faith, a relationship with Jesus Christ, and a knowledge of His Word and a lifestyle of a disciple that is completely obedient and totally surrendered to Him? Develop a faith that will not deny Jesus no matter what! Develop a faith that's willing to go through anything for Jesus. Even if it costs you and/or your loved ones your lives, you'll never regret it!

Eternity in God's paradise or eternity in a lake of fire are the only two options! Please choose God and the wonders He promises you no matter the cost. Nothing is worth losing your soul over.

My friend, an unwavering mindset, faith, and resolve of total surrender to Jesus IS the oil you need in your lamp to get through these final days of the church age and to navigate safely through the

tribulation and into the kingdom age! There is where you and I will rule and reign with Jesus Christ in immortal bodies for 1000 years! After that it's on into eternity with a new heaven and a new earth where the increase of Jesus' Kingdom will never end (Isaiah 9:7)! Get ready! Live ready! Stay ready!

PART 6

In Conclusion

Revelation Recap

If we see these passages in the book of Revelation after chapter 4:1:

1. Many people are **still on the earth** who need to be martyred (Rev. 6:11)
2. God's servants **on the earth** will be sealed on the forehead (Rev. 7:3)
3. A great crowd is seen in heaven that died **on the earth** during the tribulation (Rev. 7:9)
4. People are still praying (presumably **from earth**) during the tribulation (Rev. 8:3-4)
5. Locusts can't harm God's servants **on the earth** who are sealed during the tribulation (Rev. 9:4)
6. The saints **on the earth** defeat the Antichrist and aren't afraid to die (Rev. 12:11)
7. Antichrist declares war on Jesus' followers who are still **on the earth** (Rev. 12:17)
8. Antichrist tries to kill all **on the earth** who won't worship him (Rev. 13:7)
9. God's people **on the earth** must endure persecution (Rev. 13:10)
- 10.** You are blessed if you die in the Lord **on the earth** (Rev. 14:13)
11. Saints **on the earth** are victorious over beast, statue, and mark (Rev. 15:2)
12. Saints watching for His return **from the earth** (Rev. 16:15)
- 13.** Mystery Babylon sheds blood of the saints who are still **on the earth** (Rev. 17:6)
- 14.** The saints of God are told to leave Mystery Babylon which is **on the earth** (Rev. 18:4)
15. God's people **on the earth** rejoice at Mystery Babylon's demise (Rev. 18:20)
- 16.** Mystery Babylon kills/murders God's people here **on the earth** (Rev. 18:24 & 19:2)
17. Many saints here **on the earth** will be beheaded by the Antichrist (Rev. 20:4)
18. Obedience to this book of *Revelation* by saints **on the earth** during the time of revelation = blessing (Rev. 22:7)

Daniel Recap

1. We will receive an eternal kingdom in **the end** (Daniel 7:18)
2. The Antichrist defeats the saints **until (the end when)** the Father stops him (Daniel 7:21-22)
3. The kingdom will be taken from Antichrist (**at the end of the age**) & given to the saints whom he is persecuting on the earth (Daniel 7:26)
4. Jewish believers will be protected (in the wilderness) during the final 3.5 years (Daniel 12:1)
5. The saints will be shattered until **the end when all** of Daniel's prophecies are fulfilled (i.e., the return of Christ) (Daniel 12:7)
6. The righteous will be purified, cleansed, and refined **on the earth** by the tribulation (Daniel 12:10)
7. Those who remain on the earth **until the end** are going to be blessed by God (Daniel 12:12)

How could the rapture take place before the end?

Paul Says . . .

1. Rapture happens at the **last trumpet! (1 Corinthians 15:52)**
2. The dead in Christ rise **first** (i.e., before anyone is raptured!) (1 Thessalonians 4:15&16)

3. The rapture happens on the **same day** as the second coming of Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4)
4. Before the rapture can happen there will be a great rebellion against God and the Antichrist must appear, sit in the temple and declare himself to be God! (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

If all these things must happen first, is there any way that the rapture could happen at any moment? Absolutely, not! All the things Paul stated must happen first.

