

A Bible study examining the verses used to teach the Pre-tribulation Rapture

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

Introduction: Why Is Understanding the Rapture So Important?

Without setting dates for the Lord's second coming, the evidence points to us being at the end of this age. 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.

Would you do anything 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?

"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."



The appearance of the antichrist may very well be the next event in Bible prophecy (2 Thes 2:3). Though Jesus advised us not to set dates, I think the end is near and the time of the infamous antichrist is soon. However, because of the widespread belief in a pre-tribulation rapture, the Christian community will be totally unprepared for the most important event in modern history.

When the doctrine of the pre tribulation 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 Berians in the book of Acts, 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.

I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. - 1 John 2:21

Signs of the Last Days

Even before the 9.0 earthquake in Japan, or the riots spreading throughout the middle east. I have felt a sense of urgency in preparing this study. Pick up a newspaper and look at the national and world news. Wars, famines, pestilence, earthquakes. It is like reading Matthew 24.

Other signs like the speed at which gospel being preached to all the world, or increase in knowledge imply that the time is near. With the United Nations, we see for the first time, since the Tower of Babel, that the world could be united under one leader.

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

The USA may have been a restrainer of evil at one time, yet today, can we tell right from wrong? Is the world ready to accept an antichrist?

[In the last days] 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

However, 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, yet I 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, jeffrey@the-gospel.org and I will fix it.

Let us start by defining what the pretribulation rapture is.

Pretribulation: An event that takes place before the Great Tribulation or 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.

Thus God will eagerly catch the church away, 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 being secret, 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 such a debate, the person who is teaching the pre tribulation rapture has the burden of proof if he expects us to believe him. Whenever I have asked a brother to show me a scriptural proof for the pretribulation rapture, He has invariably shown me one of the eleven following proofs. Let's look at these proofs by reading the verses in context.

Note: I am only trying to accurately state the proofs for a pretribulation rapture; I am not trying to defend their position. Also, not all Christians who believe in a pre tribulation rapture will believe in every one of these 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.

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)?
2. When he that letteth will be taken out of the way **before** the man of sin is revealed. (vs. 7)?

Does the rapture [He that letteth will be taken out of the way], happen **after** the antichrist's appearance? Or does the rapture [our gathering together unto the Lord] happens **before** the antichrist's appearance. To be "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** 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:

*For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh **as a thief in the night**. - 1 Thessalonians 5:2 (See also Matthew 24:43, Luke 12:39, 1 Thessalonians 5:2 and Revelation 3:3, 16:15)*

AND

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. - Matthew 25:13

AND

*But **the end of all things is at hand**: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. - 1 Peter 4:7*

AND

*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*

As these verses show, John, Matthew, Peter and Paul, all expected the imminent return of Jesus Christ. Imminency, or 'at any moment', is the heart of Pretribulationism. Jesus will come at any moment. If you believe that the Scriptures teach Jesus will come after the Great Tribulation, His return could not be imminent.

Jesus will also come at an unexpected moment; this is what it means to come *as a thief*. If His coming is described as being by surprise, then the rapture must come before the Great Tribulation. If you believe that Jesus taught His coming was after The Great Tribulation, that would be at an expected time, not be very thief-like.

Rebuttal:

First, did Peter really expect to see the rapture in his lifetime? No! Jesus made it clear to him that he would not.

*[Jesus talking to Peter:] Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but **when thou shalt be old**, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, **signifying by what death he should glorify God**. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.*
- John 21:18-19

Peter knew that he would live to be an old man, and then would die a martyr for Jesus. Did Peter teach the imminent return of Jesus anyway? No, in fact he taught something totally different,

*Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, **Where is the promise of his coming?** for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. [...] But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that **one day is with the Lord as a thousand years**, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*
- 2 Peter 3:3, 4, 8, 9

While Peter may not have actually taught that Jesus would delay coming for 2,000 years, he certainly taught there would be a delay and hinted that, at least from our viewpoint, it would be a long one. In fact, it is unlikely that the apostles would have ever taught Jesus' imminent return, especially when Jesus implied through His many parables that He would delay His coming. For instance:

***While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.** - Matthew 25:5*

AND

After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.
- Matthew 25:19

AND

***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.** - Mark 13:34*

AND

*But and if that servant say in his heart, **My lord delayeth his coming**; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken.*
- Luke 12:45

In Acts 23:11, Jesus said to Paul, "For as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome". So, from this point to sometime after Paul's imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:16), he could not have expected the imminent return of Christ.

In Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, he warns against expecting an imminent return:

*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?***
- 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5

If you read this carefully, you will see that Paul warns the Thessalonians that certain events must happen before we are gathered unto the Lord. When Paul stated that he had already told the Thessalonians these things, he was implying that even prior to this letter they should not have expected an **imminent** "gathering together" unto the Lord.

