

Revelation's events unfold according to a seven-sealed scroll. These events unfold in a similar manner and sequence as to what happened to the Old Testament Jews. Thus, the events unfold in a Pattern Sequence. I call my prophetic view the Pattern View.

# THE RAPTURE DOCTRINES

(Chapter Four of my book: *Watchman Warning*;) )

by  
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Christ- Centered



Biblical Training

The Church has over 6 views regarding how the endtimes may unfold. But starting with God's Plan for history and examining over 40 doctrines at the same time, it becomes clear that there is an endtimes Tribulation and the Rapture of the Church occurs at Christ's Second Coming after the Tribulation. This chapter discusses the many doctrines including showing why and how many interpretations are in error.

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Scriptures quoted are taken from the New American Standard Bible.

*See the glossary for definitions and understanding of the terms used.*

**Note:** This report is chapter four of my book: *Watchman Warning* (1994). The details are summarized in my other book: *Watchman, How Far Gone is the Night?* (1995). We encourage you to read these books for more detail and breadth for greater background and more complete understanding. They are available by contacting the above.

This chapter is written for those who have some knowledge of the issues and doctrines in prophecy. Those wanting a more beginning view can read *Watchman, How Far Gone is the Night?*.

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# CHAPTER FOUR THE RAPTURE DOCTRINES

## INTRODUCTION

The doctrines associated with the Rapture, showing that its timing is posttribulational, are discussed in this chapter. The Resurrection of the church occurs at the Rapture when Christ comes with the holy angels at the end of the Great Tribulation to destroy all unbelievers.

## THE RAPTURE PASSAGE

The main passage in the Scriptures about the Rapture is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 at the Coming (the Greek *parousia*) of Christ. The Rapture is the event when the church (comprised of both the dead and living in Christ) is suddenly caught up by God in resurrection with imperishable bodies to meet and be with Christ in the air — in the clouds. The clouds are the sign of Christ's Coming (*parousia*) when He comes after the Tribulation (Matthew 24:30).

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 - But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain [*perisseuo*] until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend [*katabaino*] from heaven with a shout [*keleusma*], with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet [*apantesis*] the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

The Rapture occurs just before the final Day of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11) when Christ comes to bring destruction on unbelievers after the Great Tribulation. When the Lord comes for His church, He descends from heaven with a shout (a "war cry or command," the Greek *keleusma*) and with the trumpet of God (1 Thessalonians 4:16). The Jews in the Old Testament always made war cries and blew the trumpet when going to war (2 Chronicles 13:15; Joshua 6:5, 20; Nehemiah 4:20; Job 39:25; Isaiah 42:13; Jeremiah 4:5, 19; Ezekiel 21:22; Zephaniah 1:16). The Greek word *katabaino* for "descend" in the passage is used throughout the New Testament for going to a specific place. In this passage it refers to the Lord Himself going to the air and clouds above the earth. It does not carry the meaning of going somewhere and afterward returning, such as returning to heaven. The Greek word *apantesis* for "meet or meeting" in the passage has the meaning of going out from where you are to meet and welcome an arriving dignitary, and then returning to your starting place. The church goes from the earth to meet Christ in the air and then returns with Him to the earth. The Greek for "meet" is used elsewhere in the Greek New Testament with this meaning (Matthew 25:6 and Acts 28:15). There is no teaching in the passage that Christ returns with His church to heaven after the Rapture.

The dead in Christ are raised first to meet Christ in the air. Then those "who are alive and remain" are caught up immediately afterward to be with them. "Remain" in the Greek *perisseuo* means to be "left behind." Thus, this latter group may be very few in number, having been left behind after surviving the Great Tribulation when a very large number of believers died.

The Rapture, "our gathering together to Him," according to 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 8 occurs at the start of the Day of the Lord when Christ comes to destroy the Man of Lawlessness. This happens after the Beast period that is the last part of the Great Tribulation. This is the same timing for the Rapture according to 1 Thessalonians 4:13 to 5:11.

Thus, the passage has the meaning that (1) the church immediately after her resurrection is caught up from the earth to meet Christ in the air and clouds as the Rapture occurs; (2) those who are alive and remain at the time of the Rapture have been left behind, and they are very few in number, having survived the Beast period; (3) she remains there in the air with Christ to judge unbelievers as they reign with Christ (as discussed elsewhere); and (4) then returns with Him to the earth, bringing active judgment by making war against unbelievers. This judgment occurs at the Day of the Lord that follows the Rapture and the Beast period.

## The Rapture Doctrines

The Rapture passage in 1 Thessalonians 4 teaches that because the dead in Christ as well as the living will be raptured and will be with Christ forever, the church should have great comfort. Every believer will be with the Lord. Some would argue that the comfort comes from the fact that the church will miss the Tribulation. But such an assertion is not even found in the context of the passage.

The Rapture will occur after the endtime Tribulation at the time of Christ's Second Coming.

### **RAPTURE TEACHINGS, THE IMMINENT RAPTURE, THE PRETRIBULATION RAPTURE VIEW**

#### **Background**

The first part of this section will use major tenets of Pretribulation Rapture View as a general outline for the ordering of the Rapture doctrines. Afterward other doctrines will be described.

These Rapture teachings imply that the Rapture can be imminent only near the end of the Great Tribulation. The work of the church continues through the Great Tribulation and many of the church die in this period as witnesses for Christ. The church is raptured at the First Resurrection that occurs after the Great Tribulation at Christ's Coming.

Pretribulationists believe that the coming of the Rapture is imminent, meaning that it could come at any time because, in their view, there are no prophesied events that must precede its coming, including the prophesied events of the Tribulation. However, an argument from silence in the Scriptures is not a valid basis upon which to found view-determining doctrines. The Bible does not teach the Rapture is imminent before the Tribulation.

The Scripture appears to teach that even the first century church could expect to be with Christ in their lifetime (1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10). But because of nearly 2000 years passage of time, this Scripture does not have that meaning; it does not teach the nearness of the Rapture.

By my perspective, the Pretribulation Imminent Rapture View is based on several unverifiable assertions or tenets of the Scriptures. I believe that the Bible teaches the contrary on every one. The discussions that follow will show this conclusion.

These key pretribulation Rapture tenets include the following:

- 1. The Coming of Christ, the Three Greek Words, and the Resurrections** - The Greek words that represent the Coming, Revelation, and Appearance of Christ are non-technical words, and thus, they are not limited to one single Coming of Christ. They could refer to the Rapture as one event and to the Second Coming of Christ as another event. Because they can, there are several resurrections of the just.
- 2. Daniel's 70th Week** - Daniel's exclusively Jewish 70th Week occurs as the future Tribulation. Because the Tribulation period is only Jewish, the all-nations church of Christ must be raptured before it begins. (Daniel 9:24-27; Revelation 7:9, 13, 14.)
- 3. Many Prophesied Events** - The Bible does not prophesy any events that must precede the Rapture. Thus, the Rapture can come at any time before the prophesied events of the Tribulation period.
- 4. The Wrath of God** - The church is not appointed to the wrath of God; therefore, she will not be on the earth during the coming of God's wrath in the Tribulation (cf. Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10; 5:9).
- 5. Removal of the Holy Spirit** - The removal of the Holy Spirit's restraint of sin that occurs with the departure of the church from the earth (in the Rapture) — not the great apostasy — must occur before the Man of Lawlessness can be revealed (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 6, 7).
- 6. The Believer's Comfort** - The comfort of the believer in 1 Thessalonians 4:18 as it applies to the Rapture passage would lose its meaning if the church were to go through the Tribulation.

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(This passage was explained earlier. The comfort for the believer according to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 refers to the fact that both the dead and living believers would go to be with Christ in the Rapture. The concept of comfort in the passage has nothing to do with whether or not the church will go through the Tribulation.)

7. **The Day of the Lord** - The church will not be overtaken by the final Great Day of the Lord (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-9).

(In the Pretribulation Rapture View, the Day of the Lord is assumed to be equal to the entire Tribulation period instead of a period that follows the Great Tribulation at Christ's Second Coming. The concept that the Tribulation is not equal to the Day of the Lord has been previously discussed. It is developed in more detail later in this chapter. The Church will certainly miss this final Great Day of the Lord pictured in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 and in 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2, just as the Pretribulationists believe. But this Day of the Lord comes after the Great Tribulation, and thus, the church will go through the Tribulation.)

8. **The Hour of Trial or Testing** - The church cannot be on the earth during the hour of trial that tries the whole world in the Great Tribulation (cf. Revelation 3:10).
9. **The Father's House** - At the time of the Rapture, all believers will go to the Father's house in heaven before the Tribulation begins and will not immediately return to the earth after meeting Christ in the air (cf. John 14:1-3).
10. **The Word "Church"** - The word "church" is not used in Revelation when referring to the Tribulation. Therefore, the church is not on earth during the Tribulation. The saints as mentioned in Revelation refer to the saved of Israel.

These tenets will now be discussed in the same order showing that none of these Pretribulation Rapture tenets are valid. Additional doctrines about the Rapture will be discussed afterward.

### The Coming of Christ, the Three Greek Words, and the Resurrections

Christ has one single Second Coming that occurs after the Tribulation during the period of the resurrections and judgments of both the just and the unjust. His coming covers the period of the 1000 years that represent the Last Day of the Church Age.

The Scriptures teach that Christ will have only one Second Coming. The Greek word for "Coming" is *parousia*. Coming in the Greek is used with the definite article and is used only in the singular when referring to the Coming of Christ. Because of the use of the definite article, "coming" refers to one single coming of Christ.

A study of the Greek words *parousia*, *apokalupsis*, and *epiphaneia* that are represented by the English words "Coming," "Revelation," and "Appearance" of Christ respectively shows that Christ has only one Second Coming, and it occurs at the end of the Tribulation. All of these words are used with the definite article. The "Revelation" of Christ occurs on the Day of Christ when He raptures and rewards His church (1 Corinthians 1:6-8) and is used for the time when Christ comes to destroy all unbelievers (2 Thessalonians 1:7) and the Man of Lawlessness (2 Thessalonians 2:8). When He comes, Christ will rapture His church and bring destruction on all unbelievers.

1 Corinthians 1:6-8 - even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation [the *apokalupsis*] of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 - and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well [the Rapture] when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed [the *apokalupsis*] from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction ...

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2 Thessalonians 2:8 - "And then that lawless one will be revealed [apokalupto; verb form of apokalupsis] whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance [epiphaneia] of His [the] coming [parousia] ..."

According to 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, the revealing of Christ comes when He comes with the angels in flaming fire to destroy unbelievers. The same Greek word for "revealing" is used in both the 1 Corinthians 1:6-8 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 passages.

The Bible does not support the Pretribulation Rapture View that requires that Christ has two Second Comings, based on the idea that these three Greek words are general words that can refer to multiple comings. It is not wrong to assert the possibility, but then one must prove this premise. I do not believe that it can be done. Starting with the gospels and the Olivet Discourse, Christ spoke only of one coming at the end of the Church Age. He never spoke of two comings. In normal reading, one would expect these Greek words to refer to the same event, unless the Bible gave us other information to make us believe otherwise. But no such information is mentioned. Because of these comments, the non-technical use of the words referring to two Comings must be rejected.

Pretribulationists believe that Christ's Coming is in two phases. They term the first phase the Rapture and the second phase the Second Coming. According to my understanding, they believe that one Coming (the Rapture) is "for" His saints before the Tribulation (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), and another Coming is "with" His saints after the Tribulation for the destruction of unbelievers (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:23-28; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-12; 2:1, 8; 2 Timothy 4:1; Jude 1:14, 15). They believe that the Rapture takes the saints to heaven and the Second Coming returns the saints to the earth.

There are no Scriptures that teach that Christ has a two phase coming even though such concepts have been asserted. By my understanding, the Scriptures clearly teach that the Resurrection (and Rapture) of the church occurs at Christ's single one-phase Second Coming in every Scripture that uses the three Greek words associated with His coming. His coming is after the Tribulation to bring the end of history. For example:

1 Corinthians 15:22-24 - For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming [parousia], then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. (Emphasis mine.)

This delivery of the Kingdom occurs after the end of history. The resurrection of those who are Christ's at His Coming occurs at the end of the Great Tribulation when God ends history, and when Christ delivers up the Kingdom to God the Father just as this passage teaches.

The main teaching on the Rapture of the church in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 shows that the Rapture occurs at Christ's Coming. This teaching of the Rapture is presented also in 2 Thessalonians 2:1 (our gathering to Him). Both 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 and 2 Thessalonians 1:5-2:8 teach that the Rapture occurs at the Coming of Christ and at the very beginning of the final Day of the Lord when Christ comes to destroy unbelievers and the Man of Lawlessness.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 - For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming [parousia] of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up [the Rapture] together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. (Emphasis mine.)

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, 8 - Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming [parousia] of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him [the Rapture], that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed .... And the lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breadth of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming [parousia] ...

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Second Thessalonians 1:7-9 teaches the same truth that, when Christ will come to rapture His church, He with the angels will destroy all unbelievers.

The Scriptures teach that the resurrections and judgments for both believers and unbelievers will occur in rapid succession in one hour — on the Last Day — at the single Coming of the Lord (Matthew 16:27; 24:29-31; 25:31-46; John 5:28, 29; 6:40, 44; 11:24; Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:23-28; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-12; 2:1, 8; 2 Timothy 4:1; Jude 1:14, 15; Revelation 11:18; 22:12).