And if Jesus says . . .

1. Father **do not take them out of the world** (John 17:15)
2. The tribulation will be shortened because *the elect are still on the earth!* (Matthew 24:22)
3. Jesus' followers should endure **to the end** (Matthew 24:13)
4. And the Gospel will be preached **until the end** (Matthew 24:14)
5. The wheat and the weeds remain together **until the harvest** (Matthew 13)
6. The angels will gather the elect **after the tribulation (2X)** (Matthew 24:29 & 31, Mark 13:24 & 27)
7. And He **never** mentions a pre-tribulation rapture as He speaks about the signs of the end (Matthew 24, Mark 13, & Luke 21)

Then when do you think Jesus expects the rapture to happen?

What are the Odds?

Now that you have read and considered all these passages, what are the chances we (the followers of Christ) will be here until the end of the age and until AFTER the tribulation? To me it's 100%!

And what, would you say, are the odds that the believers will be snatched out early due to a pre-tribulation rapture? If you believe the scriptures, you've just read, you'll have to admit that it's around a 0% chance the church will be removed before the tribulation!

Now What?

Now that you have clearly seen that we, the saints, the true followers of Jesus Christ, the elect, the church, will be here until the end of the tribulation (or will go to heaven during the tribulation through death) how will you respond?

And now that you have clearly seen that the rapture will take place **after** the tribulation, what will you do? How will you prepare? Do you think God wants you to become fearful?

Do you think He wants you to go hide in a cabin in the woods clutching your guns? Of course not, He wants us to continue to be his faithful, obedient disciples who share the gospel and continue to help others come to know Him right until the end of this age.

Use Wisdom

Support ministries that are reaching and discipling the least reached on earth. Also learn how to share the gospel and share with everyone who will listen.

Considering the fact that God has warned us that the day will come when we will not be able to participate in the financial system anymore because we will refuse to take the mark of the beast. Have you prayerfully considered how you will live when that day comes? Begin asking The Lord some serious questions now. Questions like, How will I wash my clothes? How will I cook my food? Will I help others in need? How will I heat my home? What will I eat? Would Jesus want me to take another life in order to preserve my own? Where will I live if I lose my home?

You might think of other questions that I haven't thought of, but now is the time to settle these things with the Lord and to discuss them with your friends and family.

Jesus said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5:44) Are you willing to obey that command right up until your very last breath...even during the tribulation?

Who has the Power?

Many years ago, I read a story about a follower of Christ being tortured in a Russian prison. The prison guard said, "I am your god because I have the power over your life and death." The follower of Christ responded, "All the power lies with me, because I have the power **to love you WHILE** you torture me to death." Wow! May Jesus give us all that same power to love our enemies even if and when it costs us our lives.

And never lose sight of the goal. The goal is NOT to maximize your time on this earth and in this evil world system. The goal is live well and finish well in the eyes of God!

You and I have to get to our eternity somehow. Our current existence is temporary. These bodies are designed to wear out. Our next bodies won't.

Your pathway to eternity will either be through death, or through being changed in a twinkling of an eye in the rapture at the return of Jesus. Only God knows if you are going to be one of those who dies along the way, or if you'll make it to the end and be transformed in a split second! You don't know, so cling to Jesus in these last days because, in the words of the apostle Paul, "Whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord!" (Romans 14:8) Amen! So be willing to die for Jesus every day.

Be Transformed

Paul also told us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). So, if you used to think you were going to be raptured at any moment, or even if you were on the fence about the rapture, after reading this little book you may recognize a need for some new things to be added to your heart, soul, body, and mind. Things that will make you an overcomer who can withstand any trial for the sake of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Remain at Peace

Consider starting that process by memorizing and believing this passage.

