

Does the Bible Teach a Pretribulation Rapture of the Church?

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Introduction: Why Is Understanding the Rapture So Important?

I will name six reasons why we are at the end of this age, if only a few of those reasons are valid, it is reasonable to expect the Lord's imminent return. All Christians look forward to that day with joy. Yet, what is going to happen during the seven years immediately preceding his coming, or the Great Tribulation period? This time-period includes the world's anger toward God, led by the antichrist and his false prophet, and God's punishment of the earth for all their abominations.

"However, because of the widespread belief in a pretribulation rapture, the Christian community will be totally unprepared for the most important event in modern history."

Would you do things differently if you did not expect a pretribulation rapture? Have you ever thought about how you might continue to be a light shining in the coming time of darkness?

The appearance of the antichrist is the next event in Bible prophecy. Though Jesus advised us not to set any dates, I think the end is near and the time of the infamous antichrist is soon. However, because of the widespread belief in a pretribulation rapture, the Christian community will be totally unprepared for the most important event in modern history.



When the doctrine of the pretribulation rapture is examined closely, problems with the proofs will become evident. In the Spirit of truth, I ask you to look at these proofs. If you have only understood the pretribulation rapture through the eyes of someone who is trying to promote it, you have never been shown any of its problems. If you enjoy studying the Scripture, please take a moment to examine the scriptural proofs for a pretribulation rapture closely. My challenge to you, is to search the Scriptures, like the Bereans in Acts 17:10-11, see if evidence for a pretribulation rapture really exists. If so, believe it; if not, you will have a better understanding of the future and be able to more properly prepare for it.

Signs of the Last Days

Note: All **bold fonts** are my stress points. All the words in [brackets] are my additions.

I have felt a sense of urgency in preparing this study. Without spending much effort trying to defend the evidence, here are six reasons why this may be the end of the age, the time prophesied for the antichrist to appear.

1. Matthew 24

Wars

For nation¹ shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom - Matthew 24:7a

Today wars and racial violence are occurring all over the world. While it may seem peaceful in the USA, we have been involved in every major war and have had American troops deployed on most continents for the last sixty-five years.

Famines

There shall be famines, - Matthew 24:7b

An estimated 923 million people in the world are malnourished. There is a threat of famine in North Korea that will rival the one in the 1990s which killed 2.5 million people. In developing countries, nearly 16 million children die every year from preventable and treatable causes. Sixty percent of these deaths are from hunger and malnutrition¹

Pestilence

And pestilences, - Matthew 24:7b

A pestilence is any virulent and highly infectious disease that can cause an epidemic or even a pandemic. This word is commonly used to describe parasites that cause large-scale sickness and death⁴

Newspaper headlines in 2009 said that the flu vaccine does not work against the current strain of flu virus. In February of 2008, hospitals in Arizona were shipping patients to the surrounding states, because their emergency rooms were overflowing with flu patients. The winter of 2009-2010 does not look any better; the Swine Flue is, nearly every night, making headlines in the news.

STDs are occurring in epidemic proportions in the United States, while aids is devastating Africa. Many viruses are becoming resistant to antibiotics, and because of these antibiotics, humans are losing their natural resistance to many diseases.

Earthquakes

And earthquakes, in divers places. - Matthew 24:7c

On December 26, 2004, an earthquake hit Indonesia, causing a tsunami along the coasts of most landmasses bordering the Indian Ocean. The waves, some of up to 100 feet high, killed more than 225,000 people in eleven different countries.

In August 1999, an earthquake registering 7.4 on the open-ended Richter scale, hit Turkey, killing more than 15,000 people. The next month, an earthquake registering 7.6 hit Taiwan. Later in the same month, an earthquake registering 7.4 hit Mexico. In November, an earthquake that registered 7.2 hit Turkey again.

The USGS Earthquake Information Center locates 12,000 to 14,000 earthquakes each year. About 60 earthquakes per year have a magnitude of 6.5 or higher, or cause casualties and considerable damage. About 19 earthquakes per year are higher than 7.0. The largest earthquake ever recorded occurred in Chile in 1960; it had a magnitude 9.5³

2. An Increase Of Knowledge

*Many shall run to and fro [travel], and knowledge shall be increased.
- Daniel 12:4b*

We now have the knowledge, or technology, to fulfill all the events mentioned in the book of Revelation. Here is a little bit of modern technology that the Bible prophesied about the last days:

- Revelation 13:5 An image that speaks is now old news
- Revelation 11:7-10 Instantaneous worldwide news broadcasts of important events are normal
- Revelation 16:4 The communication, speed and other technology is available for all nations to participate in a single war as was proven in *Desert Storm*
- Isaiah 5:26-27 Today, with a little preparation, most nations could send troops into a battle in the middle east over night. Isaiah said, concerning the troops coming up to one battle, "none shall slumber nor sleep"

3. The Gospel Preached to all Nations

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. - Matthew 24:14

Have the Christians preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations? The apostles reached most of the Islamic world (the countries close to Israel) in the first century A.D. Today Christians cannot worship openly, and are often persecuted, in most Islamic countries. This is evidence that Muslims have both heard and rejected the Gospel.

The same goes for the Hindus. The Apostle Thomas reached India with the Gospel in the first century. Today the Christians in India suffer major persecution and even martyrdom. This is evidence that Hindus have both heard and rejected the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This sad fact goes for much of the 10/40 window. ⁸

The seven Asian churches that the Apostle John wrote to were in what is now the modern day Turkish Republic, a country which is 99% Muslim. Do we need to preach the gospel there again? Or is the situation the same for these countries as it was for the church to whom the Lord said, "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."?

It is true that today, in many countries, there are still tribal groups that do not have one verse of scripture in their own language. However, most these countries do have trade languages, and their trade languages do have translations. While I am not qualified to say that the Gospel has been preached to all nations, there is the possibility that we may be much closer than many think.

4. The United Nations

Our Christian forefathers wanted their independence so that they could worship God according to their own conscience. Today the world's push is for interdependence, with regional governments. Take a look at the European Union and NAFTA. Along with interdependence, the world now looks at Christianity, with its exclusivity, as a bigoted religion.

Many people are afraid and tired of terrorist activity. Environmentalists tell us that there are problems that we can solve only if we deal with them on a global scale. If the United States recession brings down the world's economy, conditions could be similar to what gave Hitler control of Germany. The world is ready for a leader, someone who could promise peace and safety while uniting the world.

If you are familiar with the United Nations, you know that a *New World Order* is their goal. Their own proponents say that this means a one world government, a world leader and *one religion*.

5. The World's Mentality

The USA may have been a restrainer of evil at one time, and today is known as the global policeman. However, the question must be asked, can we, as Americans, tell right from wrong?

In chapter three of his second letter to Timothy, Paul wrote about our mentality in the last days. Here is his list:

Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. - 2 Timothy 3:2

The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that one quarter of the adult population is suffering from a mental disorder at any given time. Instead of going to God for help, we are turning to mind altering drugs. These drugs are a multibillion dollar a year industry (the largest lobbying group in Washington) and growing. Drug use will probably mushroom again, once we have national healthcare.

The occult is now an acceptable religion. Not only are high school students fascinated with it, every night the television is preoccupied with the entire spiritual realm that Moses condemned.