Matthew 16:27 - "For the Son of man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds."

John 5:28, 29 - ... for an hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds, to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

Jude 1:14, 15 - And about these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. "

Revelation 11:18 - ... the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Thy bond-servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Thy name, the small and the great, and to those who destroy the earth.

Revelation 22:12 - "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what He has done."

Second Timothy 4:1 teaches that Christ will judge both the just and the unjust at His (the) appearing (epiphaneia).

2 Timothy 4:1 - ... Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His [the] appearing [epiphaneia] and His kingdom.

The Bible does not teach that there will be two "Second Comings" or one two-phase Coming whether or not they are separated by either seven or 1000 years. The Scriptures teach that the just are raised at the beginning of the Last Day of the Church Age (John 6:39, 44, 54; 11:24). This resurrection of all believers occurs at the First Resurrection after the Great Tribulation and before the 1000 years at the beginning of the Last Day.

And as Christ said:

John 6:39 - "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."

John 6:40 - "For this is the will of My Father, that every one who beholds the Son, and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

John 6:54 - "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life; and I will raise him up on the last day."

These Scriptures refer to a general Resurrection of the just and another general Resurrection of the unjust. By general resurrection, I mean that all the believers are resurrected at the same time and that all unbelievers are resurrected at the same time, but at a later time than the believers.

Christ said that He would be with us until the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20). He was referring to the end of the Church Age. The end of the age occurs at the end of the Great Tribulation at the Coming of Christ when He destroys the Man of Lawlessness.

The Scriptures that teach that the just and the unjust are raised and judged at nearly the same time

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would lose their meaning if the two resurrections are separated by a literal 1000 years. They make sense only if the 1000 years of Revelation represent a short time period at Christ's Coming.

Revelation 20:4 teaches that martyred believers including those who die during the Beast period, the Great Tribulation, come to life in a bodily resurrection at the First Resurrection and reign with Christ for the 1000 years. This Resurrection occurs at the time of Christ's Coming when He raptures His church.

Revelation 20:4 - ... And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Revelation 20:4 does not disallow all believers from being resurrected at this time. Because the Bible calls this resurrection "the First Resurrection," it is not logical to think without Biblical authority that it teaches the First Resurrection comes in multiple stages or that any resurrection of believers precedes this resurrection. But no such authority is mentioned.

In the above Revelation 20:4 passage, the souls of those beheaded and those who have died because of the testimony of the Word of God are separated from those who have not received the mark of the Beast. They need not refer to those who died during the Tribulation.

Because the Coming of Christ occurs in chapter 19 of Revelation, and chapter 19 precedes the First Resurrection in chapter 20, many have thought that this resurrection occurs after Christ's Coming. This conclusion has allowed interpreters to believe that there are multiple resurrections of the just. For example, one resurrection would occur at the Rapture and at the time of Christ's Coming, and one would occur in Revelation 20:4 after Christ's Second Coming.

However, Revelation is not written in chronological order. Those who believe in multiple resurrections of the just must show from Scripture that the events in Revelation 20 actually will occur after the events in Revelation 19 occur in order to ensure that their view is correct. The sequence of the chapters in Revelation does not in itself show or prove that the First Resurrection occurs after Christ's Second Coming. Furthermore, many other passages of Scripture (as previously mentioned) clearly show that the single resurrection of the just and the single resurrection of unbelievers do occur at Christ's Coming.

The Lord spoke of "the" resurrection of the just in Luke 14. (The Greek article is used.)

Luke 14:14 - "... for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." (Emphasis mine for the Greek article.)

Many other passages such as Matthew 22:28, 30 (use of the definite article referring to "the" resurrection); 24:31; John 5:28, 29; 6:39, 44, 54; 11:24; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; and 2 Thessalonians 1:6, 7 teach that all the saints are resurrected at the same time or hour, in a twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet on the Last Day.

1 Corinthians 15:51, 52 - Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

Matthew 13 teaches that the wheat (believers) are separated all at the same time from the tares (unbelievers). Thus, the resurrection of believers that occurs just before the 1000 years includes the resurrection of all believers. It is one general resurrection.

Thus, the 1000 years of Revelation 20 are representative of the Last Day of the Church Age. The just (believers) are raised at its beginning (the First Resurrection) and the unjust (unbelievers as the rest of the dead) at its end. The Bible provides for this interpretation, and it tells us not to let this fact escape our notice. It teaches:

2 Peter 3:8 - But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

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Additionally, Revelation 20:4 states that the resurrected Tribulation saints reign with Christ for the 1000 years. Second Timothy 2:12 also states that the saints who do not deny Christ will reign with Him. As mentioned previously, 2 Timothy does not say when the reign occurs. But, as I understand it, the Bible does not refer to another period when believers rule with Christ other than during the 1000 years. It would appear, then, that the saints who reign with Christ during the 1000 years are **all** the resurrected saints.

Second Thessalonians 1:6-10 teaches that all unbelievers are killed at Christ's Coming. Other Scriptures imply this same truth (Revelation 14:14-20; 19:21). Because Christ resurrects and raptures His church after the Tribulation and kills all unbelievers at His Coming, there are no unresurrected people left to enter a Millennium.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 - For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well [the Rapture] when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed.

Revelation 14:14-20 speaks of the (single) reap or harvest of the earth. The believers are first reaped from the earth, followed by all unbelievers being killed in the wine press operation. The wine press operation occurs at Christ's Coming when He kills all unbelievers after the Rapture. The wine press judgment is so devastating that the blood of all the unbelievers being killed rises to the height of the bridles of horses. At this time of the wine press operation, Christ destroys all unbelievers with a rod of iron.

Revelation 2:27 - And He shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces ...

Revelation 19:15 - And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so with it He might smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

Again the saints are reaped just before the unbelievers are — a single Rapture of the church followed by the complete destruction of all unbelievers, as unbelievers are represented in Scripture by pottery being smashed to pieces.

Because all believers are resurrected and all unbelievers are killed at Christ's Coming, a future Jewish golden-age type Millennium for the 1000 years is an impossibility. There are no unresurrected people (particularly believers) available to enter and populate a millennium.

## **Daniel's 70th Week**

God gave the Seventy Week Prophecy of the 490 years to show when the Messiah would come and aspects of what His ministry would be (Daniel 9:24-27). The 490 years started with the decree of King Cyrus the Great and ended three and one-half years into the Church Period. The first half of the last and 70th Week (three and one-half years) is the ministry of Christ, and the last half is the first three and one-half years of the ministry of the Church when the gospel only went to the Jews and Jerusalem.

This prophecy foretold two major teachings regarding fellowship with God:

1. The Jews would return to fellowship with God from their captivity at the beginning of the 70 Weeks under the Palestinian Everlasting Covenant, being returned to the land of Israel to rebuild the holy city of Jerusalem and the temple; and
2. The Jews later, during the 70th Week, would come into eternal security with God, by receiving salvation under the New Covenant confirmed by Christ and established by His Cross in the middle of the last week.

Many interpreters believe that the last and 70th week (seven years) occurs in the future and represents

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the endtime Tribulation. They believe that, according to Daniel 9:26, 27, the Antichrist makes a covenant with the Jews during the Tribulation, instead of Christ confirming the New Covenant with the Jews in the upper room (Luke 22:14-20).

The period of the 70 Weeks were decreed by God to apply to Daniel's people the Jews as a period when God would deal only with the Jews in relationship to Himself. Thus, the belief that the 70th week is future and represents the endtime Tribulation has caused many people to believe that the Tribulation lasts only seven years and is Jewish in character. This understanding has caused interpreters to believe that the all-nations church must be raptured before the Jewish Tribulation begins.

Such a belief helps support the interpretive error that God has two stand alone programs, one for Israel and another for the church. This belief is in opposition to the teaching that God has one single plan for all believers, having one part of history as a transition into the next part. Thus, the understanding of Daniel's 70 Weeks is pivotal in the understanding of prophecy.

As the discussion in the next few numbered paragraphs explains, because Daniel's 70th Week is history after the first three and one-half years into the Church Period, the 70th Week does not represent or refer to a Jewish endtime Tribulation. It does not support a pretribulation Rapture concept.

The 70th Week is history and cannot be future to the time surrounding the Cross, coming as the endtime Tribulation for the following reasons:

1. The Tribulation as described in Revelation is all-nations in character, not Jewish (Revelation 7:9, 14). More believers than any person can count die from all nations (not just Jewish believers) and enter heaven during the Great Tribulation. Thus, the characteristics of the Tribulation do not fit the description and, thus, do not qualify the Tribulation to be the all-Jewish 70th Week. (Revelation 7:9.)
2. Many of the purposes for the 70 Weeks are fulfilled by Christ on the Cross, such as the atonement for iniquity. The prophecy states that the Messiah is cut off (crucified) after 69 weeks. Assuming the 70th Week is future to the Church Period places the Cross between the 69th and 70th weeks and outside the period of the 70 Weeks. This is not in keeping with a responsible interpretation of the prophecy. Because the atonement for iniquity (Christ's Cross) must occur in the period of the Weeks and that Christ, the Messiah, is cut off after the 69 Weeks, Christ's Cross must occur in the 70th Week. It occurs in the middle of the 70th Week as the prophecy states by the stopping of the animal sacrifice and the grain offering as Christ is crucified. The stopping of the animal sacrifice and the grain offering in God's program, happened when God rent the veil of the temple. From the time of the Cross, the physical animal sacrifices are no longer in God's program even though the Jews continued them until A.D. 70.
3. The Bible, according to the Palestinian Everlasting Covenant and the levels of discipline (Leviticus 26), requires that the Jews be returned to Jerusalem from their exile in Babylon immediately after the end of the 70-year captivity (Jeremiah 29:10). According to their relationship with God under the Mosaic Law Covenant and with the 70 Week prophecy, they will rebuild the city and its walls, and the temple. The temple is also implied by the statements in Jeremiah 30:18 with 29:10 and by the action in Ezra to build the temple. All this takes place with the decree of Cyrus as God gives him the mandate to return the Jews to Israel to rebuild the city and the temple. (2 Chronicles 36:22, 23; Isaiah 44:28; 45:1, 13; Ezra 1:1-3.)

Because of chronology difficulties, however, many interpreters have accepted a much later decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus in his 20th year instead of accepting the decree of Cyrus. Such a position leaves room for the assumption that the 70th week is still future, occurring as Revelation's Tribulation. The decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus was issued 91 years after the termination of the 70-year captivity. The 91 years is a longer period than the captivity itself and does not meet the Bible's requirements for an immediate return of the Jews (Jeremiah 29:10). The Bible teaches that the city and temple were already being rebuilt in the second year of the Jews' return to their land under the decree of Cyrus before the time of Artaxerxes' 7th year (Ezra 3:8, 10; 5:1, 2; 6:1-5, 8). This was 13 years earlier than his 20th year, and it makes the choice of his 20th year invalid. Further, the Bible in Ezra and Nehemiah only calls this king, Artaxerxes. It does not call him Artaxerxes Longimanus. This name, taken from history, has been assumed by interpreters to make the chronology

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understandable. Studies located in Appendix B show that Artaxerxes is actually King Darius, not Artaxerxes Longimanus. The chronological difficulties associated with the various alternative decrees are discussed in detail in Appendix B. The chronological issues are resolved where it is shown that the accepted Ptolemaic chronology during the period of the Persian Kings has never been authenticated and is in error.

4. The Hebrew text of Daniel 9:27 requires that a previously known covenant be confirmed or caused to prevail (as was done by Christ as the Messiah). It does not allow for a covenant to be newly created, such as by the Antichrist. This would have to be the case if the 70th week were still in the future. The New Covenant — one that was previously known, namely the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31 — was enacted by Christ. The Antichrist is not mentioned in the passage, nor is he in its context. He should not be named as the one who makes a covenant with the Jews only to break it later, unless a verifiable Scripture elsewhere can be found in support of this view. I do not know of any. Many have thought the Antichrist is involved because they believe that he is the prince that brings his armies against Israel to destroy Jerusalem and the temple (Daniel 9:26). But in these situations, it is God (now Christ the Prince) that brings the pagan armies as His servants to destroy His own city and temple, just as He did previously when He brought the Babylonian armies as His servants against Israel and His own temple (Jeremiah 25:9; Ezekiel 24:21).
5. Most English Bibles have the translation of Daniel 9:27 as follows: "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week ...." However, there is no preposition (such as "for") in the Hebrew text. The translation based on the context could also be "in" or "during" one week. Thus the translation could be, "In a week, he shall make the covenant to prevail for the many ...." The Berkeley Bible shows the translation this way. Thus, the Hebrew syntax does not demand that the duration of the covenant period be only seven years. The New Covenant period can be the first three and one-half years of the Church Period after Christ enacted the covenant to the Jews only and can be the remainder of the Church Period for all people.

All of these Jewish 70 weeks became history three and one-half years after the Cross. The gospel did not leave the Jews and Jerusalem to go to the Gentiles until after the first three and one-half years into the Church Period were completed. This is verified by a study of the book of Acts that shows the gospel did not go to the Gentiles until after the apostle Paul's conversion and at the time of the conversion of Cornelius, the Gentile. The gospel went to the Jew first and then to the Greek or Gentile in the sequence of Acts 1:8 (Romans 1:16). The only period when God deals only with the Jews after the giving of the prophecy to Daniel is from the decree of Cyrus to three and one-half years into the Church Period. Even Christ said that He was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24). After this time God deals with all the nations and their cities.