Isaiah 26:3 which says, *"You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!"*

Notice that this promise is conditional. I'm sure we all want God to keep us in perfect peace and He will, but **ONLY** if we keep up our part of the bargain. Are your thoughts fixed on Jesus?

If we genuinely trust in Him and keep our minds fixed on Him, **THEN** He will do His part and keep us in perfect peace no matter what storms are raging around us. I believe it is possible to sleep like a baby during times of tribulation. This is because we are at peace and rest in our trust and confidence in God.

Psalm 91

You also may want to personalize Psalm 91, making it a daily prayer. Below is my attempt at personalizing it and turning it into a prayer that I can say back to God.

- ¹ I choose to live in Your shelter Most High and I
will always find rest in the shadow of You, the Almighty.
- ² This I declare about You, LORD:
You alone are my refuge, my place of safety;
You are my God, and I trust You.
- ³ For You will rescue me from every trap
and protect me from deadly disease.
- ⁴ You will cover me with Your feathers.
You will shelter me with Your wings.
Your faithful promises are my armor and protection.
- ⁵ I will not be afraid of the terrors of the night,
nor the arrow that flies in the day.
- ⁶ I will not dread the disease that stalks in darkness,
nor the disaster that strikes at midday.
- ⁷ Though a thousand fall at my side,
though ten thousand are dying around me,
these evils will not touch me.
- ⁸ I will open my eyes,
and see how the wicked are punished.
- ⁹ If I make You my refuge, Oh Lord,
if I make You my shelter, Most High,
- ¹⁰ no evil will conquer me;
no plague will come near my home.
- ¹¹ For You will order Your angels
to protect me wherever I go.
- ¹² They will hold me up with their hands
so I won't even hurt my foot on a stone.
- ¹³ I will trample upon lions and cobras;
I will crush fierce lions and serpents under my feet!
- ¹⁴ Oh my LORD, You say, "I will rescue those who love me.
I will protect those who trust in my name.
- ¹⁵ When they call on me, I will answer;

I will be with them in trouble.
I will rescue and honor them.
¹⁶ I will reward them with a long life
and give them my salvation.”

Thank you, Lord, for these promises and that with You and in You we are truly invincible. Amen!

Promises of God

Also, consider memorizing these passages and others like them by looking them up in your own Bible and copying them in the space provided: (One of the best ways to memorize scripture is to copy it by hand).

Nahum 1:7

Isaiah 41:10

2 Tim 1:7

Psalms 139:16

Romans 8:31 & 37

Exciting Times!

This final generation will have the privilege of trusting God and experiencing Him like no other generation in history! Think about that! Since these coming days of tribulation will be the days of the greatest trouble the world has ever known, then the generation of believers that lives through them will need to have a deeper relationship with Jesus than any other generation in history.

If these trials are meant to cleanse, purify, and refine us, then this final generation that lives through the tribulation may just be the most cleansed, purified, and refined generation in all human history! Isn't that encouraging?

You were born for this! God doesn't make mistakes, and it's not a mistake that you and I are alive right now! If you are reading this, then there is a great possibility you are part of the last generation that Jesus said will "not pass away" until all these things have taken place (Matthew 24:34).

Are you ready?

If not, here are a few suggestions.

Get prepared. Recently, I heard a military commander (speaking of war) say, "It's easier to live prepared than it is to get prepared." I think that applies to the time of the tribulation as well. It will take more planning, preparation, and energy to get ready for the difficult days before they begin than it will to maintain a state of preparedness once you reach it.

You will need to be prepared physically, mentally, and spiritually. And spiritually is the most important of the three.