We are entering a global recession. The United States is taking many other economies down with it. History tells us that the world will elect a man, even a morally bankrupt one, if he can make them believe that he will solve this problem.

Honesty is lost to this generation. To do regular bank transactions, we often need to submit thumbprints. Banks must verify every credit card transaction because of stolen credit cards. There is an epidemic of identity theft. The *Mark of the Beast* may soon be the only solution to this problem.

6. Israel

The Fig Tree

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

Since everyone who has set a date for the Lord's return, from the apostle's time to the present, has been wrong in his calculations, this conclusion is not to be used as an infallible proof. It is only to provoke our thought:

1. If the fig tree is Israel, and
2. If the rebirth of Israel in May of 1948 is the putting forth leaves, and
3. If a generation is 70 years, as implied in Psalm 90:10

Then with a little math, we have the year 1948 plus 70 years for one generation, which equals the year 2018 for the coming of our Lord. If we then subtract seven years for the Great Tribulation, the antichrist could make his appearance before 2012. If these calculations are close, it is reasonable to expect the antichrist to appear at any time, even if my calculations are off (I would not take my date setting to seriously.)

The Parting of Israel's Land

For over sixty years, the gentiles have been parting up Israel, giving it to the Muslims. Yet what saith the Scripture?

*[referring to the Lord's indignation toward all nations] For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompenses for **the controversy of Zion.***
 - Isaiah 34:8

AND

*Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, **even the ancient high places are ours in possession:** Therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; **Because they have made you desolate, and swallowed you up on every side,** that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the heathen, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people: Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, **which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that are round about;** Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, **which have appointed my land into their possession** with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey.*

*Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, **because ye have borne the shame of the heathen:** Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame. - Ezekiel 36:2-7*

AND

*For, behold, in those days, and in that time, **when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,** I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, **and parted my land.***
 - Joel 3:1-2

The whole world, through the [United Nations and the media, condemns Israel](#) for trying to exist. Even so, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel and Zechariah (and other Old Testament prophets) have all said not only that these conditions would exist, but also that God will intervene on Israel's behalf.

Terrorism in Israel

The number one reason why I believe that we are in the end days is because of the epidemic of terrorism in Israel. While their enemies rejoice over the murder and mayhem of innocent children and elderly, the rest of the world ignores Israel's plight. Do not think that God will allow this terror in His Holy Land to go unpunished forever.

For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. - Isaiah 34:8

What is the Pretribulation Rapture?

In preface, let me state that, before God, I did not deliberately misrepresent those who believe in a pretribulation rapture nor did I try to create any straw-man arguments to discredit them.

Nevertheless, if I have misrepresented the pretribulation doctrine in any way, please email me: jeff@the-gospel.org.

Let us start by defining what the pretribulation rapture is.

Pretribulation: An event that takes place before the Great Tribulation, the last seven-year period of this age.

Rapture: To seize, or carry off by force, to claim for one's self eagerly, to snatch out or away. ⁵

God will eagerly catch the church away, by force, and claim her for Himself before the Great Tribulation starts. This teaching includes the following points:

1. Most people who believe in the pretribulation rapture also believe that Jesus Christ can rapture His church at any moment. In fact, there is nothing to prevent it from happening before you have finished reading this page.
2. The saints will ascend up to meet our Lord Jesus in the air. As Paul said:

We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. - 1 Thessalonians 4:17

3. Jesus will catch up the saints up in the clouds. We will meet the Lord in the air and go to Heaven for seven years, during which time the Lord will punish those who remain on the earth.
4. The rapture will be secret. This does not mean that people will not notice the rapture when it happens; those left behind will notice things like airplane and automobile crashes and other events that are the result of the missing people. By *secret* rapture, they mean that the world will not see Jesus, and that many of those who are left will attribute the missing people (some believe this includes the rapture of unborn babies) to some other cause, rather than to Jesus having come for His church.

5. The rapture is necessary before the antichrist can make his appearance. Those who believe in the pretribulation rapture believe that Paul could not have said it more clearly, when he stated:

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. [By being taken out of the way Paul means, that the church is raptured.] And then shall that Wicked be revealed.
- 2nd Thessalonians 2:7-8a

Common Proofs for the Pretribulation Rapture Refuted

My position is that there is no mention of the pretribulation rapture in the Bible. In a debate such as this, the person who is teaching the pretribulation rapture has the burden of proof. Whenever I ask a brother to show me scriptural proof for the pretribulation rapture, He will invariably show me one of the eleven following proofs. Let's look at these proofs more closely.

Note: You will note that I am only stating the proofs that those who believe in a pretribulation rapture give; I am not defending their position. Also, not all Christians who believe in a pretribulation rapture believe all eleven proofs.

Proof 1: 2nd Thessalonians 2:6-9

Explanation:

*And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: **only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed**, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, - 2nd Thessalonians 2:6-9*

"He who now letteth" is the Holy Spirit, or the church. Therefore, this verse plainly teaches that the church (people filled with the Holy Spirit) must be taken out of the way (raptured) before the antichrist comes, and that this antichrist must come before the Great Tribulation.

Rebuttal:

This is the most frequently quoted passage for those who teach the pretribulation rapture. Look at the passage again, this time starting in verse one, and pay special attention to the words in bold.

2nd Thessalonians 2:1-9

1. *Now we beseech you, brethren, by **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him**,*
2. *That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*
3. ***Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;***

- 4-6. *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.*
7. *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only **he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.***
8. ***And then shall that Wicked be revealed,** whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:*
9. *Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,*

Paul gives a clear warning in verse 3, "Let no man deceive you by any means." This warning comes directly before a timeline of events, indicating that the order of these events is very important. Why do you think he warned us of this deception?

If Paul is using this passage to teach a pretribulation rapture:

1. Why does our gathering together unto the Lord (vs. 1) happen **after** the man of sin is revealed (vs. 3)?
6. When he that letteth will be taken out of the way **before** the man of sin is revealed. (vs. 7)?

One event happens **before** the antichrist's appearance [He that letteth will be taken out of the way], and the other event happens **after** the antichrist's appearance [our gathering together unto the Lord]. Therefore, "taken out of the way" cannot be the same event as "our gathering together unto him."

How do you interpret the following verse?

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

If you use the second chapter of 2 Thessalonians as proof for a pretribulation rapture, you must read it as,

*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [our gathering unto him] shall **not** come, ~~except there come a falling away first, and~~ [before] that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.* - 2nd Thessalonians 2:3

If an elder understands this contradiction and continues teaching the pretribulation rapture, based on 2nd Thessalonians 2, it is between him and God.

Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. - Matthew 15:14

Mistakes:

The teacher is **eisegeting** (That is reading his beliefs into the interpretation without any scriptural support) Scripture when he changes the definitions of the following words in 2nd Thessalonians 2:

1. ... *He that letteth* (vs. 7) to mean the church or Holy Spirit.
2. ... *taken out of the way* (vs. 7) to mean the rapture.

The teacher is also taking verse 7 out of context, since he ignores the fact that *our gathering together unto him* (vs. 1) happens after the man of sin is revealed (vs. 3).