Because the 70th Week is history, the prophecy does not provide for a future exclusive period when God only deals with the Jews that could be the future Tribulation. Thus, the prophecy does not provide a basis for a pretribulation Rapture of the all-nations church. Because many Gentile believers die in the Great Tribulation, the all-nations church is not raptured until after the Tribulation. The Bible has no passage that lays a foundation for a final Great Tribulation that is only Jewish in character (a period when only Jews are saved) that would allow for a pretribulation Rapture.

The prophecy of the 70 Weeks is therefore a pivotal prophecy in determining the time of the Rapture and the 1000 years. Because the 70th Week is history, requiring a posttribulation Rapture, and all unbelievers are killed at Christ's Coming, there will be no one available to enter a Millennium. Thus, there will not be one.

A detailed study of the 70 Weeks, including the interpretive difficulties, is presented in Appendix B, "Daniel's Seventy Weeks."

## Many Prophesied Events

The Bible teaches that there are many prophesied events that must precede the Rapture. Scripture does not support the Pretribulation Rapture View of the imminent Rapture of the church, meaning that there are no prophesied events that must precede the Rapture, and, thus, the Rapture can come at any time during the Church Period, but before the Tribulation. Scripture teaches the contrary. Scripture specifically

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describes many events that must occur before the church can be raptured. These include the prophesied events that took place in the first century — namely, the destruction of the temple (Matthew 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 21:5, 6, 20-22, Olivet Discourse), the deaths of Peter and Paul (John 21:18, 19; 2 Timothy 4:6; 2 Peter 1:14), and the preaching of the gospel to the whole world (Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10). The gospel did go to the entire, then known whole, world in the period of the early church (Acts 2:5; Romans 1:8; Colossians 1:6). In addition, the New Testament Scriptures themselves were not all written until nearly the end of the first century.

There are also many indefinite prophesied events that cover the Church Age which must take place before the Rapture can occur. These include (1) the events described in the parable about the return of the Lord from a distant country (Luke 19:11-27), (2) the events in the parable about the wheat and the tares growing together before they are separated at the end of the age (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43), (3) Christ fulfilling His statement that He would be with His church until the end of the age (Matthew 28:19, 20), (4) all God's named elect believing the gospel (Romans 11:25; Ephesians 1:4), and (5) the elect completing God's named works (Ephesians 2:10). Also many events recorded in Revelation must occur before the Rapture can occur. Thus, the Rapture will not occur until after the end of the current Church Age, and after all the elect believe and accomplish their works. One might expect the Church Age or Dispensation to last about 2000 years just as the two previous Dispensations have lasted. If this were true, the Rapture will not be imminent until the time the 2000 years of the Church Period are nearly over.

Because the Rapture has not yet occurred in the more than 1900 years of the church period, it is evident that the Rapture has not always been imminent in the sense of the term as many pretribulationists believe it to be. There could be another long period ahead before it becomes imminent. Certainly God has criteria that must be met before He will rapture His church, whether or not they are taught in Scripture. **For a Pretribulation Rapture View, until those criteria are known, the timing and imminency of the Rapture cannot be known.** There could be many events that must happen before the Tribulation comes. This being true, the Rapture could still be imminent before the Tribulation, but after these events occur.

However, because the Rapture occurs at the Second Coming of Christ after the Tribulation, it will only be imminent near the end of the 42 months of the Great Tribulation and Beast period. It will only be known accurately if the beginning of the 42 months and the period that the heavenly court sits for judgment can be exactly known.

God's criteria for when the Rapture will occur do not appear to be directly stated as such in Scripture. The Scriptures do state that God before the foundation of the world chose an elect (believers in Christ) and the works that they would do (Ephesians 1:4; 2:10). It would seem only natural that the Rapture will not occur until after all the elect believe and accomplish God's chosen works. Because many of His elect live and die, remaining faithful to the martyr's death in the Tribulation, it is clear that the Rapture will occur after the Great Tribulation (Revelation 6:9-11; 7:9-17; 13:7; 14:12, 13). The argument that God has two separate groups of His elect has yet to be proven (beyond assertion) and developed from the direct teachings of Scripture. I do not believe that it can be done because the Scriptures teach otherwise.

It is also natural that God will bring the final judgments on unbelievers only after all unbelievers have made a formal decision to reject Christ's rule and His gospel. People make formal decisions when they accept or reject the gospel and the mark-of-the-Beast or by death, not having made a formal decision. All the unbelievers making formal decisions of rejection is the bundling of the tares for the eternal fire (cf. Matthew 13:30). The wheat is taken (the Resurrection and Rapture of the church) into God's barn (the dwelling places prepared for believers in the new Jerusalem; cf. John 14:1-3; Revelation 21) after the tares (unbelievers) are bundled. According to Scripture, those who take the mark of the Beast can no longer be saved (Revelation 14:9, 10). The Rapture cannot occur until the final tares are bundled which occurs during the Great Tribulation.

Scripture shows that many of the elect die in the Great Tribulation (Revelation 7:9, 14). As they reject the doctrines of the Beast and go to the martyrs' death, they do the works of God. The work of the church is not complete until the end of the Great Tribulation.

The church is not raptured until after the coming of false christs in the endtime Tribulation according to the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:23-25). The Rapture occurs at Christ's Coming when His angels gather

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all believers from all parts of heaven and earth (Matthew 24:31). This teaching is confirmed by the church not being raptured until after the apostasy has come and after the Man of Lawlessness is revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:1-5). His period will be the time of the false christs and the signs and wonders that occur before the Coming of Christ. Both the Lord and Paul warned the church not to believe anyone who told believers otherwise (Matthew 24:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:5). Thus, they both have warned us that the Tribulation with false christs and the Man of Lawlessness will come before Christ returns to gather His saints from all ends of heaven and earth in the Rapture.

Matthew 24:25 - "Behold, I have told you in advance." (The Lord.)

2 Thessalonians 2:5 - Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things. (The apostle Paul.)

## **The Wrath of God**

John 3:36; Romans 2:5; 5:9 and 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9 teach that the church is not appointed to God's wrath. Pretribulationists believe that this wrath refers to the wrath occurring in the Tribulation. Thus, they argue that the church must be raptured before the Tribulation begins. However, the wrath referred to in these passages is not God's wrath in the Tribulation; instead, it is His eternal wrath of the Lake of Fire. The church, of course, will not experience God's eternal wrath. However, she will experience His temporal wrath in discipline during the Tribulation. Revelation teaches that there will be many believers who will experience God's temporal wrath in the endtime Tribulation (the events of the trumpets and the Beast period; Revelation 7-9; 13; 14). Similarly, God's temporal wrath was poured out on Israel (both believers and unbelievers) in Old Testament times (Jeremiah 21:4, 5, 12; 23:19; Lamentations 2:2, 4; 3:1; Ezekiel 5:13; 7:8). God is no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11; James 2:1-4): if He would allow Revelation's Tribulation saints to experience His temporal wrath, might He not allow the church to do likewise? (Indeed, the Tribulation saints are part of the church.)

## **Removal of the Holy Spirit**

Pretribulationists believe that the Holy Spirit is removed from the earth with the departure of the church in 2 Thessalonians 2:6, 7 to allow the Man of Lawlessness to be revealed. However, the passage instead teaches that the Man of Lawlessness is revealed (comes out of the midst of mankind) because the church (and the world) has departed from obedient faith. The church is in great apostasy. This is the context of the passage. The great apostasy of the church and world come before the Man of Lawlessness is revealed.

As a result of the apostasy, God no longer restrains the Man of Lawlessness and allows him to be revealed. He is revealed as the appropriate seal of Revelation is broken because the breaking of the seals order the endtime events of Revelation. The church remains on the earth after his revealing to experience God's discipline for her falling away, her apostasy.

The focus of the passage in 2 Thessalonians 2 is that the Rapture (our gathering together to Him), the Coming of Christ, and the beginning of the Day of the Lord (all synchronized events) will not occur until after the Great Apostasy (the departure from the faith) comes first and after the Man of Lawlessness is revealed. The Man of Lawlessness will not be revealed to come out from among the midst of mankind until God stops restraining him. He operates during the Beast period. And when Christ does come, He will destroy the Man of Lawlessness after his period of reign. (2 Thessalonians 2:1, 8.)

## **Discussion**

Two verses in this passage have given interpreters problems because of their vagueness:

2 Thessalonians 2:6 - And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed.

2 Thessalonians 2:7 - For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.

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Several possibilities or assertions (not interpretations) have been suggested for the restrainer and for what is taken out of the way. These suggestions for the restrainer have been God, the Holy Spirit in the church, and government. The restrainer in verse 6 is in the neuter and in verse 7 is in the masculine (Greek text). This difference has not helped interpreters. The Spirit of God is said to restrain in Genesis 6:3, but was never removed from the scene, including through believers, such as today or in the endtimes.

Many have asserted that the restrainer is removed from the earth after stopping the restraining, being taken out of the way. This has led to the concept that the restrainer is the Holy Spirit acting through the church. The Man of Lawlessness cannot be revealed, until after the restraining action of the Holy Spirit through the church is removed — taken out of the way — by the Rapture of the church. However, the Greek for being "taken out of the way" does not demand a removal from the earth. There is no verification of this assertion or possibility in Scripture.

Because God does restraining directly or indirectly through government, the church, and by many other means, the most likely meaning of these two verses is that God (or His Holy Spirit) restrains the Man of Lawlessness from being revealed until the time that He chooses to stop. But neither God nor the Holy Spirit are removed from earth directly or through the church. Even if God does restrain through the church, the passage does not demand the removal of the church from the earth in Rapture when He stops restraining. Observation indicates that, as sin is escalating over the earth, the church is still on the earth, showing that her impact on the world is decreasing. This increase in sin shows that God's restraint on sin is decreasing, whether or not it is through the church. And this is happening before the Rapture.

A careful examination of the passages shows that when God's restraint is removed, the Man of Lawlessness is revealed, being allowed to come out from among the midst of mankind. It is not the restrainer that is taken out of the way, but instead the verse can mean that God, the restrainer, stops restraining the Man of Lawlessness, so that he is revealed as he comes out from the midst of mankind. The man of lawlessness coming out from the midst of mankind is a possible translation.<sup>1</sup>

Scripture teaches that when God's people are obedient, they are successful. When they are disobedient, they are disciplined. In Israel's time, God used Israel's enemy armies (e.g. Babylon's armies) to bring this discipline. This is the concept here in 2 Thessalonians 2. The Man of Lawlessness is revealed to bring discipline to the church because of her great apostasy. As the sin of the church increases, God reduces His restraint on sin, and it escalates in the rest of the people. The stopping of His restraining eventually allows the Man of Lawlessness to be revealed and bring the discipline.

An alternative translation for the verse is:

2 Thessalonians 2:7 - "For the mystery of [the] lawless [one] is operating now and He [God] who is restraining just now will do so until he [Man of Lawlessness] comes out from the midst of mankind or from among them." (Author's translation and comments.)

The Man of Lawlessness is revealed because the church overall becomes apostate, not because the church is raptured.

## The Day of the Lord

The time of God's severe and devastating judgment against a nation is called "a Day of the Lord." The judgment comes in the form of devastating wartime calamities on a nation, either of His people or of the world, for her apostasy, immorality, sin, and false worship. A Day of the Lord takes sovereignty from a nation. There were many such days of the Lord in the Old Testament. For example, **Israel (God's people)** experienced a Day of the Lord judgment when Babylon came to devastate the land, temple, and Jerusalem. Fifty years afterward, Babylon experienced a Day of the Lord when the Medes and Persians captured her city and land.

The following are happenings that typically occur on every Day of the Lord:

1. The Lord does what He has not done before and what He will not do again — He brings great devastation, causing many believers and unbelievers to die. (This happens with God's people [Isaiah

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7:17; Jeremiah 30:7; Ezekiel 5:9; Daniel 9:12; 12:1; Joel 2:2; Matthew 24:21].)

2. Destruction comes from the Almighty to judge sin, pride, and action against God's people. Sinners die.
3. All hands go limp and all hearts melt when they see that the destruction from God's hand cannot be stopped. Pain and anguish take hold of people, like that of a woman suffering in labor.
4. The sun, moon, and stars lose their light. There are clouds and thick darkness. God removes all light, both physical and spiritual, from those upon whom He brings severe judgment.
5. The land is devastated.
6. Great earthquakes occur.

The above happenings were taken from many Scriptures regarding the Day of the Lord.

As previously stated, three Day-of-the-Lord judgments occur in the New Testament period. The first was a final calamity judgment upon the nation of Israel in A.D. 70. The second is a calamity judgment of the happenings of the first six trumpets upon the Beast nation, or empire, and the world, for their disobedience during the fifth-seal period. This judgment comes as the Great Tribulation begins and as announced at the sixth seal. The third and last is after the Tribulation. This last is a retribution-judgment upon all nations for their sin and for their persecution of the church during the Tribulation Period. This will be the greatest Day of the Lord because it will come against those who greatly persecuted Christ's church. **The final portion of the Great Tribulation period exclusive from the calamity with war is NOT a Day of the Lord.** Instead, the Tribulation is a divine discipline period that occurs between the last two days of the Lord: the one during the six trumpets, and the other at the seventh bowl. The sequence of these two Days of the Lord come according to the Pattern Sequence. See chapters 5 and 6 and Appendix A.