Are you physically prepared for the difficult days ahead? What will be your source of food, water, and shelter? The days are coming when you and I will not be able to buy or sell anything because we refuse to accept the mark of the beast. Doesn't it seem like the vaccine passport of 2021 was a global trial run at the mark of the beast? In many places around the world, you couldn't buy or sell anything without one. So, ask yourself if you will be able to survive and thrive on your own resources? And if your answer is, "no" then how might God want you to begin preparing yourself? This will look different for everyone, but the main thing is to bathe every decision in prayer and to follow the peace of the Lord in all you do in these last days!

Are you mentally ready for the days ahead? No matter what else you do, pray, and determine **never** to deny Christ even to the point of death! Think through every potential scenario and simply tell Jesus every day that you live for Him and that you would rather die for Him than deny Him. If we deny him, He will deny us. (2 Timothy 2:12)

Also, you will need people! Find like-minded people who are all-in for Jesus and who are committed to Him and to His Kingdom agenda in this world! Commit to each other that you will never deny Christ or betray each other no matter what pressure is put on you. Seriously, ask the Lord to give you the strength to lay down your life for Him, and/or your friends (John 15:6) every single day.

Are you spiritually prepared to trust in God like never before? Read His Word more than ever before. Pray like never before! To make it through the tribulation without losing your soul, you will need to cling to Jesus more than ever! He, and the strength He provides, is your only hope to make it through to the end without losing your soul! Clinging to Jesus with every fiber of your being is the only way to avoid falling victim to the ancient, diabolical, wicked serpent who will stop at nothing to see you and I deny Christ and worship him instead. Please do not think that you can oppose him on your own. You can't! Only the power of God active in your life can overpower and defeat the enemy of your soul.

Overcomers Rewards

Revelation 12:11 says we overcome him by the blood of Jesus and by the word of our testimony. And according to Revelation chapters 2 and 3, those who overcome will receive wonderful blessings. Take a few minutes right now and read those 2 chapters and see the blessings God promises to those who overcome.

Write them here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Our Weapons

Your spiritual weapons must be forged before the battle begins. Ephesians 6:11 NIV says, “Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” At this period in history, you are going to need that armor more than at any other time in the history of the world! No one makes bullets in a foxhole. Bullets are made way before the battle begins and are carried into battle. Think about that, no weapon of war was ever forged on the battlefield. You’d be killed while attempting it. Instead, the weapons of war need to be made and practiced with well in advance of the actual battle. In the same way, we must put on our armor and forge our spiritual weapons now so that we will be able to stand against the devil’s schemes once we are face-to-face with him and his schemes.

Here is a final passage from Paul regarding the weapons we need to be prepared for this spiritual fight of our lives that is fast approaching.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NIV For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

The Time is Now!

We must train for battle **before** we are in it. No winning team or prevailing army ever comes out on top without a high level of preparation. Can you imagine an army that never trains for battle ever winning a battle? Or a sports team that never practiced or trained, winning the championship? Of course not. So, get ready now so you will be prepared for the battle before the battle is upon you.

Our Teachers?

Take a moment and ask yourself, who are your spiritual teachers? Seriously, take a mental inventory of who teaches you your spiritual information? Do you learn from a local pastor? Or do you learn from a favorite author? Do you have a favorite YouTube, or online preacher or teacher or prophet that you learn

from? These may be ok as long as they are guiding you in the truth according to God's definition of the truth, according to the scriptures. But how do you know? How do you know if they are guiding you according to God's truth or not? In order to know if your human teachers are leading you correctly, you'll need to know God's truth for yourself.

Jesus said that in the last days, many false teachers and false prophets will arise and will deceive many. Could you or I be one of those that is being deceived? How do you know if the spiritual leaders you learn from are telling you the truth or not? In these last days it is more important than ever that you and I be able to tell the difference between the false teachers and the real ones.

Thankfully, the Lord has given us a way to make sure that we are not being led astray in these last days. It involves balancing your teachers and developing that habit of learning from all the spiritual teachers available to you.

I'd like to tell you that you have several flawless teachers who are always available and who will never lead you astray or make a mistake in their explanation or interpretation of Scripture. Let me show you who they are.