Proof 2: Jesus Said, "I come as a thief"

Explanation:

Jesus said, "I come as a thief" (Matthew 24:43, Luke 12:39, 1st Thessalonians 5:2 and Revelation 3:3)

Jesus must come at an unknown and unexpected moment, like a thief. This proves that the rapture must come before the Great Tribulation, because if it came after, it would be at an expected time - not very thief-like.

Rebuttal:

Every verse that mentions *coming as a thief and that has a specific date* will point to a time after the Great Tribulation. Some verses are not mentioned in relation to time, but no verse refers specifically to a time that predates the Great Tribulation (We will look at the timing of 1st Thessalonians 4:17 in a moment).

The following passage is a plain reference to Jesus' Second coming like a thief at the Battle of Armageddon, the event at the end of the Great Tribulation period.

*[After the sixth vial is poured] **Behold, I come as a thief.** Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. - Revelation 16:15-17*

And nother passage that can only refer to Christ coming like a thief at the end of the Great Tribulation. There is no passage of Scripture which, taken in context, will not allow this timing.

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

The Lord's coming (after the nations come up to battle of Armageddon) must take the world by surprise. If the world expected Jesus to make His appearance at the Battle of Armageddon, would they not forbear to go up and fight? Even so, this event should not take His church by surprise. If it does, it will be because we did not listen to Jesus when he said to *take heed*.

*And **take heed to yourselves,** lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, **and so that day come upon you***

unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. - Luke 21:34-35

Paul concurred with Jesus in his first letter to the Thessalonians, where he plainly stated that the day should not overtake the saints by surprise.

*For yourselves know perfectly that the day of **the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night**. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, **brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief**. - 1st Thessalonians 5:2-4*

John also warned the Church of Sardis to watch:

*Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. **If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee**. - Revelation 3:3*

The Lord's coming should not take the church by surprise. Yet, if we are to watch, what is the definition of the word *watch*? And how should we be watching?

Watch: <γρηγορεύω gray-gor-yoo'-o> To *keep awake*, that is, *watch* (literally or figuratively).

How do we watch? In the following parable, Jesus teaches us how to watch. Did the man going on the journey tell the porter to simply stay awake? Does not the context of this parable imply that he expected the porter to also be looking?

*Take ye heed, **watch and pray**: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and **commanded the porter to watch**. **Watch** ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you **I say unto all, Watch**. - Mark 13:33-37*

Jesus commanded us to watch; it will be only the disobedient and unbelieving who will be surprised.

Mistakes:

The teacher, by redefining the word **watch** as *sober* removes the urgency taught in those passages of scripture.

The teacher has a mistaken assumption, that when Jesus said, "I come as a thief", he was teaching that he would take, not just the unbelieving, but his church by surprise.

The teacher is ignorant of the Scriptures that teach the Lord's second coming after the Great Tribulation will take the unbelievers like a thief.

Proof 3: Jesus said, "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation"

Explanation:

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. - Revelation 3:10

One pastor who believes in the pretribulation rapture put it this way:

"Some have wrongly believed 'keep' means to keep through, or protect through the tribulation. Suppose you approach a high voltage area with a sign that says, 'Keep Out.' Does that mean you can enter and be protected? No, it means you are forbidden from entering the area. But this verse also says He will keep us from the hour of testing. It is not just the testing, but the time period. If a student is excused from a test, he still may have to sit in the class while others take the test. But if he is excused from the hour of testing, he can go home. The Church will be called home before the hour of testing."

Rebuttal:

Before I begin a rebuttal, we need to define our words. To demonstrate the importance of understanding proper definitions, look at this verse from first Peter.

*Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won **by the conversation** of the wives; - 1st Peter 3:1 kjv*

The modern definition for *conversation* is 'a verbal exchange of ideas or opinions' (*Webster's New World Dictionary*). The definition of the Greek word *ἀναστροφή* the word Peter used, was 'behavior' (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*). Did Peter want the wife to win her husband by her *behavior*, or by *telling her husband about her behavior*? If you wish to know what Peter was teaching, you must use the same definitions for your words that he did.

If we use the modern definitions given to us by the teachers of the pretribulation rapture, we can make an argument that Jesus will call His church home before the hour of testing comes. However, if we look at the actual words that John wrote, we may arrive at a very different conclusion.

First, this promise of being kept was written to an actual church in the city of Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7), and as history has borne out, they (and every other Christian church at the time) were either going through, or about to go through a time of great testing.

In light of the persecution which they were already going through (vs. 8), how would the church of Philadelphia have understood this promise? Would they not have taken this promise personally? After having read this promise, did they expect to be raptured? Or did they believe that the seven churches represented seven different church ages (which belief is necessary for this proof to support the pretribulation rapture doctrine)?

While it is interesting to muse on the thought that the seven churches in Asia each represent a different church age, that is not the how those churches interpreted Revelation 2 & 3. If the apostles taught, or if the early church believed in the seven church ages (of which six had not yet come), how could they believe that the rapture could occur at any moment?

Every one of the seven churches that John wrote to were in the first church age. From that day to this, there have been a diversity of churches, similar to each of the seven, some deserving correction, and others praise. So why was the church at Philadelphia praised?

*Because **thou hast kept the word of my patience**, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. - Revelation 3:10*

The Lord praised the church in Philadelphia, because they had "kept the word of my patience". It is important for us, like the church of Philadelphia, to keep His word. Therefore, we should be very careful as we interpret this passage.

*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will **keep** thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. - Revelation 3:10*

I have no doubt that God kept the Philadelphian church, as promised. The Greek word *keep* is defined:

From τῆρός (*teros* (a watch; perhaps akin to G2334); **to guard** (from loss or injury, properly by keeping the eye upon; and thus differing from G5442, which is properly to prevent escaping; and from G2892, which implies a fortress or full military lines of apparatus), that is, to note (a prophecy; figuratively to fulfil a command); **by implication to detain** (in custody; figuratively to maintain); by extension to withhold (for personal ends; figuratively to keep unmarried): - **hold fast**, keep (-er), (ob-, pre-, re) serve, watch [The bold emphasis is mine]

When God said that He would *keep* the church, does it sound like God promised to *rapture* them? Are there not many words that would describe a rapture much better than *keep* does. For instance, I will **remove** thee, I will **bring** thee, I will **send** thee or (the most suitable) I will **rapture** thee. And when John wrote *thee*, that brings up another question: to whom was the Lord speaking?

*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep **thee** from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. - Revelation 3:10*

The definition of *thee* is *you* (accusative singular). God made this promise to only one church, the church of Philadelphia. He did not make this promise to any of the other churches in Asia. We can claim this promise for ourselves, but what will keep the other (especially the not so pleasant) promises like the one to the last church from being applied to us?

This was a specific promise made to a specific church, but since this promise is recorded in the Bible, other churches that keep God's word faithfully can have faith that God will keep them also. However, they cannot expect God to keep them any differently than He kept the church at Philadelphia.

Did God promise to keep the Philadelphian church *from* the hour of temptation, or did He promise to keep them *through* it?

*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee **from** the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. - Revelation 3:10*

From: <Greek - εκ or ek> A primary preposition **denoting origin (the point whence motion or action proceeds)**, from, out (of place, time or cause; literally or figuratively; direct or remote) ⁶

The question is, in Revelation 3:10 does the word *from* (εκ) mean *to keep thee from* (as to separate) or can it mean *to keep thee through* (without physically separating)? As we look at some examples of how εκ is used in other passages of the Scripture (the word is in bold), you can decide for yourself if the word implies a separation (like a rapture) or is simply "denoting origin (the point whence motion or action proceeds)".