The church (as the Tribulation saints) is subject to God's disciplinary wrath during the Day of the Lord of the trumpet happenings, but not to God's retribution-wrath during the Great Day-of-the-Lord events of the seventh bowl. The same type situation was true with Israel. She experienced the first Day of the Lord against her, but not the one that came against her conquering nation. Thus, the church will experience the Day of the Lord that comes upon the Beast nation and world during the trumpet happenings.

The last and Great Day of the Lord is also called the Day of God in 2 Peter 3:9-13 and in Revelation 16:14 during the bowl happenings of the last war — "for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty." According to 2 Peter 3, this day of God will cause the elements of the earth to melt and the heavens to burn from the intense heat and fire that God brings. Thus, when this Day of God is completed, there is no earth left upon which people can live. There will be no earth available for a Millennium to follow the bowl periods. Thus, the Bible says in 2 Peter 3:13, "But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."

The Bible uses the term "great" Day of the Lord when referring to a Day of the Lord against Israel and her surrounding nations in Zephaniah 1:14, against Israel in Acts 2:20, and against all nations, including Israel, at the end of the Church Age during the bowl happenings in Revelation 16:14.

A Day of the Lord has come if the happenings described previously are occurring, whether or not the Bible labels the situation a Day of the Lord. Other names for the Day of the Lord include Day of "Vengeance," "Indignation," "Reckoning," or "Wrath."

References to Day-of-the-Lord judgments:

### Against Israel

Isaiah 2:5-22; Ezekiel 13:1-23; Joel 1:1-2:27; Amos 5:18-20; Zephaniah 1:1-2:3. The judgment is called "the Day of the Lord" in Isaiah 2:12 ("Day of Reckoning for the Lord of Hosts"); and in Ezekiel 13:5; Joel

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1:15; 2:1, 11; Amos 5:18, 20; Zephaniah 1:7, 14, 18; 2:2.

### **Against the Nations**

Babylon: Isaiah 13:1-22; Egypt (Ethiopia, Put, Lud, and those in league with them): Ezekiel 30:1-26; Edom (Esau) and allied nations: Obadiah 15; Gaza, Ashkelon, Ekron, land of the Cherethites, land of Canaan, land of the Philistines, Moab, Sons of Ammon and the Assyrians: Zephaniah 2:4-6, 8-10. It is called the "Day of the Lord" in Isaiah 13:6, 9; Ezekiel 30:3, and Obadiah 1:15.

### **Against the Nations, But Not Called a Day of the Lord**

Moab: Isaiah 15:1-9; 16:1-14; Ezekiel 25:8-11 (includes Mount Seir); Amos 2:1-3; Jeremiah 48:1-47; Ezekiel 35:1-15 (Mount Seir); Damascus (Syria): Isaiah 17:1-14; Amos 1:3-5; Jeremiah 49:23-27; Egypt: Isaiah 19:1-17; Ezekiel 29:1-21; 30:1-26; 32:1-21; Jeremiah 46:1-26; Tyre: Isaiah 23:1-18; Ezekiel 26:1-28:19; Zechariah 9:2-4; Ezekiel 29:18; Amos 1:9, 10; Edom and the other nations: Isaiah 34:1-15; 63:1-6; Ezekiel 25:12-14; 32:29; 36:1-5; Obadiah 1:1-14; Amos 1:11, 12; Jeremiah 49:7-22; Ammon: Ezekiel 25:1-7; Amos 1:13-15; Jeremiah 49:1-6; Ezekiel 21:28-32; Philistia: Ezekiel 25:15-17; Amos 1:6-8 (Gaza); Jeremiah 47:1-7; Sidon: Ezekiel 28:20-24; 32:30; Assyria: Ezekiel 31:1-18; 32:22, 23; Nahum 1-3 (Nineveh); Elam: Ezekiel 32:24, 25; Jeremiah 49:34-39; Meshech - Tubal, Land of Magog (Gog): Ezekiel 32:26-28; 38; 39; Kedar and Hazor: Jeremiah 49:28-33; Babylon: Jeremiah 50:1-51:64; Isaiah 47:1-15.

### **Against Israel in A.D. 70**

Joel 2:32; Acts 2:20; Matthew 24:15-22; Mark 13:14-20; Luke 21:20-24.

### **Against the Beast Empire And World at the Beginning of the Final Disciplinary Tribulation Period**

Revelation 6:12-18.

### **Against All Nations at the End Of the Tribulation Period**

Joel 3:1-21; Matthew 24:27-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2:1, 2, 8; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 11:18; 16:17-21.

## **The Hour of Trial or Testing**

According to the Pretribulation Rapture View interpretation of Revelation 3:10, the church is kept out of the hour or period of the trial or testing that will come upon the earth, and thus, she is raptured before the trial begins. The trial is assumed to be the Great Tribulation. Thus, the Bible appears to teach that the church will not be on the earth when the trial and Great Tribulation begin.

Revelation 3:10 - 'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from [ek] the hour of testing, which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth.'

Revelation 3:10 uses the Greek preposition ek that carries the meaning "from" and that can mean "out of," in the sense of being separated from. It can mean also "from," in the sense of "separated from, but not removed from the presence of." The latter has the concept of being preserved without the effect — "to be preserved" through the trial without the trial having an effect on believers. The former meaning is the meaning that the pretribulationist believes. The latter meaning would imply a posttribulation Rapture. Both of these meanings of ek are used in John 17:15:

John 17:15 - "I do not ask Thee to take them out of [from or out of] the world, but to keep them from [separated from, but not removed from the presence of] the evil one."

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The same meaning of the preposition can be applied to Revelation 3:10, showing that God will protect the obedient church from the effects of the trial, instead of removing her by the Rapture. Thus, the church is preserved through the trial.

Revelation 3:10 - Because you have kept the word of my perseverance, I also will keep you from [separated from, but still in the presence of] the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth.

### **Discussion of Revelation 3:10**

There is the fundamental question of whether the "hour of testing" or trial, occurred in the period of the Philadelphia church, near John's day, or whether it is future, during the Great Tribulation time. Assuming it to be future, Revelation teaches that a test will come upon the whole world in the period of the Great Tribulation. The test is whether unbelievers choose to believe in Satan or in Christ; to believe in Christ as Savior or to believe in the false doctrines of the Beast and thus take the mark of the Beast. All believers are sealed in Christ before this test begins and thus are preserved through it; they are in the presence of it, but not affected by it (Ezekiel 9:4-6; Revelation 7:3). The test cannot affect believers, because they are already saved, and because they have eternal security in Christ, they cannot lose their salvation.

The concept of the trial is whether or not unbelievers will believe the gospel or accept the mark-of-the-Beast during the Great Tribulation. Believers are not tested and are preserved through the trial because they are already saved. If unbelievers accept the mark of the Beast, they can buy their life's necessities in the market place. All unbelievers will take the mark of the Beast, and because they will, they will no longer be able to be saved. Because believers will not accept the mark, most will be martyred. (Ephesians 1:13, 14; Revelation 7:1-3; 13:15-17; 14:9-12.)

While a physical mark may be involved, the true mark of the Beast in Revelation 13:16, 17 is a spiritual, or doctrinal, mark. The mark of the Beast results from a belief in the false doctrines of the Beast. In the Old Testament, God told His people to place His doctrines and commandments on their right hands and on their frontals (Exodus 13:9, 16; Deuteronomy 6:6-8; Jeremiah 3:3). God's perspective is that He looks at the doctrines and commandments people believe as the motivation and reasons from which they worship and conduct their lives. The physical mark is a sign that the people have taken the spiritual mark of believing the evil doctrines of Satan through the Beast.

God probably has chosen that most believers in this testing period of the Great Tribulation are to be martyred on His behalf (Revelation 14:13). Revelation 7:9-17 teaches that a great number of believers die in this period.

Revelation 7:9 - After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes, and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palm branches were in their hands ...

Revelation 7:14 - ... "These are the ones who come out of the great Tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

The meaning of "come out" in Revelation 7:14 is that believers die over a time period. The Greek word for "come" is in the masculine, nominative, plural, and present middle participle. The meaning is that believers are coming out (continuous action) of the tribulation, not having suddenly come out. Robertson states it has the idea of continued repetition. He quotes another author who states, "The martyrs are still arriving from the scene of the Tribulation."<sup>2</sup>

## **The Father's House**

Pretribulationists also believe that John 14:1-3 teaches that the Rapture occurs before the Tribulation:

John 14:1-3 - "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you [the Rapture] to Myself; that where

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I am, there you may be also."

This passage follows John 13:36-38 where it teaches that Christ is going away and the disciples cannot now go with Him. But they will be with Him later. The meaning of the John 14:1-3 passage is that the hearts of the disciples should not be troubled about Christ' leaving them now because they will go to the Father's house to be with Christ at the time when Christ comes again for them. When Christ comes again for them, this would be the time of the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Just as in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, their comfort speaks nothing about missing the endtime Tribulation. Their comfort is based on being with Christ. It is not based on their missing the Tribulation. **This passage speaks nothing about the time when they will go to the Father's house.** The time when they go there could just as easily be after the Tribulation when Christ comes, instead of before the Tribulation as pretribulationists believe.

All the references to Christ's Second Coming refer to a time after the Tribulation. There is not a single verse that teaches that Christ's Coming (and the Rapture) occurs before the Tribulation.

### The Word "Church" in Revelation

Pretribulationists believe that because the word church is not used throughout Revelation, the referral to the word saints in Revelation refers to Israel. Of course the reverse could be said. Saying it either way is not a development from Scripture.

In a normal reading of the book of Revelation, the interpreter finds the church all the way through the book, even though the word "church" is not used. The book is addressed to the seven churches in Asia whose believers are the bond-servants of Christ (Revelation 1:1, 4). The apostle John is called a bond-servant (Revelation 1:1), and the second and third chapters are addressed to the seven churches. There is nothing said in Revelation that indicates that the word "saints" in Revelation means Israel instead of the church, which would be the required meaning for a pretribulation Rapture. The saints who die are saved by the blood of the Lamb, and they die in the Lord (Revelation 7:13, 14; 14:13). They are saved under the New Covenant in the Church Period.

The fact that Revelation does not mention the word "church" does not prove the pretribulationist position that "the saints" in Revelation mean Israel when so large a number of saved Gentiles die in the Great Tribulation. The burden of proof is on the pretribulationist to show that Revelation refers to Israel when it uses the term "the saints." Just a statement of an unverifiable position is no proof. An unverifiable postulation is no way to found a view-determining doctrine. But this is difficult to do when such a large number of Gentiles are saved whose number is beyond the ability of any human to count (Revelation 7:9). God says of the saints in Revelation 7:17 that He will wipe away their tears. This is exactly what God does for the church in the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:4). The new Jerusalem is referred to as the bride, the wife of the Lamb (Revelation 21:9, 10). The bride is the church (2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7).

Clearly, the church is all through the book of Revelation. Consequently, it should be understood that the church goes through the Tribulation and is raptured afterward. One would expect this because there is no mention of a return of Israel as a covenant nation in the New Testament. There is no way that one can make "the saints" in Revelation to be covenant Israel.

### Conclusion Concerning the Imminent Rapture

The aforementioned discussions concerning the doctrines that are associated with the Pretribulation Rapture View show that the Pretribulation Rapture View is not valid. None of these tenets as believed by pretribulationists are valid. The Bible teaches the contrary on every one. The Rapture is not imminent before the Tribulation. Instead, it is imminent near the end of the Great Tribulation. The Rapture occurs after all the elect believe and as the work of the church is nearing completion during the Great Tribulation.

**THE SIGNS OF CHRIST'S COMING;  
AFTER THE RAPTURE,  
GOD DESTROYS THE EARTH**

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As previously mentioned, the Scriptures teach that God will destroy (kill) all unbelievers after the church is gathered together in the Rapture to be with Christ at His Coming, having been given rest from affliction (e.g. 2 Thessalonians 1:5-2:2, 8; Revelation 14:14-20). He also told Abraham that He would not destroy Sodom as long as one righteous person lived in it (Genesis 18:22, 23). Thus, God will destroy the earth if there are no righteous people (believers) left, and He will yet preserve the earth if there is yet one believer remaining. After the Rapture occurs, whenever it does, there will be no periods following it. Thus, a Millennium will not come.

The situation existing at the Coming of the Son of Man (Christ) will be like that in the days of Noah and Lot — a time of great apostasy and immorality.

Luke 17:26-36 - "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, let not the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house go down to take them away; and likewise let not the one who is in the field turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life shall preserve it. I tell you, on that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken, and the other will be left. There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left."

Unbelievers were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until Noah entered the ark and the flood waters came suddenly upon them and destroyed all of them. By faith, Noah believed that the flood would come after he and his family finished the ark. He knew that the coming of the flood was impending, but he did not know the exact timing. In Lot's day, the people were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building, when their cities were totally destroyed (Sodom and Gomorrah). In both situations, unbelievers were living normally and did not understand their peril until judgment came. Likewise, the Son of Man will come suddenly, without warning, in days of normal living, but at a time when the people are in great apostasy, immorality, sin, and false worship. Christ said that He would find little faith on the earth when He came (Luke 18:8). Thus, the world will be in great apostasy. When He comes, He will deliver His people in Rapture and afterward will bring complete destruction on unbelievers. According to this Luke passage, the ones taken will be the ones raptured. The fact that they are taken shows that the Rapture occurs then.