Teacher #1

John 6:45 As it is written in the Scriptures, 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from Him comes to me.

Did you know that your Heavenly Father is willing to teach you directly? I used to think of Him as far off and aloof, so busy with managing the universe that he didn't have time to listen to, or interact with, or teach little, old, insignificant me. You may feel the same way, but that is not what this passage tells us. Thank God that He, Almighty God, Creator of the universe, Master over all that ever was, is, or ever will be, is willing to personally instruct you and me anytime, anywhere.

Notice also that 100% of those who learn from the Father come to Jesus. That is the best possible success rate! You can't do better than that. So, as I teach, I'm always trying to teach them to learn from God the Father! That way more souls will be in Heaven than if they only learn from me. I do not have a 100% success rate! No human teacher does.

So, when I don't understand something in the scriptures, I simply say, "Father, teach me." Or "Father, please explain this to me." And He does! He does it in His timing, so sometimes it's right away, and sometimes it's when I'm ready for it. But He is always ready and willing to instruct us in what we need to know and when we need to know it.

Teacher #2

Matthew 23:10 And don't let anyone call you 'Teacher,' for you have only one teacher, the Messiah.

In the days that Jesus walked the earth, people liked the title of teacher. It isn't all that different in our day. It feels nice to have people look to you as the person with the answers. Yet, we are wise if we

recognize that the triune God we serve, follow, and obey is the only real source of truth. Jesus will teach us everything we need to know, and He will never lead us astray.

Notice what Paul says to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:7

⁷ Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

We see that Paul is giving instructions to Timothy and then Paul tells Timothy, that if he has questions or doesn't understand anything, that The Lord Jesus will help him understand. Paul was a great teacher, but he wasn't always physically available. Jesus is always available!

Teacher #3

John 16:13a When the Spirit of truth comes; He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own but will tell you what He has heard.

1 John 2:27a But you have received the Holy Spirit, and He lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know.

The Holy Spirit is always available to guide you into all truth to the point that it says here, we do not need people to teach us. WOW! Often, we think we need human teachers to teach us everything we need to know. But here we see that the Holy Spirit will teach you EVERYTHING you need to know. Everything means EVERY-THING. Isn't it great to know that the One who can teach you everything you need to know about every single subject or topic, already lives inside you?

Teacher #4

Ephesians 4:11 Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Humans are great teachers also. The difference is they are not always available and are NOT always correct. In the days of the first century church, they did not have professional teachers like we have today. They also didn't have the New Testament scriptures that we rely on today. They relied on the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and learned from human teachers whenever they were available.

Also, human teachers sometimes teach things that aren't right. And God has given us a Powerful Ally to help us tell the difference between the true and false prophets and teachers in these last days. Notice what John says in 1 John 4:1&4

1 Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world.

4 But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.

You see that we are not to believe everyone who claims to speak for God but the Holy Spirit who lives in us will show us the truth about the true and false prophets in these last days.

Jesus is the one who gave these leadership gifts to the church, and He doesn't make mistakes. He gave the 5 leadership gifts to help the rest of the body of Christ mature. And the early church was devoted to the teaching of human apostles so we should be too.

The New Testament believers had this in balance. They understood that they could learn from God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as well as human teachers Peter and Paul. It is nice to have human teachers. I have learned countless truths from excellent human teachers. So, let me suggest that learning from people become like the dessert in your spiritual meals. May the meat and potatoes of your spiritual food come directly from the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Most people eat 2-3 meals a day but only have a sweet fattening desert once a week or so. So let your weekly teaching from a human teacher be like a weekly dessert that you look forward to. But let your primary spiritual food come directly from the teaching of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through regular times reading the word for yourselves! It is good to have multiple meals of spiritual food throughout the week through reading your bible and letting the Triune God **and** human teachers teach you what it means.