*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child **of** the Holy Ghost. - Matthew 1:18*

*He said unto them, What man shall there be **among** you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? - Matthew 12:11*

*Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known **by** his fruit. - Matthew 12:33*

*For **by** thy words thou shalt be justified, and **by** thy words thou shalt be condemned. - Matthew 12:37*

*And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen **through** faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. - Galatians 3:8*

If John had used the Greek word εν (translated in), he would clearly have meant that God would keep the church in the hour of temptation. If he had used από (translated from), he would clearly have meant that God would separate them from the hour of temptation. Since John used εκ, however, arguments can be made for both interpretations. The Lord promised to keep the church at Philadelphia, but He did not really give any details on how.

Does the word εκ ever imply a separation? Yes, in some passages, depending on the context, it does. However, those who want to use the word ek to teach a pretribulation rapture will have to find those passages for themselves. 😊

Even so, suppose John did mean, *keep thee from*, as opposed to *keep thee through*. Was this a promise to deliver us from the great tribulation?

*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of **temptation**, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. - Revelation 3:10*

The word temptation is πειρασμός (or pi-ras-mos'). The definition⁶ is:

A putting to proof (by experiment [of good], experience [of evil], solicitation, discipline or provocation); by implication adversity

[From πειράζω to test (objectively), that is, endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline: - assay, examine, go about, prove, tempt (-er), try]

While temptation (pi-ras-mos') may include adversity, the word *temptation* is not a good definition for the Great Tribulation. The purpose for the Great Tribulation is not to test or tempt, but according to the pretribulation rapture teachers themselves, it is God's wrath or punishment on those who have failed the test. However, "the hour of **temptation**", is a perfect description of what history proves the church of Philadelphia actually faced.

The last two words we will look at are *world* and *earth*.

*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the **world**, to try them that dwell upon the **earth**. - Revelation 3:10*

The word for **world** is οικουμένη (pronounced oy-kou-men'-ay). The definition⁶ is:

Feminine participle present passive of οικέω (as noun, by implication of γη); land, that is, the (terrene part of the) globe; **specifically the Roman Empire**

The word that was translated **world** could mean *the entire world* (Mat 24:14), but it is also used as a synonym for *the Roman empire* (Luke 2:1 & Acts 24:5). If John had used the word αἰών (aiōn) for the word *world* an argument could be made that Philadelphia was about to go through a temptation that would include this whole age.

The word for **earth** in the above passage is γῆ (pronounced ghay). The definition⁶ is:

Contracted from a primary word; **soil**; by extension a **region**, or the solid part **or the whole** of the terrene globe (including the occupants in each application)

The word that was translated **earth** could mean *the entire world*, (Mat 5:18) but it could to describe *a piece of land as small as a farm* (Mat 13:5). If John had used the word κόσμος (cosmos) for the word **earth** an argument could be made that Philadelphia was about to go through a temptation that would include this whole age and cover the entire planet. But John used the perfect words to describe the trial that the first century church went through, at the hands of the Roman Empire.

*Because thou [the church in Philadelphia] hast **kept the word of my patience**, I also will **keep thee from the hour of temptation**, which shall come upon all the **world**, to try them that dwell upon the **earth**. - Revelation 3:10*

The above passage should be understood:

*Because thou [the church in Philadelphia] hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world [οικουμένη not αιών], to try them that dwell upon the earth [γῆ not cosmos].
- Revelation 3:10*

Not:

Because ~~thou~~ [the sixth church age] hast kept the word of my patience, I also will ~~keep~~ [rapture] ~~thee~~ [the whole church] ~~from~~ [out of] the ~~hour of temptation~~ [the Great Tribulation], which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. - Revelation 3:10

Mistakes:

The teacher:

Redefines words, rather than looking up their real definitions. In order to understand this passage, we must use the same definitions that John would have used when he penned the words.

Doesn't understand whom John was writing too, the church in Philadelphia, not a church in the United States of America.

Uses the *seven church ages theory* to interpret this passage. If you believe in the seven church ages, would the interpretation of Revelation 2 & 3 mean the same thing to those seven churches as it does to you? (see Galatians chapter 1)

Eisegets Scripture, rather than exegeting it. Christians with either viewpoint can learn from Revelation 3:10. However, neither side can honestly prove or disprove a pretribulation rapture from this passage.

Proof 4: Jesus Said, "One shall be taken, and the other left"

Explanation:

37. *But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*
38. *For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark,*
39. *And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*
40. *Then shall two be in the field; the **one shall be taken, and the other left.***
41. *Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*
42. *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. - Matthew 24:37-42*

This passage teaches the pretribulation rapture. "*Then shall two be in the field; the **one shall be taken ...***" This rapture could happen at any time, since Jesus said in verse 42, "*Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.*"

Since we can't know the timing of the rapture, then this event would have to happen before the tribulation, otherwise we would know its timing. Also, if this event happened at the end of the Great Tribulation, how could the saved and unsaved be walking together, sleeping together or working together?

Rebuttal:

If a parable is interpreted in one of the gospels, the same parable will have the same interpretation when it is in another Gospel. It is in studying similar passages together, that we accurately understand Biblical doctrine and prophecy. In Luke 17:34-37, Jesus spoke the same parable. And in Luke verse 37 the disciples ask a simple question, "*Where Lord?*"

36. *I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*

37. *And they answered and said unto him, **Where, Lord?** And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together. - Luke 17:34-36-37*

The answer tells us not only where but who will be gathered. The eagles will be gathered to where the body is. Does this sound like the gathering of saints unto the Lord, to you? In addition, this passage never states that people will actually be raptured – it says, "taken". To see something interesting, look at two words *taken* and *left* more closely.

Taken : *par-al-am-ban'-o*: **To receive near, that is, associate with oneself** (in any familiar or intimate act or relation); by analogy to assume an office; figuratively to learn.

Left: *af-ee'-ay-mee*: **To send; to send forth**, in various applications.

Therefore, it is not one taken and one left, it is "*one shall be [received near and associated with myself] and the other [sent forth].*" Where will the lord be sending them? "*Wheresoever the [carcass] is, thither will the [vultures] be gathered together.*"

Most Christians agree that there will be a separating of the sheep from the goats on the Judgment Day (Matthew 25:31-46). If you look at it more closely, you will see that a similar separation is taking place in Luke 17:36. To understand this separation better, we need to know the timing of Luke 17:36. Let's look at the whole passage, in context:

28. *Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;*
29. *But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.*
30. *Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.*
31. ***In that day***, *he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.*
32. *Remember Lot's wife.*
33. *Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.*
34. ***I tell you, in that night*** *there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.*
35. *Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*
36. *Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*
37. *And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together. - Luke 17:28-37*

In verse 31, our Lord warns those in Judea not to come back from the field to take anything out of their houses. Where else in Scripture does Jesus say not to go into the house to collect personal belongings? Matthew 24:15-18 (or Mark 13:14).

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them

which be in Judea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. - Matthew 24:15-18

According to these verses, the day in which the Abomination of Desolation is committed is the same day in which *he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away* (Luke 17:31a).