In all these situations, believers are taken to safety; then judgment comes with total destruction immediately upon the remaining unbelievers who are in an extremely sinful state. Not understanding biblical doctrines, unbelievers will not expect Christ's Coming. To them, His Coming will be unexpected, like the coming of a thief in the night. Unbelievers (and disobedient believers) will not notice the biblical signs and will scoff. They will say that things are just like they have always been (2 Peter 3:4). They will not expect His Coming.

Believers need not have anything written to them regarding the times and epochs of Christ's Coming because they know that the Day of the Lord will come upon unbelievers as a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11). It will not come unexpectedly upon believers because they are sons of light and of the day. They will escape this last Great Day of the Lord. Obedient believers will recognize the characteristics of false Christs, just as they will recognize their signs and wonders. Thus, they will have some idea that Christ's Coming is just at the door, because Christ said these would be signs of His Coming.

Matthew 24:24 - "For false christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders ..."

Matthew 24:33 - "... when you see these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door."

Even Christ said that He did not know the exact "hour" or "day" He was coming; the angels and people did not know, only His Father knew (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32). This condition was apparently

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necessary to make the spiritual warfare fair between Christ and Satan.

The Coming of Christ is both in the general and the specific sense. The happenings of Revelation describe precursory events that bring the Coming of Christ. In this general sense, Revelation's events are part of Christ's Coming. His general Coming includes all the events of the endtime Pattern Sequence, beginning with the events of the fourth seal. He comes in the specific sense when He comes to rapture His church and bring judgment on unbelievers. He comes on the clouds, after the heavenly signs, at His "Appearing," "Revelation," and "Coming."

The Lord said He would come at an "hour" when no one would expect Him. No one will know the exact time.

Christ was crucified at Passover, and the church began on the Day of Pentecost. If Christ maintains the consistency of this Jewish pattern, He will return during the Feast of Ingathering (or Tabernacles), perhaps on its eighth day, a sabbath rest. This feast begins on the 15th of the Jewish seventh month of Tishri for eight days, the first eight days of our October. The feast was used to celebrate the time of the harvest.

Leviticus 23:39 - On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the Lord for seven days, with a rest on the first day, and a rest on the eighth day.

Because the mark-of-the-Beast period will last 42 months, if informed believers know when it begins (in the spring), they will know generally when He will come. However, they will not know the hour or the day. They are already saved, and thus, Christ cannot come upon them as a thief for God's judgment in wrath. If Christ does not follow this Jewish pattern, then no one may know when the 42 months actually begin, even if they recognize the trumpet happenings and know they are in the Great Tribulation by the signs. They may know within several months.

Obedient believers will be faithfully keeping His commandments and accomplishing His work. They will be ready for His Coming. Being in apostasy, unbelievers will not understand, and thus, they will not believe He is coming. This situation is like the parable of the ten virgins; five were ready for Christ's Coming, but five were not. (1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 16:15.)

**We must be careful to observe the signs of Christ's Coming. BOTH THE LORD AND THE APOSTLE PAUL TOLD US TO REMEMBER THAT THEY HAD INFORMED US IN ADVANCE THAT SIGNS WOULD PRECEDE CHRIST'S COMING (Matthew 24:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:5). The church will experience the times of these signs. By observing them, she will know that Christ will soon come.** From man's perspective, people will be living normally, as they always have. From God's perspective, they will be in great apostasy and immorality, requiring judgment.

When the signs appear, the Coming of Christ, in the general sense, has begun. In summary, the signs that alert believers of Christ's Coming include the following:

1. The great apostasy and the revelation of the Man of Lawlessness occur. The great apostasy occurs in the period of the fifth seal, and the Man of Lawlessness is revealed then or in the mark-of-the-Beast period. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-5.)
2. False christs, false prophets, and the Man of Lawlessness will perform signs and wonders, trying to mislead even the elect (Matthew 24:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10).
3. The days will be like the days of Noah and Lot. People will be living normally — marrying, building houses, and working — but they will be in a state of great apostasy, immorality, sin, and false worship. They will be saying, "Peace, peace," just before sudden destruction comes upon them (Matthew 24:37-44; Luke 17:26-30; 1 Thessalonians 5:3, 4).

When these signs take place, believers can know Christ's Coming is soon. However, unbelievers and disobedient (and uninformed) believers will be spiritually asleep and will not observe the signs. They will be scoffers who believe things will continue as they always have.

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Signs also occur when Christ comes in the specific sense. They will occur announcing the coming of the Day of the Lord after believers have experienced a Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:29, 30; Mark 13:24-26; Luke 21:25-27). These signs will be the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars, and the shaking of the heavens. Then the sign of the clouds will appear, as Christ comes upon them in great power and glory to rapture His church before the Day of the Lord begins.

**After these specific signs of His Coming, Christ will come suddenly, rapturing His church without giving unbelievers a chance to change their beliefs — just as God gave them no chance after He delivered Noah and Lot. They saw the flood waters rushing upon them, but they could do nothing about it. The people in Sodom were destroyed without warning.**

**Unbelievers may see Him coming upon the clouds before the rapture, but they will not be given opportunity to change their beliefs. Their concern will be judgment, not salvation because they are in great apostasy.**

**The church will be changed into resurrection bodies quickly, in the twinkling of an eye, and then sudden destruction will come upon unbelievers.**

(Matthew 24:23, 24, 30, 36, 37-44, 50; 25:1-30; Mark 13:26, 32-37; Luke 17:22-38, 40; 19:13; 21:27; Acts 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3; 2 Peter 3:3, 4; Revelation 3:3; 16:16.)

### CHRIST SITS AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND

Christ sits at God's right hand from the time of His Ascension until the last enemy is defeated — or becomes His footstool (Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 1:3, 13; 10:12, 13). The last enemy is death — the separation from God and the absence of spiritual life. Those who follow the world and worship other gods are His enemies and reside in spiritual death. Christ overcame Satan's power of death for people by His Cross (Hebrews 2:14). Death is overcome for the individual when a person believes in Christ's Cross. At that time, God imparts spiritual life, and this life remains forever. If a person never believes the gospel, he remains in a state of spiritual death forever. Thus, spiritual death is defeated when the last person either believes the gospel or takes the mark of the Beast. Either of these choices results in a permanent spiritual arrangement. When all unbelievers' names (humans) are erased from the Book of Life, then all enemies (both unbelieving humans and evil angels) will have become His footstool. This happens just before the seventh trumpet sounds, after which He raptures His church and brings the final judgments in His wrath on unbelievers.

At His trial, Christ told the high priest that he would, "see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds" (Matthew 26:64). He was speaking of the time of his resurrection and coming before Christ at the Great White Throne. The Rapture also occurs at the time when Christ comes on the clouds. Thus, the Rapture occurs near the time of judgment. Because He sits until the judgment comes, the Rapture cannot occur before this time. The judgment can only come after He has defeated His last enemy. The period of the Coming of Christ on the clouds extends from the Rapture to the time of the Great White Throne Judgment.

The final enemy, death, is subdued by the end of the Great Tribulation. Christ sits on the right hand of Power until the end of the Great Tribulation, when He comes to rapture His church and bring judgment on unbelievers. Sometime after the Great Tribulation, Christ offers up His Kingdom to God the Father, and God becomes all in all:

1 Corinthians 15:23, 24, 28 - ... after those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power .... And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.

He will abolish all human and angelic authority and power when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Lord and His Christ, after the seventh trumpet sounds. Thus, the Rapture and final judgments occur at this time.

(Psalm 110:1-7; Matthew 22:44; 24:30; 26:64; Acts 1:9-11; 2:34-36; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28; Ephesians

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1:20-23; Colossians 3:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 2 Timothy 1:10; Hebrews 1:3, 13; 2:14; 8:1; 10:12, 13; 12:2; Revelation 11:15; 16.)

### **THE OLIVET DISCOURSE**

In His discourse on the Mount of Olives, Christ addresses His disciples, answering their three questions that were as follows: (1) when will all the stones of the temple be torn down, (2) what will be the sign of His Coming, and (3) what will be the sign of the end of the current age (Matthew 24; Mark 13; and Luke 21)?

Because of the wording in the Discourse regarding a Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21; Mark 13:19) and regarding Christ's Coming after the tribulation of those days (Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27), many believe that this tribulation refers to the endtime Great Tribulation in Revelation 7:14. This conclusion has re-enforced the belief that the Rapture of the all-nations church could be pretribulation. This is thought to be true because the discussion regarding the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place (thought to be the temple) and the Great Tribulation in the passage refers to a Jewish economy in the endtime Tribulation period (Matthew 24:15-21). Matthew speaks of the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place with reference to the book of Daniel. Daniel refers to the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. Because of the reference to the Great Tribulation, dispensational interpretation has the temple that is destroyed in Daniel being one that by their view is in the endtime Great Tribulation. Thus, adherents to this view believe that the endtime Tribulation is Jewish in character and, because they do, they believe that the all-nations church must be raptured before this Jewish Tribulation in Matthew 24 begins.

However, because (1) the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 by a Great Tribulation is necessary to answer the disciples' question regarding when will the stones of the temple be torn down and (2) the passage refers to the Tribulation of those days, there must be two Great Tribulations in the passage. One is directly stated in Matthew 24:21 (the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple), and the other one is implied in Matthew 24:23, 24 when false christs and prophets come showing great signs and wonders (the endtime Tribulation of Revelation 7:14). This last Great Tribulation is not directly mentioned in the Discourse because the Church Period was considered a mystery (Ephesians 1:9, 10) during the gospel period, and its information was not revealed until after the Day of Pentecost. The implied endtime Great Tribulation during the time of false christs and prophets is the tribulation referred to in Matthew 24:29 where it says: "But immediately after the tribulation of those days."

This interpretation shows that the Jewish economy associated with the Great Tribulation of Matthew 24:21 was associated with the persecution of the Jews in A.D. 70 and not with the endtime Tribulation. This passage gives no foundation for an endtime Jewish Tribulation. This Discourse is discussed in detail in Appendix C, "The Olivet Discourse."

### **BELIEVERS MUST PREACH THE GOSPEL**

In Romans 10:13-17, the Bible teaches that believers must preach the gospel, taking it to unbelievers for them to be saved. They must believe the report concerning the gospel. Unbelievers do not seek after God (Romans 3:9-18), people must take the gospel to them so that they can hear it:

Romans 10:17 - So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

This teaching requires a posttribulation Rapture because a very large number of believers die in the Great Tribulation. After the Rapture, there would be no one left to preach the gospel to have this many saved in times of great apostasy.

Historically, people have believed without preachers after they have once heard. But God must draw them to Himself (John 6:44). However, people remaining after the Rapture will have rejected the gospel and/or will be in great apostasy and in rampant sin. They will not believe after the Rapture. According to the Posttribulation Rapture View, all unbelievers who remain after the Rapture will have taken the mark of the Beast. They no longer can be saved.

Certainly, those in great apostasy who have not yet heard before the Rapture occurs cannot believe

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without preachers of the gospel after the Rapture occurs. Those whose sin is mature are no longer able to believe. Because they have formally rejected the gospel and the truth (the fact of creation), and because they are in great sin, God or their sin hardens them so they can no longer believe even if they do hear the gospel (Matthew 13:14, 15; Acts 28:24-28; Romans 1:18-32; 11:7-10). God gives them up to their sin.

For a pretribulation Rapture to be valid, unbelievers will need to seek after God (no one will be left after the Rapture to preach the gospel) in a time of great apostasy and rampant sin, and lead a number of people to Christ, greater than any person can count, in less than seven years. Saving this very large number of people without preachers when unbelievers do not seek after God during periods of extreme apostasy has not happened in all of history, and it is neither logical, nor is such a situation supported by Scripture. Thus, it is not likely that it will happen in the future. Nor is a pretribulation Rapture, because of the teaching of this doctrine, likely.

### **THE ORIENTAL MARRIAGE OF CHRIST TO HIS CHURCH**

Christ and His church are married according to the oriental marriage custom. The timing of the Rapture is in accordance with the sequence in this marriage custom. Thus, knowledge of the marriage details brings understanding of when the Rapture occurs.

In this custom,<sup>3</sup> the parents decide whom their children will marry. At the time of the betrothal, the bridegroom gives his bride a gold ring. This is a binding engagement, or marriage, but the couple does not yet live together (Matthew 1:18; Luke 2:5). This was the case with Mary and Joseph, when Mary became pregnant with the Christ child. The engagement cannot be set aside without a divorce (Matthew 1:18-20). After a prescribed period, such as a year, the bride's father makes her ready by giving her a white wedding garment. The bridegroom comes with his friends to the bride's home, and the bride's father presents her to the bridegroom. The groom takes his bride to his home for a wedding feast of many days (Matthew 25:10). Afterward, the bridegroom takes his bride to their new home where they now live together.