The Father is the Source of All Truth

The Father will teach us directly (John 6:45). Jesus will teach what He hears **from the Father** (John 12:49). Holy Spirit will teach what He hears from **the Father** (John 16:13). And even human teachers must "speak the very words of God" (**the Father**) (1 Peter 4:11).

When people learn how to learn directly from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, they are no longer dependent on human teachers. And, when people learn how to learn from God they are much better equipped to distinguish truth from error. Human teachers are biblical and good (I am one) and you should learn all you can from them. But the best thing human teachers can do is to teach people how to learn directly from the Triune God! That way the Body of Christ isn't dependent on human teachers only.

People who know how to learn from God will be harder to deceive so learning from God will be a vital skill in these last days when false teachers are on the increase.

Endnote:

The working title for this book was "Dead Wrong." I chose that title because as I was doing the research for this book, I woke up one morning and the first thought that flooded into my mind was, "The pre-tribulation rapture teaching is dead wrong, and many will die and lose their souls because of it." I felt strongly that it was the Holy Spirit speaking to me.

So, after much thought and prayer, we changed to the current title to broaden the potential audience this information. To those who already believe in a post-trib rapture, we hope that this book will help strengthen your faith to be an overcomer and stand strong until the day of the Lord.

And to those who had been believing in a pretribulation rapture timeline, we hope that this information has challenged your pre-suppositions and has encouraged you to work hard to establish a faith that can last until the end.

We hope and pray that you will not be a spiritual casualty that will fall away when you find yourself in the Tribulation that you hadn't prepared for.

May we all be strengthened to remain strong in the Lord to our individual last day!

THE END

STAY CONNECTED

keep an eye out for our upcoming “Navigating the Last Days” teachings.

Subscribe to our YouTube channels at Go Multiply so you don’t miss upcoming teachings such as:

- What will the coming kingdom of Jesus be like? What do we have to look forward to?
- How does the Bible tell us to live during the last days and the tribulation?
- Can a person lose their salvation? (Appendix A)

For more information

Go to GoMultiply.org and EmbraceTheKingdom.org and sign up for our newsletters to stay informed of upcoming events and other ways to navigate these last days.

© 2022 Kurt Olson www.GoMultiply.org

For translation and redistribution permission, contact Kurt@GoMultiply.org

If you want more information on being a true disciple of Jesus that multiplies or on helping people get into right relationship with God and make it to Heaven without becoming religious email kurt@GoMultiply.org.

Appendix A

CAN A PERSON LOSE THEIR SALVATION?

(Here is a list of passages to study on the topic of eternal security)

For millennia people have debated whether it's possible for a person to lose their salvation after they have been born again. Many leaders have differing views on this topic. God does not want you to be confused about it.

Please open your Bible or Bible app when you read these verses so that you can read them in context and in multiple translations.

1. John 16:1
2. 1 Corinthians 15:2
3. Hebrew 6:4-6
4. Psalm 69:28
5. Matthew 13:21
6. Galatians 5:4
7. 2 Peter 3:17
8. Romans 11:22
9. John 15:4-10
10. Romans 11:17-21
11. Mark 13:13
12. 1 Corinthians 10:12
13. Matthew 24:45-51
14. Matthew 24:10
15. 1 Timothy 5:15
16. 2 Timothy 4:4
17. Hebrews 3:12
18. Hebrews 10:26-29
19. Hebrews 12:25
20. 2 Peter 2:20
21. Revelation 2:5
22. Revelation 2:26
23. Revelation 3:5
24. 1 Corinthians 9:27
25. Acts 11:23
26. Acts 14:22
27. Hebrew 8:9
28. 1 John 2:24
29. 2 Timothy 2:12
30. Proverbs 30:9
31. Colossians 2:6
32. Ephesians 4:30
33. John 10:27-28
34. John 6:39-40
35. John 3:16
36. Hebrews 13:5
37. 1 John 2:19
38. Romans 8:38-39