Verse 34 states "I tell you, in that night ... one shall be taken and the other left". Which night is Jesus referring to? The "day" in verse 31, or day in which the Abomination of Desolation is committed.

Daniel 9:27 says that the Abomination of Desolation will be committed in the middle of the Great Tribulation.

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. - Daniel 9:27

Read Matthew 24:40-41 again, "*Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*"

1. If the word *taken* does mean "to receive near, to associate with oneself," and
2. If the word *left* means "to send, or to send forth," and
3. If *in that night* (Lu 17:34) is the same day that the saints are to flee Judea into the mountains, and
4. If they are to flee when they see the Abomination of Desolation (Mt 24:18), and
5. If the abomination does happen in the middle of the tribulation period (Da 9:27),

Then this passage, so far from teaching a pretribulation rapture, teaches that some will be *received* by Christ (when they flee into the mountains) and some will be *sent* to the antichrist, or carcass (when they choose to remain behind) at the time of the *abomination of desolation*.

Revelation 12 supports this:

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle⁹ that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. - Revelation 12:14

If you want to look more closely at this exodus, the Bible study [On the Wings of an Eagle](#) looks at other Scriptures showing this event.

Mistakes:

1. The teacher did not look at the definition of important words like *taken* and *left*.
2. The teacher took verses out of context:
 - a. He ignored the disciple's question "Where Lord?" and the Lord's answer. (Luke 17:37)
 - b. He did not look for the timing of this event by taking the passage in context.

Proof 5: The Church is Only Mentioned in the First 3 Chapters of Revelation

Explanation:

The apostle John mentions the *church* nineteen times in the first three chapters of Revelation, and not again until the end of the book. This implies that the church is raptured before any of the events mentioned in the later chapters of Revelation take place.

Rebuttal:

John did not write the book of Revelation in chronological order. Chapters 1 through 3 were words of admonition and encouragement to seven real churches in Asia. Revelation 12:2-5 talks about the birth of Christ, an event that happened before any of the seven churches came into existence. Though seven chapters apart, the sixth trumpet (Rev 9:14) and the sixth vial (Rev 16:12) both prophesy of the drying up of the Euphrates River in preparation for the Battle of Armageddon. These seven chapters cover a large time span. There is no shortage of examples to prove that John did not write the book of Revelation in chronological order; one has only to read the book.

Since John did not write the book of Revelation in chronological order, Christ admonishing His seven churches in the beginning of the book of Revelation does not prove that there will be a pretribulation rapture.

Another problem with this proof, we do not need the word church (ek-klay-see'-ah) to prove there is no pretrib rapture, we need the word *pretribulation rapture* to prove there is one! While the word ek-klay-see'-ah is not mentioned in chapters 4-19, neither is it mentioned when he talks about the thousand year reign in chapter 20, or the bride of Christ in chapter 21. Will the church be missing here also? Even though the word ek-klay-see'-ah is missing from chapter 4 through 21, God's people are mentioned, for instance in chapter 18:

*And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.** - Revelation 18:4*

Mistake:

The teacher does not understand that the book of Revelation is not in chronological order. This fact holds true for many other books of the Bible as well.

Though the word *Church* is not mentioned in chapters 4 through 21, the teacher is ignorant or misleading if he teaches that God's people are not mentioned in these chapters.

Proof 6: John saw and/or was Actually in the Pretribulation Rapture

Explanation:

1. *After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, **Come up hither**, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.*
2. *And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.*
3. *And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.*
4. *And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats **I saw four and twenty elders sitting**, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.
- Revelation 4:1-4*

John is told to *Come up hither* right after the seventh church age. This times John's vision to the pretribulation rapture. We see John raptured into Heaven (vs.1) where he saw twenty-four elders (vs. 4). Since these elders represent the church, John was raptured to a point in time just after the rapture of the church, from which point in time he saw the Great Tribulation unfold.

Rebuttal:

It is true that John saw the Great Tribulation and other *things which must be hereafter*, but the Scriptures make no mention of him actually being transported to a specific point in time. There are several reasons for not using *the Seven Church Ages* interpretation of Revelation 2 & 3 to prove a pretribulation rapture. For instance:

1. As already mentioned, the early church could not believe that Jesus Christ would return at any moment and in *Seven Church Ages* at the same time.
2. the "rapture" would have to happened in the sixth church age not the last church age.
3. John never said anything or implied anything other than that Jesus asked him to write words of correction and encouragement to seven literal churches in Asia.
4. Chapter four does not continue the admonitions from chapters two and three, but starts with an entirely different vision. Therefore its context should be understood as such.
5. Like Isaiah and Ezekiel (in Isaiah chapter 6 and Ezekiel chapters 1 & 10), Revelation chapter 4 states that John was conveyed into God's presence. John (like Isaiah and Ezekiel before him) saw the Lord in his glory, as He sat upon His throne. John tried to give us a description of His majesty. The truth is that nowhere in chapter four of Revelation is the pretribulation rapture addressed.
6. There are three other major assumptions in this proof.
7. Though John saw future events, it is an assumption to say that God actually transported him into the future. The voice did not say, "I will take you into the hereafter" it said, "I will show thee things which must be hereafter".

8. The twenty-four elders are only assumed to be church elders, their actual identities are not given.
9. Which leads to another assumption, even if the 24 are church elders, that does not imply the church must be in Heaven. Chapter 4 never addresses either whether the elders belong to the church (or Israel or if they are from New Testament or Old Testament times), or whether the church is in heaven with the elders.

Mistake:

Chapter 4 is taken out of context; it is not a continuation of chapter 3.

The teacher's proofs are all based on assumptions (chronological order, time travel, the elder's identity, etc) and assumptions are not proofs.

Proof 7: Zechariah 14:1-15 Does Not Mention the Rapture

Explanation:

Zechariah 14:1-15 is an Old Testament picture of Jesus returning to earth at His Second Coming. Since Zechariah does not mention a rapture or a resurrection of the saints that have gone to sleep before us, these events must happen before His Second Coming or before the Great Tribulation.

Rebuttal:

Like this Zechariah 14 proof, some teachers base arguments for a pretribulation rapture on details not touched on in other passages of Scripture. For instance, some teach that since the rapture is not mentioned in the end times passages of Revelation 19:11-21 or in Matthew 24,¹¹ this proves that the church will be raptured before the Great Tribulation.

We will look only at Zechariah, and then the serious Bible student can apply the same principles when he looks at the other passages.

The fact that a rapture is not mentioned is not is not proof of a pretribulation rapture. If a pretribulation rapture was proved by other passages, then Zechariah 14 might be presented as circumstantial evidence. Even so, using missing details from prophecy as circumstantial evidence is very poor hermeneutics. This is because **missing details in Bible prophecy is the rule, not the exception**. Therefore we must study all of the scripture passages on a topic before we can begin to understand it. For an example, in Psalm 22:16 we read:

For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. - Psalm 22:16

Psalm 22 mentions that they pierced our Lord's Hands and feet. But, the Psalmist fails to mention that a soldier pierced our Lord's side. Does this missing information in Psalm 22 prove that a soldier did not pierce Jesus' side?

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. - John 19:34-35

In this same way, is there anything besides the rapture that is not mentioned about the Lord's Second Coming in Zechariah 14? (If you cannot make a list of them, you need to go back and study). In what Biblical prophecy of a particular event is every detail mentioned?