According to this marriage custom concept, before the foundation of the world, God the Father chose the church to be Christ's bride (Ephesians 1:4). As the church believes, God gives the Holy Spirit as a pledge, or guarantee, (the same purpose as the golden ring) that the completed, or live-in, marriage will occur later (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:12-14). The pledge is a promise that brings eternal security in Christ; the engagement is consummated. At a future time, the Father raptures the church to His home above the earth and makes the church-bride ready by giving her a white wedding garment (Revelation 19:7, 8). Then Christ comes, as the bridegroom, with His friends, the holy angels. The Father presents the church to Christ, and they can now live together. The groom now takes His bride, with the bridegroom's friends, to the earth for the wedding feast or supper (Revelation 19:9) (at the time they make war against unbelievers). Later, He takes His bride to their new home, the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-5, 9, 10, 22-27).

The bride makes herself ready with a new wedding garment, and the wedding supper occurs at Christ's Second Coming, when He comes to destroy the earth (Revelation 19). The wedding happens at the Rapture, after Babylon the Great — the great harlot — who worked with the Beast with the seventh head (Revelation 19:2) is judged, and after the seventh trumpet, when the Lord and His Christ have taken over the reign of the earth (Revelation 11:15, 17; 19:6). Thus, the oriental marriage concept harmonizes with 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and teaches that the Rapture is posttribulational.

### **ROMANS, CHAPTERS 9-11**

These chapters in Romans are devoted to teaching the fact that God has not cast aside His people Israel after the Church Period began on the Day of Pentecost. The Jews individually like the Gentiles can believe the gospel and can be saved, appropriating the riches of Christ as God planned. Central to this passage is Romans 10:9-13 where it speaks that both the Jew and Gentile can have salvation in Christ without distinction. Thus, they can have the very best that God can offer them.

Romans 10:12 - For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek [Gentile]; for the same Lord is Lord

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of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; for "Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

These chapters in Romans do not teach that God has set aside Israel as a covenant nation for the duration of the Church Period, and then, as Christ comes as the Deliverer at the end of the Church Period, He plans to bring her as a covenant nation back into her land in the Millennium. There is not a single Scripture in this passage of Romans 9-11 that refers to Israel being returned to her land after the Church Period. In fact there is not a single Scripture in the whole New Testament or the Old Testament that teaches that. The whole passage in Romans 9-11 deals with salvation in Christ and being grafted into Christ — the Jewish and Gentile believers have equal inheritance in Christ. Because this is true, God has not cast off His people Israel.

God is very careful to say that the true children of God or Abraham are the children of promise. These are to be saved in Christ as Abraham's Seed. They are not the physical lineage of Abraham who inherit the land. Thus, the Jews, as a covenant nation, inheriting the land after the Cross have no importance, and this will not happen.

Galatians 3:7-9, 29 - Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith that are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, "All the nations shall be blessed in you." So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer ... And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

All the nations includes the nation of Israel.

Just as it was in the days of Elijah when God had a saved and faithful remnant of 7000 believers, God today also has another remnant according to God's gracious choice (Romans 11:4, 5). Romans 9-11 teaches that, although the sons of Israel are very large in number, only a remnant of Israel will ever be saved. Those not saved will be permanently hardened and will never believe (Romans 11:7, 8). They are the non-elect. All of Israel is not the true Israel, only the sons of promise are. What the apostle Paul is saying is that God is now saving individuals of Israel by the Cross. And those who are the important ones of Israel are now the children of promise whom the Seed of Abraham blesses with salvation. The rest, the non-elect, are permanently hardened. Those hardened will never believe. Thus God is no longer interested in the land per se, but instead He is concerned that the children of promise are saved in Christ. (Romans 9:6-14, 24-30; 11:1, 2.)

Romans 11:7 - ... That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it [salvation], and the rest [the non-elect] were hardened [will never believe and have salvation].

The olive tree is used in Scripture as symbolic of obedient Israel as individuals (Psalm 52:8; 128:3; Jeremiah 11:14-17; Romans 11:). The same concept is taught with obedient Israel being planted as a palm tree (Psalm 92:12-15). Psalm 128:3 speaks of each child of Israel as an individual olive plant.

The symbology in Romans 11:17-24 of the Olive Tree does not deal with Israel as a covenant nation or where the people of Israel will live. It deals with their obedience to God. When they are obedient, they as branches remain on the tree. When they are disobedient, they become worthless, and they are removed from the tree and burned with fire (Jeremiah 11:16). In the Jeremiah passage, God deals with the obedience of Israel as the house of Israel and the house of Judah as individuals, not as a covenant nation.

The root which supports the tree is God or Christ. On the Day of Pentecost, many Jews were saved, and they were grafted back into the tree of obedience to be truly supported by Christ as the roots of the tree. The saved Gentiles who are the unnatural branches are also being grafted into the tree which represents the obedient saints. But because the Jew and Gentile have equal inheritance in Christ without distinction as taught in Romans 10:12 and Ephesians 2:11-16, the olive tree does not represent Israel as a covenant nation. It represents obedient believers, both Jews and Gentiles, who are the sons of Abraham according to promise. These are the believers in Christ. The present olive tree is probably representative of Christ. In this sense, the Israelites to be saved must be grafted back into the olive tree (Christ) as the natural branches, just as the Gentiles who are the unnatural branches must be (Romans 11:14-24).

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Christ then represents Israel's own olive tree (Romans 11:24).

This same truth is taught in John 15:1-12. Christ is the vine. Believers are the branches. Unbelievers are taken from the vine and are burned with fire.

John 15:1-6 - "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

The context of Romans 11:11-24 teaches the concept of individuals of Israel returning to God and being saved in Christ. This is how fellowship with God is restored. It is the only way of restoring fellowship with God. The context does not refer to Israel being restored as a covenant nation and going into a Millennium.

Romans 11:25-27 teaches that those of Israel who were not hardened will be saved by the time of the fulness of the Gentiles occurs (Romans 11:25-27). Those hardened will be maintained in their hardened states, never to be saved at that or at any time. Those saved will go to be with the Deliverer (Christ) forever. This teaching is in agreement with Titus 2:13, 14 and Hebrews 9:28.

Romans 11:25-27 - For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."

Titus 2:13, 14 - looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our Great Savior, Christ Jesus; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good deeds.

Hebrews 9:28 - so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sin of many, shall appear a second time, not to bear sin, to those who eagerly await Him, for salvation.

All three of these passages teach that when Christ comes, He redeems the believer and brings him salvation. Salvation is in the sense that salvation is now complete. Hebrews 9:28 makes it clear that this happens at the Second Coming of Christ. The Titus 2 passage is not so clear regarding the time. It could be occurring throughout the Church Period. When Christ comes He will remove the ungodliness from Jacob (Israel) (Isaiah 27:9; Romans 9:26) — her sins will be pardoned — and she will go into eternity, not into a Millennium.

When Christ as the Deliverer comes, the believer receives a new spiritual resurrection imperishable body, and the sin in his physical members is removed. The believer is now totally redeemed from sin. The blessed hope for the believer in the Church Period has always been to be with Christ, not to go into the land of Israel. Compared to Christ, and being with Him, the land has no value.

Romans 11:25-27 is written in an unclear manner. First it must be observed that the verse does not say what the destination of the saved people will be. Nor does it say that they go into heaven or into a Millennium. It teaches that those hardened remain hardened (remain unsaved) until all the Gentiles believe. It does not say that when or after all the Gentiles are saved, that then all Israel will be saved. Instead it teaches that Israel is saved in the same manner as the Gentiles are. That is, the Jews are saved throughout the Church Period. And when the fulness of the Gentiles occurs, the fulness of the Jews occurs also. Those not saved were previously hardened. The Deliverer will come after all the Jews and Gentiles who are to be saved are saved (the fulness of believers, both Jews and Gentiles).

We learn from other passages that when Christ as the Deliverer comes, He raptures His church and takes her to be with Him. At the Rapture, the Church Period is over. For Israel to go into the land in

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Romans 11:26, 27, those saved must believe after the Rapture. But the passage teaches that the Jews are saved by the time the Deliverer comes. The passage does not teach that people are saved after or when the Deliverer comes. Scripture does not support this concept. I know of no Scripture that teaches that any people are saved after the Rapture. There is not a single verse in Scripture that teaches that Christ takes the Jews into the Millennium when He comes as the Deliverer.

Because so many saved people from all nations (both Jews and Gentiles) die in the Great Tribulation, the Deliverer does not come until after the Tribulation. Thus, the Rapture occurs after the Tribulation. And because no one is saved afterward, the end of history now comes. There will not be a Millennium.

As stated earlier all unbelievers will have taken the mark-of-the Beast by the end of the Great Tribulation, and they will no longer be able to be saved. When Christ comes, the world will be in an advanced state of apostasy. The likelihood of people being newly saved at the moment He comes and after the Rapture is, for all practical spiritual purposes, zero.

Further, Christ does not come until after the seventh trumpet sounds when the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Lord and His Christ. According to Daniel 7, the kingdom is not given to Christ until after the Little Horn period and until after the court sits for judgment. At the time the court sits for judgment, it is too late to be saved.

This Romans 9-11 passage, therefore, does not give any foundation or support for the view that Israel is suddenly saved and, as unresurrected believers, enters the Millennium. In the Old Testament, the Deliverer normally comes after a period of exile and bondage and after Israel confesses her sin, and delivers Israel back into the land. But in the New Testament, the deliverance after all believe is to be with Christ in the Rapture, not into the land (Titus 2:13, 14; 1 John 3:1, 2).

Another important observation is that the timing of the fulness of the Gentiles determines the sequence of the Rapture, the Millennium, and the application of the Jeremiah 31 New Covenant. The fulness of the Gentiles means that no Gentile will be saved after the fulness occurs. This is what fulness means. Because the fulness of Israel occurs at or by the same time as it does for the Gentiles, the same is true for Israel. Because many saved Gentiles die in the Great Tribulation, the fulness occurs before the Tribulation ends after which time the Rapture occurs. Therefore, there cannot be a pretribulation Rapture. Fulness also means that no Gentiles will be saved after the Rapture. And because the fulness of the Jews occurs at the same time, and these Jews also will be raptured, there will be no Jews saved after the Rapture either. If there were to be a subsequent Millennium, neither Jew nor Gentile would be saved because their fulness has already occurred. But then a Millennium could not occur because God only brings repentant unresurrected believers of Israel into the kingdom. Only unbelievers are available after the fulness and the Rapture occur.

If interpreters assume that the Rapture is pretribulation when Jews and Gentiles are taken to heaven, at first glance this passage could allow that Christ takes both the saved Jews and Gentiles who believe in the Tribulation into a Millennium. This assumption would mean that the context of the entire passage of Romans 9-11, and particularly chapter 11, would have to refer to the Tribulation period after the Rapture of the church. However, in no way is this the case. By my perspective, the dispensationalists would have to assert and prove this to be true to sustain the belief that the fulness of the Gentiles according to this passage occurs after the Rapture has occurred. I do not believe that this can be done. Paul the saved apostle places Himself in this period (Romans 11:1). And the rest of Scripture teaches that Christ has only one Coming, and that occurs after the Tribulation when He comes to rapture His church and kill all unbelievers.

In summary, this Romans 9-11 passage teaches that both the Jew and Gentile have equal inheritance in Christ. Thus, God has not cast aside Israel. But only the children of promise are saved. The rest, the non-elect, are permanently hardened. When the fulness of both Jews and Gentiles occur, the Deliverer will come and complete the salvation process; ungodliness will be removed from Jacob. The passage per se teaches nothing about Israel as a covenant nation, or about a Millennium. The passage teaches that all the Gentiles and all the Jews are saved (reached fulness) at this time. Because they are delivered to the air in the Rapture at the end of the Great Tribulation and Church Period, there are no unresurrected Jews or Gentiles available to enter any Millennium. A Millennium does not happen.

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### **BIBLICAL REQUIREMENTS**

In summary, the biblical requirements for history's sequence, according to God's single multi-phased plan, are:

1. Spiritual warfare during biblical history is required to bring the evil environment necessary to develop, test, and prove the spiritual maturity of believers.
2. National Israel was required in God's plan, because her people were to have Christ crucified to satisfy God's justice for sin. Her Palestinian Everlasting Covenant relationship to God using a Pattern Sequence was necessary to understand how God would terminate history as described in Revelation. God gave Israel the Law to show them that they cannot keep from sinning and, therefore, need a Savior.
3. Christ after living a perfect and sinless life had to voluntarily go to the Cross as a lamb without blemish for man's sin and in order to qualify to receive all power of heaven and earth at His Ascension. This power was necessary for Him to begin His church, taking believers from all the nations.
4. Christ had to go to the Cross to show His worthiness to break the seals of the seven-sealed book. This action begins the Pattern Sequence that ends human and angelic history.
5. God uses an endtime Pattern Sequence to end history amid the spiritual warfare.
6. The Tribulation is required to bring divine discipline upon the church. This understanding shows that the Rapture comes after the Tribulation. Even though most of the church is martyred during the Tribulation, Satan leaves many believers alive to prevent God from destroying the earth. God leaves them alive as His witness to complete His chosen works. These are the few believers who are alive and remain at Christ's Coming.
7. God uses the rule of Satan, through the Beast and False Prophet, in the Great Tribulation to formally polarize the beliefs of the world. All people make formal decisions either to believe or reject the gospel. They reject the gospel by taking the mark of the Beast. Getting the people to make formal rejections of the gospel is the bundling of the tares. This allows God to Rapture the church and bring the final judgments.
8. The resurrections and judgments come after the Tribulation, but only after it is shown by the court that all the elect believe and accomplish God's chosen works.