Mistake:

When a teacher says that an event not mentioned in Zechariah 14 is proof that it will happen, he is applying a rule of interpretation that would not work in any other passage of Scripture.

Proof 8: God has Not Appointed the Church to His Wrath

Explanation:

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

The Great Tribulation is a time when God pours out His wrath on the disobedient. Since God has not appointed us to wrath, He must remove His church from the earth before the Great Tribulation.

(Some arguments criticize those who do not believe in a pretribulation rapture, as though they want to go through the Great Tribulation.)

Rebuttal:

To understand 1 Thessalonians 5:9 in its proper context, as it relates to the rest of the Bible, we must look at other passages more closely. It is certain that God has not appointed His saints to the wrath reserved for His enemies, yet Christians have gone through, and will continue go through tribulation. Below are a few verses that could be helpful in taking 1 Thessalonians 5:9 in context.

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

AND

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

AND

*Rejoicing in hope; patient **in tribulation;** continuing instant in prayer;*
- Romans 12:12

AND

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

If you believe Christians will not go through tribulation, look at what is happening in many parts of the world today and at what has happened to the church at the hands of evil men for the last two millennia. In light of the Bible's position, if you think that God will not let you partake in tribulation, you should prayerfully reconsider your position.

When the Apostle Paul says, "God hath not appointed us to wrath" he is referring to God's wrath, after the Day of Judgment, not to the temporary suffering that we may experience now:

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. - Luke 9:24

AND

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. - Matthew 10:28

Christians who do not believe in a pretribulation rapture by no means desire to be persecuted. In one pretribulation website (raptureready.com), the teacher uses the header "Persecute Me Please" to mock those who disagree with his doctrine. It continues, "You would think the desire to go through the tribulation would be as popular as the desire to jump into a pit filled with vipers and broken glass." However, a Christian must not believe doctrine based on its popularity or convenience, but only on whether or not the evidence points to the doctrine as being true. Jesus said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt." We who claim to have the Mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16) should have these same desires as Christ.

Assuming we agree that Christians do go through some tribulation, the important question becomes, do we go through the Great Tribulation?

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

God's correction of His children is not the same thing as God pouring out His wrath on His enemies. Most Christians will concur that God does not appoint his saints to that wrath. Even so:

*And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee **the righteous and the wicked**. Seeing then that **I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked**, therefore shall my sword go forth out of his sheath against all flesh from the south to the north: That all flesh may know that I the LORD have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath: it shall not return any more. - Ezekiel 21:3-5*

The argument that this is the wrath of man, and not the wrath of God, does not work. God clearly says that the vengeance is His. Is the Lord obligated to remove his saints from the world in order to protect them from the Great Tribulation?

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. - Luke 9:24

The truth is that God can do as He pleases, and we like Job and Jesus, should willingly submit.

[Job said] Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation: for a hypocrite shall not come before him. - Job 13:15-16

AND

And [Jesus] said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. - Mark 14:36

God can do as He pleases, for instance, *before* God brought his people out of Egypt there was great tribulation. Even so, He did not appoint the children of Israel to the wrath that He poured out on the servants

of Pharaoh. While they did suffer discomfort (Exo 5:21), God was able to discern the difference between the children of Israel and the Egyptians.

*And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. And **I will put a division between my people and thy people:** tomorrow shall this sign be. - Exodus 8:22-23*

In the same way, God will put a division between His people and the antichrist's people at the end of this age. Revelation says:

*And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but **only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.***
- Revelation 9:3-4

AND

*And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and **there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast,** and upon them which worshiped his image. - Revelation 16:2*

Those who know the Lord (are sealed with his Holy Spirit) will not take the Mark of the Beast, and will not receive these plagues.

In the book of Daniel, the heat of King Nebuchadnezzar's furnace had a different effect on Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers (death) than it had on the three faithful Jews (burning their bonds).

*Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, **the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.** And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spoke, and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, **Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.***
- Daniel 3:21-25

No Christian should doubt that God (who knows the number of hairs on each person's head) is able to protect His people through the greatest of tribulations, even without a pretribulation rapture.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. - Ephesians 3:20-21

Even so, what if we go through the Tribulation, and what if we are not delivered from His wrath? Will you still serve Him?

*If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. **But if not**, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. - Daniel 3:17-18*

AND

***Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:** but I will maintain mine own ways before him. - Job 13:15*

Mistakes:

The Teacher

is mistaking temporary tribulation for the punishment of the wicked after the Day of Judgment.

is appealing to feelings rather than facts. (No one feels like going through the Great Tribulation.)

is using faulty doctrine if he assumes that Christians do not suffer tribulation.

is limiting God's power and choices to our own limited understanding of the End Times.

Proof 9: We Shall be Caught up to Meet the Lord in the Air

Explanation:

15. *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.*

16. *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: **and the dead in Christ shall rise first:***

17. *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to **meet the Lord in the air:** and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

18. *Wherefore comfort one another with these words. - 1st Thessalonians 4:15-18*

The word rapture originated from the two words *caught up* in verse 17. These verses speak for themselves; the Apostle Paul plainly believed in the rapture.

Rebuttal:

These verses refer to the Lord's Second Coming, not to a secret pretribulation rapture. At the Lord's Second Coming, his saints will meet Him in the air. This will be as He is coming to earth. There is no hint in 1 Thessalonians 4, or anywhere else in Scripture, that after we meet Christ in the air he will go back to Heaven for seven years. Rather, 1st Thessalonians says:

*For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto **the coming of the Lord** shall not prevent them which are asleep.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:15 (See 1 Th 2:19; 3:13; 5:23)*

It is true that Paul taught that those who were alive would meet the Lord in the air. Perhaps verse 16 can help with the timing of this rapture. Referring to "The dead in Christ shall rise first", we should ask, "when do the dead in Christ raise?" Daniel wrote of the order of events in chapters 11 and 12.

And he [antichrist?] shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. - Daniel 11:45 - 12:2

This passage in Daniel does not name the exact day, but it does say that the dead [in Christ] will raise to everlasting life after the man of sin. You do not need to take my word for it; study Daniel for yourself.

1. If Daniel teaches that the resurrection to eternal life happens after the man of sin plants his tabernacle in the Holy Mountain, and
2. If the rapture happens after the resurrection of the dead to eternal life (1Th 4:16), then
3. This rapture must occur after the man of sin.

Another passage in Matthew tells us when the Lord will gather His elect:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. -Matthew 24:29-31

We will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air at His Second Coming, not in a pretribulation rapture. This will be when He comes to earth.

Mistake:

The teacher is assuming the time of the rapture.

There is no mention in scripture of it happening before the tribulation.

He ignores any scripture passages on the resurrection of the saints that date 1st Thessalonians 4:17 to the end of the Great Tribulation period.

Proof 10: Will the Saints Make a U-turn?

Explanation:

The two following arguments come from two different teachers of the pretribulation rapture:

raptureready.com: "In the pre-trib scenario, after we rise to meet the Lord in the air, we will go to heaven and abide there seven years. At the end of the seven years Christ comes down to earth, defeats the Antichrist, and cleanses the temple. In a post-trib rapture we would rise in

the air to meet the Lord, then do a 180-degree U-turn and come back down to earth. It states in Rev. 1:7 that Christ will appear out of the clouds and come down to earth. It says in Zech. 14:4 that His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. **If He's already headed our way, why would we need to be caught up to meet Him?"**

raptureme.com: "Matthew 25:31,32 - "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations" Carefully notice that **Jesus is going to sit upon His throne in Jerusalem when He returns**, and the nations of earth will be gathered before Him to be judged. **How can this fact be reconciled** with 1st Thessalonians 4:17, which states that **the saints will be caught up together to meet with the Lord in the air?** "

Rebuttal:

The first teacher asked, "if He's already headed our way, why would we need to be caught up to meet Him?" The answer is we don't *need* to be, we *want* to be. This will be like the triumphal entry, when the saints went out to meet Jesus as he entered Jerusalem.

And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? - Matthew 21:8-10

The saints came from everywhere to meet Jesus, and then they made a u-turn and returned to Jerusalem with Him. Throughout history, and across cultures, it is normal for people to run out to greet their victorious king when he arrives. When you have guests, do you go out to greet them? Do you make a u-turn and come back your home with them? Why is it hard to believe that the saints will be caught up to meet Jesus at His glorious coming, and then return to Jerusalem with Him?

The second teacher says the Lord will rule from Jerusalem and then asks the question, "How can this fact be reconciled with 1st Thessalonians 4:17, which states that the saints will be caught up together to meet with the Lord in the air?" The answer is *easily*. The Lord himself said that that was exactly what was going to happen. This will be an exciting event for the saints; I wouldn't want to miss it!

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

Mistake:

The first teacher posed a straw-man argument. He does not *disprove* the beliefs of those who hold to one Second Coming, he only tries to make the fact that we will go forth to greet our savior on His return seem ridiculous. The teacher created a scenario, an unnecessary u-turn, which is more easily refuted than the desire to go up and greet Jesus when he comes in all his glory.

The second teacher's inflexibility is the only thing that keeps him from being able to reconcile Matthew 25:31-32 with 1st Thessalonians 4:17.

Proof 11: Noah and Lot are Allegories

Explanation:

In the same way that God removed Noah and Lot before He poured His wrath out on the ungodly, so God will remove the church in a pretribulation rapture before He punishes the unbelieving world. Jesus even uses Noah and Lot for examples when He describes what it will be like at the end of the age.

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

Rebuttal:

The teacher is missing Jesus' application. Jesus was describing the world (eating drinking, getting married and generally going about their business) as being too preoccupied to notice His coming. In Luke 17, Jesus actually stated three times the timeframe to which these allegories apply. His first two statements couch these allegories:

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

<Noah and Lot allegories, Luke 17:26-29>

Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. - Luke 17:30

These two passages refer to the Lord's Second Coming, which, according to the pretribulation rapture doctrine, is after the Great Tribulation.

Luke The third time that Jesus dates these allegories directly follows, in verse 31 when He said *In that day*. When is that day?

***In that day**, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.* - Luke 17:31

As already discussed in Proof 4, this verse refers to the middle of the tribulation period. Jesus uses Noah and Lot as allegories to show what it will be like at the time of the Abomination of Desolation (To connect Luke 17:31 with the Abomination of Desolation, see Matthew 24:15-20).

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

Finally, a better allegory can be found in the story of Moses leading the Children of Israel out of Egypt.

1. The plagues Moses performed are similar to the end days. It is possible that Moses is one of [The Two Witnesses of Revelation 11](#)?
2. God, through Moses, repeatedly plead with Pharaoh to let His people go. God will similarly plead for his people at the end of time.

*A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, **he will plead with all flesh**; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD. - Jeremiah 25:31*

AND

*I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will **plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel**, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. - Joel 3:2*

The important point for us here is that God can protect his own people. He did so in Moses' time, and led Israel out of Egypt after Egypt was destroyed.

*And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? **let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?** - Exodus 10:7*

God is no less able to protect His saints at the end of the age.

Mistake:

1. The teacher is taking the allegories of Noah and Lot out of context.
 - a. Jesus used these allegories to teach about the latter half of the Great Tribulation.
 - b. The purpose of these allegories is to warn us about being too distracted with the cares of this life to notice His Second Coming. He was discussing His Second Coming, not the sudden disappearance of His church.
2. The teacher is **eisegeting** this passage (Reading his beliefs into the interpretation without real scriptural support.). He is only interested in looking for those allegories that imply a pretribulation rapture, while ignoring the allegories that don't.

Conclusion

It would be helpful if there were some Bible verse that plainly said, "Thou shalt not believe in the pretribulation rapture." Unfortunately, there is not. While Jesus did not tell us about every event that *would not* happen, he did tell us what events *would* happen.

***But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.** - Mark 13:23*

If Jesus said that He has told us all things, but He did not mention the pretribulation rapture, what does this imply? The best evidence to disprove the pretribulation rapture is a close examination of Paul's letters to the Thessalonians, in light of what Jesus taught (we will use Matthew chapter 24). Every chapter in both 1st and 2nd Thessalonians mentions our Lord's Second Coming. Let us become familiar with these verses before we comment on them.

1st Thessalonians

Chapter 1

For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

*And to wait for his **Son from heaven**, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. - 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10*

Chapter 2

*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our **Lord Jesus Christ at his coming**?*

For ye are our glory and joy. - 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

Chapter 3

And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

*To the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, **at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.***

- 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

Chapter 4

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

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven **with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God:** and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

***Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air:** and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

Wherefore comfort one another with these words. - 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18

Chapter 5

***Prove all things;** hold fast that which is good.*

Abstain from all appearance of evil.

*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless **unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

- 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23

2 Thessalonians

Chapter 1

Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

*And to you who are troubled rest with us, **when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,***

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

- 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10.

Chapter 2

*Now we beseech you, brethren, **by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,***

That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

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

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

*And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the **Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:***

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. - 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.

Chapter 3

And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

*And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into **the patient waiting for Christ.** - 2 Thessalonians 3:4-5*

We must also read Matthew chapter twenty-four.

Matthew 24

Behold, I have told you before.

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

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

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

- Matthew 24:25-31

On careful observation, Paul is expounding to the Thessalonians Jesus' teachings in Matthew. Do not let the chapter and verse numbers cause you to split up Paul's teaching. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 Paul tells us to "wait for his Son from heaven." And in 2 Thessalonians 3, Paul concludes by reminding us to be directed "into the patient waiting for Christ."

Let's compare Paul's letters to the Thessalonians to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 24:

The Lord is coming in glory.

Jesus:

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

- Matthew 24:29-30

Paul:

*When he shall come to be **glorified in his saints**, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.
- 2 Thessalonians 1:10*

AND

*And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the **brightness of his coming**:,
- 2 Thessalonians 2:8*

The Lord is coming with the sound of a trumpet.

Jesus:

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

Paul:

*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and **with the trump of God**: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16*

The Lord is coming in the clouds.

Jesus:

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

Paul:

*Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them **in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air**: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17*

The Lord is coming with His holy angels.

Jesus:

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

Paul:

*And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the **Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels**, - 2 Thessalonians 1:7*

We will be gathered to the Lord at his Second Coming.