### **SUMMARY OF THE LOGIC AND DEVELOPMENT BEHIND THE UNDERSTANDING OF WHEN THE RAPTURE WILL OCCUR**

The logic behind the understanding of the timing of the Rapture, showing that it is posttribulation, is as follows:

1. All the Scriptures that deal with the Resurrection and Rapture of the Church show that the Rapture occurs at Christ's Coming when He comes on the clouds to make war against and to destroy all the unbelievers. There is not a single Scripture that teaches that there will be a pretribulation Rapture. His Coming is always synchronized to occur at the beginning of the last Great Day of the Lord that occurs after the Tribulation.
2. The last Day of the Lord that the church will miss does not include the Great Tribulation. They are different periods and occur with one following the other.
3. Christ does not come as the Deliverer until the fulness of the Gentiles occur. The fulness can only happen some time after the Tribulation begins because a very large number of Gentiles die in the Tribulation.

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4. Christ sits at the right hand of the Father until the last enemy death is defeated. Because people believe the gospel in the first part of the Tribulation and all the unbelievers make their formal declarations of rejection during the Great Tribulation, Christ sits at the Father's right hand until after the Great tribulation. Then He comes to the air above the earth for the Resurrection and Rapture of the church.
5. Daniel's 70th Week is history near the time of Christ. Daniel's prophecy gives no support for a Jewish Tribulation that would allow for a pretribulation Rapture.
6. The Bible does not teach that the Rapture is imminent before the Tribulation. Instead it teaches that many prophesied events must occur before Christ comes. These events include the great apostasy, the revelation of the Man of Lawlessness, all the elect believe, and the elect do all of God's chosen works. These events extend into the Great Tribulation.
7. God always destroys all the unbelievers immediately after He removes all His believers. For this reason, a Tribulation or Millennium will not occur after the Rapture. Because the Great Tribulation and Beast period are clear happenings, the Rapture will not occur until after the Great Tribulation. A Millennium will not occur.
8. The separation of the wheat (believers in Christ) in Resurrection and Rapture will not occur until after all the tares or unbelievers are bundled. This bundling takes place during the Great Tribulation. The church is preserved through the hour of trial that tries all unbelievers. This trial is the Great Tribulation when unbelievers are confronted with taking the mark of the Beast. There is a single harvest of the earth. The believers are taken in the harvest, and the unbelievers are destroyed in the wine press.
9. Believers must preach the gospel for people to be saved. After the Rapture there are no preachers remaining to preach the gospel. There are a number of saved people, greater than anyone can count, in the Great Tribulation. This doctrine implies that the Rapture can only be posttribulation. When Christ comes for His church, the rest of the people will be in extreme apostasy and are not likely to believe after the Rapture. They will not believe when they see Christ coming, only before He comes.

The above shows that the Rapture is posttribulation.

### MY CONCLUSIONS; THE TENETS OF THE PATTERN VIEW

A summary of my conclusions that form the Pattern View is now presented. These conclusions were taken from the many doctrines that are presented throughout the book. Although this material is described elsewhere, including in this chapter, it is summarized here in one place to present what I believe the Bible to teach.

**These conclusions stand as a doctrinal statement of the Pattern View.** As far as I can tell, these doctrines harmonize with each other and with the rest of Scripture.

### The Doctrinal Statement of the Pattern View of Prophecy

The 1000 years of Revelation 20 represent the Last Day of the Church Age, and the Rapture will be posttribulation because:

1. **Daniel's Seventy Weeks** - The 70th Week of Daniel, that represents a Jewish period, is history and does not define or refer to the endtime Tribulation. The 70th Week is the time period when Christ and the Jewish church confirm the New Covenant to the Jews. The gospel did not go to the Gentiles (except possibly to Jewish proselytes) until after the 70th Week ended — three and one-half years into the Church Period. It is Christ, not the Antichrist, who confirms a covenant with the Jews in Daniel 9:27. The characteristics of the Tribulation are predominately all-nations and not Jewish in nature because the Scriptures teach that a very large number of Gentiles die in the Great Tribulation. The Rapture of the all-nations church cannot occur until after the Great Tribulation. The Tribulation need not last only seven years. It could last many years. (Daniel 9:24-27; Revelation 7:9, 14.)

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2. **The Church Period is the Last One** - God sums all things up in Christ in the last Dispensation of the Church, for all things in heaven and all things on the earth. God's plan is finished by the end of the Church Period. The church is upon whom the end of the ages have come. There is the present age and the eternal age to come. There will not be a future temporal age. Thus, there will not be a Jewish golden-age Millennium coming after the Church Period. (Matthew 12:32; Mark 10:30; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Ephesians 1:9, 10, 21; Hebrews 6:5.)
3. **General Resurrections and Judgments** - There is a single general Resurrection of all believers that occurs at the Rapture and the Coming of Christ after the Great Tribulation (Matthew 22:28, 30; Luke 14:14; John 5:28, 29; 6:39, 44, 54; 11: 24; 1 Corinthians 15:23, 51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:6,7; the Greek article is used for one resurrection in Matthew 22, Luke 14, and 1 Corinthians 15:23).

When referring to the Resurrection of all the saints, the Bible teaches the following:

1 Corinthians 15:23 - But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His [the] coming ...

The Resurrection and Rapture of believers occur at the beginning of the Last Day as the 1000 years. The single general Resurrection of all unbelievers occurs after the 1000 years as the Last Day. These two general resurrections come with one following the other in a short time interval (John 5:28, 29; 2 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 11:15-18). John 5:29 says they will be raised in the same hour. All the teachings regarding the Resurrection and Rapture of the church are referenced to the end of the Church Age when believers are separated from unbelievers, when all unbelievers are killed, and when the Resurrection of both believers and unbelievers occur in rapid order. God destroys (kills) all unbelievers (after the 1000 years as the Last Day) who are living at the time after the Rapture, which ends history. Their destruction precludes a subsequent Tribulation or Millennium. The church's Resurrection and Rapture occur as the same event at the First Resurrection after the Beast period. Then, after the 1000 years as the Last Day, Christ comes with His holy angels in flaming fire and the wine press operation to destroy the Beast and to kill all unbelievers in retribution-judgment. All believers go to be with Christ, as He gives them rest from their afflictions, and there are no people left alive on earth to enter any Millennium. All believers are resurrected at the Coming of Christ, and all unbelievers are resurrected shortly after believers are resurrected. The resurrected unbelievers go to the Great White Throne Judgment. The resurrection of the just is said to occur on the Last Day, and 2 Peter 3:8 gives authorization that the 1000 years could be just a day or short period of time. (Matthew 24:29-31; 25:31-46; John 5:28, 29; 6:39, 54; 11:24; Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:23-28; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2:1, 8; 2 Timothy 4:1.)

4. **The Resurrection and the Rapture of the Church** - The Resurrection and the Rapture is posttribulational and occurs in a twinkling of an eye at the Coming of Christ as He comes with the sound of the trumpet and the war cry to make war against all unbelievers, including the Man of Lawlessness. At the Rapture, the angels gather Christ's elect from the ends of heaven and the ends of the earth, after the Tribulation of those days with the false christs, signs, and wonders. The Rapture will not occur until after all the elect believe and until after all the elect finish the works that God before the foundation of the world has chosen for them to accomplish. All the elect are sealed by God by the end of the fifth-seal period and just before the Great Tribulation begins starting with the trumpet events. The Great Tribulation period consists of the period of the first six trumpets and the mark-of-the-Beast period. The church accomplishes God's work during the Great Tribulation as a witness for Christ as she goes to the martyrs death during the mark-of-the-Beast period. A study of the Greek words for the "Coming," "Revelation," and "Appearing" of Christ shows that Christ comes to resurrect and rapture His church at the time He destroys the Man of Lawlessness and brings judgment on unbelievers and delivers up the kingdom to God the Father. He comes after the Tribulation on the Day of Christ just as the final great Day of the Lord begins. (Matthew 24:29-31; Ephesians 1:4; 2:10; Revelation 7:3; 9:4; 11:15-18; 13:7; 14:13.)
5. **The Judgment of the Court** - After the Great Tribulation, the court in heaven sits for judgment. The court renders the verdict that Christ has won the spiritual warfare over Satan. After the decision of the court is rendered, the seventh trumpet sounds and the court awards the authority of the kingdom of the world to the Lord and His Christ. This new authority allows Christ to rapture and reward His

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church and bring judgment on unbelievers. Together, Christ and the church rule with a rod of iron when they come to kill all unbelievers in the wine press operation. They crush unbelievers like breaking pottery. (Daniel 7:9-15, 26, 27; Revelation 11:13-18; 20:4)

6. **The Imminent Rapture** - The Rapture will be imminent near the end of the Great Tribulation, after all the elect believe (after the fulness of the Gentiles and Jews has taken place), and when the work of the church is being completed. This is when the wheat and the tares are separated. There is no Scripture that teaches that the Rapture occurs before the Tribulation, or that it is imminent before the Tribulation. (Matthew 13:36-43; 28:18-20; Revelation 14:13.)
7. **The Trampling of Jerusalem** - Jerusalem is to be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. The Gentiles will control Jerusalem from the time Jerusalem and the temple were devastated in A.D. 70 until the end of the Great Tribulation. The Beast Empire (the coalition of nations) will rule over Jerusalem during the Great Tribulation. Today, even though the Jews control Jerusalem, the Gentiles control and influence the temple site. God will not let Israel build another temple because the Mosaic Law System has been put aside, and because His Son was the supreme and only important sacrifice. (If another temple is built, it will be built by the Antichrist, not by God.) (Luke 21:24; Revelation 11; 13.)
8. **Christ Sits At the Father's Right Hand** - Christ sits at the right hand of the Father until the last enemy is defeated which is death. Death is defeated when the last person believes the gospel and is saved, and when the last of the non-elect formally reject the gospel. All the elect are sealed with salvation before the trumpets bring their wrath upon the world, and all the non-elect make their formal rejections by the end of the Great Tribulation. (Revelation 7:3; 9:5; 13)
9. **The Release of the Man of Lawlessness** - Sin in the endtime church causes God to reduce His restraint on the world sinning. The sin of both the church and the world causes God to release the Man of Lawlessness to come out from the midst of mankind to bring discipline upon the church and the world for their sin. Thus, the church remains on the earth during the period of the reign of the Man of Lawlessness (the Beast or Antichrist).
10. **No One is Saved After the Rapture** - God will not save anyone after the Rapture, because He would then have no one to preach the gospel, and because spiritually dead people do not seek after God. He destroys unbelievers when no believing remnant remains. Thus, a Tribulation period or a Millennium cannot follow the Rapture.
11. **God is no respecter of people** - If God would put His Tribulation saints through the Great Tribulation, then He might also put His entire church through it.
12. **The Purpose of the Tribulation** - The final Tribulation period is designed to bring discipline upon the church, America, and the world for their apostasy, immorality, sin, and false worship. The final Great Tribulation is designed also to polarize the beliefs of the world; this allows God to rapture His church and to bring the final judgments at the end of the Tribulation. The polarization means that all people have formally accepted or rejected the gospel — there are no remaining neutral people. The polarization happens during the test that God brings upon the whole world after all the elect believe, during the Great Tribulation. Believers are preserved and protected by God during this period. Christ is with His believers on earth until the end of the age, when the angels separate the wheat and tares. The wheat is separated from the tares by Rapture after the tares are first bundled in the Great Tribulation by taking the mark of the Beast. Those who take the mark of the Beast can no longer be saved. They are bundled as they make a formal decision to reject the gospel and accept the false doctrines of the Beast to worship him instead of God. This separation of the wheat and the tares occurs at the Resurrection of the just and the unjust, when the righteous shine forth.
13. **Oriental Marriage** - In an oriental-type marriage, Christ receives the church to be His live-in wife at the time of the Rapture, when He comes from heaven on His white horse to destroy the nations. Before this time the church is betrothed to Christ in a legal and binding marriage, but they do not yet live together.
14. **The Day of the Lord** - The Day of the Lord is when God brings destruction on His own people or

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those of any nation. There is a Day of the Lord on the church and the world during the period of the first six trumpets that causes the world to be under the authority of the Beast. The Tribulation period under the Beast is not part of the Day of the Lord, but instead a period of divine discipline. The Thessalonian epistles show that the Coming of Christ, the Rapture, and the beginning of the final Day of the Lord are synchronized events. This final and Great Day of the Lord or of God on unbelievers happens at the time when the Man of Lawlessness is destroyed during the period of the last two bowls, after the Tribulation. God in this final Day of God causes the elements of the earth to melt and the heavens to burn with fire, at the time of His Coming. There is no earth upon which to have a Millennium. The church now goes to the new Jerusalem that is associated with the new earth and the new heaven.