Jesus:

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

Paul:

*Then **we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them** in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17

AND

*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by **our gathering together unto him,*** - 2 Thessalonians 2:1

The Lord is coming with a vengeance.

Jesus:

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

Paul:

*In flaming fire **taking vengeance on them** that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: - 2 Thessalonians 1:8*

There is only one Second Coming of the Lord.

Jesus:

*For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also **the coming of the Son of man be.*** - Matthew 24:27

AND

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

Paul:

*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of **our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?*** - 1 Thessalonians 2:19

AND

*To the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ** with all his saints. - 1 Thessalonians 3:13*

AND

*For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto **the coming of the Lord** shall not prevent them which are asleep. - 1 Thessalonians 4:15*

AND

*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**. - 1 Thessalonians 5:23*

AND

*When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) **in that day**. - 2 Thessalonians 1:10*

AND

*Now we beseech you, brethren, by **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**, and by our gathering together unto him, - 2 Thessalonians 2:1*

We have been warned.

Jesus:

***Behold, I have told you before.** - Matthew 24:25*

Paul:

***Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.** - 1 Thessalonians 5:21*

AND

Let no man deceive you by any means: 2 Thessalonians 2:3a.

To the brothers who believe in the pretribulation rapture:

I have tried not to belittle those who believe in a pretribulation rapture (excepting teachers who are deliberately misquoting Scripture). If Jesus died for your sins, then we are brothers.

If I misrepresented the pretribulation rapture proofs, forgive me; it was not intentional. Even so email me jeff@the-gospel.org and I will either fix my mistake, or I will post your objection with a link from the passage you believe is in error.

If I was faithful in presenting the proofs and rebuttals for the pretribulation rapture, I hope God is able to convict you. I know that many teachers continue to use passages like 2nd Thessalonians 2 to teach the rapture, even after they have been shown its contradictions. (Proof 1)

To the false teachers:

There are many false teachers who twist the plain meaning of 2 Thessalonians 2:1 to suit their doctrine.

One teacher addressed the contradiction between the pretribulation rapture and our gathering together unto Jesus before the man of sin is revealed (2 Th 2:1), by changing the meanings of "*the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him*" to mean *the Battle of Armageddon*. If a teacher can define these words to his own liking, then he can make Paul's teachings mean anything he wants. However, in such cases, the teacher's interpretation will not have the same meaning that God intended the passage to have.

Another teacher (<http://pretribulationrapture.com/pretrib/article36.htm>), specifically addressing this contradiction, stated that he keeps "getting the same question over and over again." He then said of those who do not believe in a pretribulation rapture, "The only problem with this is all of the dissenters fail to read the verses in context with the chapter. They read a few verses... make their false conclusions and ignore the verses right after their 'proof.'" This is a strange accusation because, when he presents the other side of the argument, this author is guilty of doing exactly that.

He presents the argument of those who are "attacking the pre-tribulation rapture."

THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD JESUS

2Thes:2:

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

Above verses 3 and 4 state that the return of the Lord will not come except first there be a falling away and the man of sin be revealed. I'm told by the people attacking the pre-tribulation rapture that here is my proof that the pre-tribulation rapture is false. **See above as it clearly states the Antichrist will come before the return of the Lord. That clearly disproves the pre-tribulation rapture according to many who wish to reject the concept.**

Here I call into question this teacher's honesty. We all agree that "the Antichrist will come before the return of the Lord. (The Lord's Second Coming)." If we all believed that the return of the Lord is when we are *gathered together unto him*, there would be no controversy.

However, this teacher believes that he is going to be gathered unto Jesus at the pretribulation rapture. In stating his opponents position, this teacher has left out the most important words, "and by our gathering together unto him,". His last paragraph should read.

Above verses 3 and 4 state that the return of the Lord will not come except first there be a falling away and the man of sin be revealed. I'm told by the people attacking the pre-tribulation rapture that here is my proof that the pre-tribulation rapture is false. See above as it clearly states the Antichrist will come before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, **and by our gathering together unto him**. That clearly disproves the pre-tribulation rapture according to many who wish to reject the concept.

About the false teachers, Jesus said:

Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. - Matthew 15:14



Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. Rev 16:15

Many other teachers use the best selling *Left Behind* series when expounding on the pretribulation rapture. However, the whole series is fiction. While the characters in the book often boast of Scriptural knowledge, the books themselves have very few Scriptures quoted in them. This is not an attack of novels based on pretribulation raptures, but let us heed Paul's warning not to use fables, works of fiction, or teachers who deliberately deceive as resources for learning sound doctrine.

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

- 2nd Timothy 2:3-4

Chuck Smith (founder of Calvary Chapel) once said that God wants us to believe in a pretribulation rapture, even if it is not true. He said that it's the belief that Jesus will return at any moment that keeps us sober and watchful. However, Corry Ten Boom (with her sister Betsy who as a result died, were imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp for their faith) states the other side of the coin:

"There are some among us teaching there will be no tribulation, that the Christians will be able to escape all this. These are the false teachers that Jesus was warning us to expect in the latter days. Most of them have little knowledge of what is already going on across the world. I have been in

countries where the saints are already suffering terrible persecution. In China, the Christians were told, 'Don't worry, before the tribulation comes you will be translated – raptured.' Then came a terrible persecution. Millions of Christians were tortured to death. Later I heard a Bishop from China say, **sadly, 'We have failed. We should have made the people strong for persecution rather than telling them Jesus would come first.'** Turning to me, he said: 'Tell the people how to be strong in times of persecution, how to stand when the tribulation comes – to stand and not faint.' I feel I have a divine mandate to go and tell the people of this world that it is possible to be strong in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are in training for the tribulation."

The truth is, many because they expect a pretribulation rapture do not study end time events, these passages are hard to understand and they are not personally relevant. Unfortunately, they have not considered how God might expect them to behave once the antichrist does appear. Nor do they pray for the strength to remain faithful when those days come.

And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be helped with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed. - Daniel 11:33-35

AND

*And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. **Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?** - Luke 18:7-8*

In closing, let me quote Jesus:

Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape ¹⁴ all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.
- Luke 21:33-36*

May grace, peace, love and faith be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ sincerely. Amen.

Written by [Jeff Barnes](#)

Footnotes:

- [1] The definition of *nations* in Matthew 24 is "different tribes or races."
- [2] <http://www.bread.org/learn/hunger-basics/>
- [3] <http://www.didyouknow.org/earthquakes.htm>
- [4] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pestilence>
- [5] Thayer's Greek Definitions
- [6] Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible
- [9] In Exodus 19:4 God uses the same metaphor to describe bringing Israel up out of Egypt.
- [11] The argument for Matthew 24 is that the chapter focuses on Israel not on the church; this is why Jesus does not mention a pretribulation rapture here. For instance, Jesus says to flee from Judea, not to flee from North America. Another example is that praying that the abomination of desolation does not happen on the Sabbath is not relevant to Christians since we are not under the Mosaic Law.
- [14] Escape: <εκφεύγω ekpheugō ek-fyoo'-go> to flee out.
The prefix <ek> is a primary preposition denoting *origin*.
The root <pheugō> means to run away (literally or figuratively); by implication to shun; by analogy to vanish. The word is translated in the KJV as "escape" or "flee". You will miss Jesus' warning if you eisegete *escape* to mean being taken up in a Pretribulation Rapture.

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