There will not be a future Jewish golden-age Millennium, nor do the 1000 years symbolize the Church Period. God has no basis or plan to bring Israel back into the land. These are true because:

1. **The 1000 Years** - The 1000 years of Revelation 20 symbolize the Last Day of the Church Period during the period of the first five bowls. The 1000 years follow the Rapture and occur just before the last two bowls. During the 1000 years, Christ and the church sit in judgment over unbelievers. As a result of the judgment, Christ comes with His church and angels to destroy all unbelievers with flaming fire, the wine press operation, and the rod of iron as the armies of the world encompass the camp of the saints when they descend from heaven. The context of Revelation 20 is the Coming of Christ, the binding of Satan, the resurrections, the judgments, and the reign of the saints with Christ. Revelation 20 does not deal with a return of Israel to her land in a Jewish golden-age Millennium. The Bible teaches that Christ's reign after the Cross is always eternal. It is never for 1000 years. Only the saints reign for 1000 years (during the Last Day).
2. **God Has One Plan** - God has but one long-term sequentially-phased plan for His people: that they become saved in Christ and grow spiritually mature in Christ. He does not have two plans — one for Israel, and another plan for the church. People are either unsaved and remain in Adam's race, or they are saved and in Christ's race. All believers from all parts of biblical history comprise Christ's single church and body, both Jews and Gentiles, and they all go to the new Jerusalem.
3. **The New Covenant** - The enactment of the New Covenant permanently set aside and replaced the Mosaic Law Covenant, and it now is the only recorded covenant now in effect for anyone. (The exception is the implied covenant that is in effect that deals with the endtime nation and Pattern Sequence and the basis for terminating history.) Its period is effective only in the Church Period from Christ's Death to His Second Coming. This New Covenant is for the salvation of all people from Genesis to Revelation. Israel does not now have any covenant in force that would restore her to the land after the endtime Tribulation. The New Covenant and the Cross completely and permanently replaced the Mosaic Law Covenant and, thus, disallow any return of animal sacrifices and a physical temple. The Mosaic Law Covenant can no longer be used as a vehicle under the Palestinian Everlasting Covenant to determine whether Israel stays in the land. The Cross also brought equality to the Jew and the Gentile so that the Jew can never again have prominence above the Gentile. (Ephesians 2:11-16; Hebrews 7:11-28; 8:6; 9:11-18; 10:1-18.)
4. **Israel Permanently Set Aside as a Covenant Nation by Divorce** - God's (Christ's) divorce of Israel permanently set aside the Palestinian Everlasting Covenant. Christ is now marrying the church. The divorce of the Northern Kingdom occurred in her history, and the divorce of the Southern Kingdom occurred at the Cross. Both kingdoms broke the Palestinian Everlasting Covenant. The Southern Kingdom broke the covenant by her refusal to have Christ reign over her and by her making a binding blood covenant for themselves and their children with God as they took responsibility for Christ's Death. The divorce occurred and Israel's covenant history ended when God rent the veil of the temple. This is the only covenant that could return Israel to her land. Because the Jews killed Christ, their kingdom was taken away and the administration of the Kingdom of God was taken away and was given to the church. As of the Cross, God's purposes for Israel, as a covenant nation, were completed. These included rendering the temple services, bringing the Old Testament Scriptures, being a lineage to bring Christ in the King line, being a light to the Gentiles, and bringing the Law to tell people they needed a savior and to demonstrate Christ's qualifications to be the Lamb without blemish, as He fulfilled the Law. God also used the Jews to have Christ crucified as they refused His rule over them and by making the blood covenant. The partitioning of the Bible into the Old and New

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Testaments represents the old and new relationships with God. (Exodus 6:4-8; Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 3:8; 31:32; Matthew 21:33-46; 27:25, 51; Luke 20:9-18)

5. **The Promises of God** - All the promises of a return or an establishment of Israel to her land, even under what might be called glorious circumstances, have been fulfilled prior to the Cross. Israel at one time lived in and possessed all the land, There is not a single Scripture that teaches that Israel is returned as a covenant nation after the Cross, such as in the 1000 years of Revelation 20. There is not a single Scripture that teaches that Israel did not possess the land that God promised. Thus, God is not obligated to return Israel to her land to fulfill any promise. (These promises are discussed in Appendix D, "The Return of Israel.")
6. **The United States as a Covenant Nation** - The United States, as a covenant nation, did not come from, does not represent, and does not become Israel in any manner. And Israel, with both believers and unbelievers — does not become the church in the Church Period. However, both Old and New Testament believers of Israel, "as individuals," do become part of the church through the New Covenant, beginning at Christ's Ascension and on the Day of Pentecost. The believers who died prior to the Day of Pentecost were held captive under the Law until the Cross came. Then Christ took them to heaven with Him to be part of His church.
7. **The Kingdom of God** - Throughout history, God rules over His people from heaven using the Kingdom of God. Christ being God ruled over responding people, mostly of Israel, throughout the Old Testament period. The Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom like Israel's Kingdom. Only born again believers can enter the reality of God's Kingdom which happened after the Cross. The Kingdom of God is effective in the Church Period. Believers are translated from the Dominion of Satan into the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is a relationship kingdom through which believers respond to God. The reality of the Kingdom now with born-again believers means that believers will go to be with Christ in the Rapture. This was not true of Old Testament believers until the Cross came. The Kingdom of God comes without physical signs or observation. Beginning immediately after His Ascension, having received all power of heaven and earth, Christ began His rule over all the nations on the Father's throne at His right hand. This began Christ's rule in a new way after the Cross over the Kingdom of God. Believers now had the reality of salvation. In Colossians 1:13 it is called the Kingdom of His dear Son. This heavenly throne also includes the authority vested in David's throne as He rules over all nations. In His earthly ministry, Christ offered this Kingdom of God to the Jews. He did not offer them a political kingdom. Had He done so, the Jews would have accepted it, and He would have been tried for treason by the Romans. (Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:28-33; Ephesians 1:20-23; 1 Peter 3:22.)
8. **All Believers Are Part of Christ's Church** - The church is defined as all the people who believe in the Cross of Christ — all those who have been translated from the Dominion of Satan into the Kingdom of God (Christ). All believers from Genesis to Revelation — from all dispensations — are incorporated into the Church. In Christ all believers, maintain their ethnic races, but lose the distinctions of their race in Christ. All are equal in Christ. There is no such thing as believers who are called Israel and who are apart from the church. Being in Christ by the Cross and being part of the church is the hope of Israel (Acts 28:20). Israel as part of the church is called the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16).
9. **The Broken-Down Barrier** - Through the Cross, both Jewish and Gentile believers now have equal inheritance in Christ. Together, they are one new man in Him with now only Christ having the preeminence. The barrier between the Jew and the Gentile has been permanently broken down by the Cross. The Jew can never again have prominence or spiritual position above the Gentile (such as in a future Millennium).
10. **The Church as a Witness** - The church continues as a witness, accomplishing God's work during the Great Tribulation. Believers witness by not denying Christ as they go to the martyr's death. The Tribulation comes as divine discipline on both the church and the world.
11. **Revelation's Events** - Most of Revelation's events are still in the future, occurring near Christ's Second Coming. They unfold in a Pattern Sequence as Christ breaks the seals of the seven-sealed book. The sequence consists of obedience and prosperity leading to apostasy (the first three seals),

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calamity (the fourth-seal war), discipline and great apostasy (the fifth-seal period), devastating calamity (the first six trumpets), severe discipline and the greatest ever apostasy (the mark-of-the-Beast period), Deliverance (the Rapture), and Retribution-Judgment on unbelievers in the period of the bowls).

12. **The World in Apostasy** - The world will be in an advanced state of apostasy, immorality, sin, and false worship when Christ comes. It will not be Christianized.
13. **The Earth is Destroyed** - The earth is completely destroyed by fire and melts under the intense heat at the last great Day of the Lord or of God that occurs at the time of the last two bowl occurrences. There is no earth left with which to continue with a Millennium. All believers look for a new heavens and a new earth. (2 Peter 3:10-13.)
14. **The 1000 Years Do Not Occur as the Church Period** - Satan is placed into prison and is taken out of circulation during the 1000 years so that he cannot deceive the nations. Satan is definitely not bound and deceives the nations throughout the Church Age. Most of the world has responded to his deception. The 1000 years occur after the Beast period of 42 months, after the First Resurrection (the time of the Rapture), and after the court sits for judgment. The Beast period occurs just before Christ returns. The resurrection in Revelation 20:4 is a physical resurrection from the dead because those resurrected had physically died by being beheaded. Since they physically died, they must be physically resurrected. The Bible gives no authorization to equate the 1000 years to the Church Period. (Revelation 20:1-4.) (The many Scriptures that show Satan is greatly deceiving the nations during the Church Period are presented in chapter 3.)

### NECESSARY PROOFS FOR OTHER VIEWS

I believe that if other views are to be sustained as being correct, their adherents must develop and prove (not just state, assert, or postulate) that the Scriptures teach (in two or more places):

1. Christ can be married to Israel as a covenant nation and believers in the church at the same time and still be in agreement with His laws for spiritual leaders of only having one wife at a time so that the Palestinian Everlasting Covenant can be re-enacted.
2. The New Covenant did not replace the Mosaic Law Covenant so that a temple and animal sacrifices can be restored.
3. The barrier is reestablished when the Jew can be once again prominent or exalted above the Gentile when the Cross brought equal inheritance in Christ for the Jew and Gentile with Christ now being the only one Who can have preeminence.
4. The saints in Revelation are only of Israel and not of the church comprised of both Jews and Gentiles when Revelation was addressed to the church and when a large number of people from all nations die in the Great Tribulation.
5. That God has two groups of the elect when the Bible teaches that all people who are saved are in Christ (both Jews and Gentiles), and being in Christ, they are called out of Satan's Dominion into Christ's Kingdom — they are His church which has the meaning of being called-out from one kingdom into another.
6. The kingdom that Christ offered the Jews was not implemented in the Church Period when the Bible teaches in many places in the New Testament that it was. The Kingdom that Christ offered the Jews was a political kingdom and not a relationship kingdom.
7. Christ did not sit on David's throne at His Ascension when the Bible says He did.
8. Israel did not completely live in and possess the land of Israel when the Bible says she did.
9. Satan does not deceive the nations in the Church Period when the Bible shows in many places that he does.

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10. The Antichrist makes and then breaks a covenant with the Jews in Daniel 9:27 when the context shows that Christ confirms the New Covenant. The Cross can be outside the period of the 70 Weeks, namely falling between the 69th and 70th Weeks, when the purposes of the Weeks are fulfilled in Christ on the Cross.
11. That if the Jeremiah 31 New Covenant implemented in a Millennium or in the Tribulation and Millennium is only for Jews, how can Gentiles be saved in these periods? Why the Jeremiah New Covenant can only refer to Jews, even though Gentiles are not mentioned in Jeremiah. That if both Jews and Gentiles are saved under the Jeremiah New Covenant, why its period does not refer to the Church Age when the Bible says it is the period of the New Covenant. Why the Jeremiah New Covenant period cannot apply to the Church Period when Jews from both the houses of Israel and Judah were saved on the Day of Pentecost.
12. What is the purpose of the court sitting for judgment in Daniel 7:9-12, 26, 27 and Revelation 20:4, and how it fits into their scheme of things.
13. That there are two Comings of Christ, one for the Rapture of the church to the clouds, and the other on a Return of Christ to the earth when the use of parousia in the Rapture and the Second Coming passages is always used in the singular and most times with the definite article. The same is true for the Greek words for the Revelation and the Appearance of Christ.
14. Why the Second Coming of Christ is not one great event consisting of the Resurrection, Rapture, and reward of the church, a period of judgment on the earth for a short period (the Last Day as the 1000 years), and the Resurrection and Judgment of unbelievers followed by their being cast into the Lake of Fire (1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; 2 Timothy 4:1; Jude 1:14, 15).  

2 Timothy 4:1 - I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of His Christ, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by the appearing of His kingdom ...
15. That the Bible teaches that there is a Jewish

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golden-age that actually occurs in the 1000 years of Revelation 20, when the church reigns with Christ during the resurrections and judgments, when such a golden-age is not in the context of the passage; the passage has a context of resurrection and judgment.

16. That, after a pretribulation Rapture, a number of people greater than any person can count are saved in the Tribulation without preachers when the people are in extreme apostasy, immorality, sin, and false worship — particularly when the Bible teaches that believers must preach the gospel for people to be saved, and unregenerate unbelievers do not seek after God.

### **SUMMARY**

The aforementioned doctrines in chapters 1-3 and this chapter and those detailed in the appendices show that the Rapture can only be posttribulation and that the 1000 years can only represent the Last Day at the end of the Church Age. This conclusion permits the understanding of the Pattern Sequence, and thus, establishes the Pattern View. The Pattern View is developed in the next chapter (chapter 5), summarized in chapter 6, and is given with its detailed events in Appendix A.

Hopefully, the Pattern View with its associated doctrines helps resolve the issues between interpreters so they will believe one view. In believing the Pattern View, it is hoped that interpreters and all believers alike will now support and help proclaim the Watchman Warning and begin to alert and train believers everywhere for the unfolding of the terrible endtimes.

Knowing the events that occur in each endtime period such as delineated in this book, Bible students who find themselves in the fifth-seal period by observing its events can know then that a Pretribulation Rapture is incorrect. At that time, pretribulationists can begin to carry out the recommendations in chapter 6 to the degree that circumstances allow.

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### ENDNOTES

1. Payne, Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy, pp. 564, 565.
2. Robertson, A. T., Word Pictures in the New Testament, Volume VI, The General Epistles and the Revelation of John, Nashville: Broadman Press, 1933, p. 352.
3. Wight, pp. 124-134.