One of the events that must happen before the rapture is the antichrist sitting in the temple of God. From the time that the temple was destroyed, until the day when it will be rebuilt, the Prophecy in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5 cannot be fulfilled. This prophecy in 2 Thessalonians is specific, Paul also gave a more general prophecy in Acts,

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. - Acts 20:29

While Paul continues to describe the future in this passage (in tears), He mentions no imminent return of Jesus Christ.

If you think that not believing in the imminent return of Jesus gives you an excuse to let your guard down and live worldly, take heed to what Jesus said:

*But and if that **evil** servant shall say in his heart, **My lord delayeth his coming**; And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and **appoint him his portion with the hypocrites**: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*
- Matthew 24:48-51

While Jesus did not teach an imminent return, He did teach:

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. - Matthew 24:44

It is easy to show how this surprise plainly happens at the end of the great tribulation. But first, let us look at the phrase, "I come as a thief". Every verse that mentions Jesus coming as a thief, with a specific timeframe attached to it, points to a time **after** the Great Tribulation. While sometimes it is not mentioned in relation to a particular time, no verse refers specifically to a time that predates the Great Tribulation (We will look at the timing of 1st Thessalonians 4:17 in [Proof 9](#)).

the apostle John made a plain reference to Jesus' 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*

Peter also mentioned Christ coming *like a thief* at the end of the Great Tribulation.

*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*

There is no passage of Scripture that mentions coming as a thief, which if taken in context, will not allow this timing. The Lord's coming at the Battle of Armageddon must take the world by surprise. If the world expected Jesus to make His appearance, would they not refrain from fighting? The reason the world does not expect the Lord to return is because it believes that it has won the Battle of Armageddon. This is taught in the following Scripture passages.

*Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. **They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.** The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it? - Joel 2:6-11*

While Joel does not specifically say, the city shall be taken, Zechariah does.

*For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the **city shall be taken,** and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.*

Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. - Zechariah 14:2-3

In verse two Zechariah plainly says, "the city shall be taken". John in the book of Revelation continues this thought.

*And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. **And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.** And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.
- Revelation 11:7-11*

In Revelation, we see that the world's celebration lasts for three and a half days. The world is celebrating their victory over God by making merry and sending gifts one to another. Because the world thinks that it has won the Battle of Armageddon, it is not expecting the Lord to return at this time. However, His coming, three and a half days later, will not take His church by surprise, anymore than the church, at that time, will be preoccupied with the cares of this life.

*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*

The world is crying peace and safety, because it believes that the Great Tribulation is over and that they have won. This day should not overtake the saints like a thief, because we have been warned to watch, and because the prophets have told us what to watch for. The apostle John continues this thought when, in the book of Revelation, he admonished the Church of Sardis:

*[Jesus 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.** - Revelation 3:3*

Contrary to the pretribulation rapture doctrine, the Bible teaches that, if we will watch, the Lord's coming will not take the church by surprise. If you believe that for the last two thousand years a

pre tribulation rapture could have occurred at any moment, there is nothing for us to watch for, since it will come suddenly and with no warning.

Mistakes:

The teacher

- Is mistaken if he believes that the apostles taught the imminent return of Jesus.
- Is mistaken if he believes that when Jesus said, "*I come as a thief*," he meant that even the church would be taken by surprise.
- Is ignorant or misleading if he teaches that the Lord second coming *after* the Great Tribulation cannot be as a thief.

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

Explanation:

*And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: **for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.** Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. - Revelation 3:7-9*

*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 [from www.thepropheticyears.com] 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."

In his gospel, Luke said it like this,

*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 all these things** that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. - Luke 21:34-36*

When Luke said to escape these things, he is clearly teaching a pre-tribulation rapture.

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'. The definition of the Greek word *ἀναστροφή* the word Peter used, was 'behavior'. 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 interpret the above passage using modern definitions, 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, and as history has borne out, they and every other church, were either going through, or about to go through a time of great testing.

In light of the trial which they were already going through, 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?

Did they believe that the seven churches represented seven different church ages? An interpretation that is necessary for this proof to support the doctrine of a pre-tribulation rapture. While it is interesting to muse on the thought that the seven churches in Asia represent different church ages, that is not the how the first century church 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 [His] patience". It is important for us, like the church of Philadelphia, to be careful to keep His word. Lets start by looking at the word **keep**.

*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

Does the word *keep* have the same definition as *rapture*? Are there not many better words for rapture than the word *keep*? 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* 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 from being applied to us?

Though this was a specific promise made to a single church, since it 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 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)

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)". εκ is the **bold word** in these verses.

*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*

AND

*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*

AND

*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*

AND

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

AND

*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*

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 εκ to teach a pretribulation rapture will have to find those passages for themselves. 😊

If John had used the Greek word εν (translated in) instead of εκ, 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, if we look at this word only, arguments can be made for both interpretations. The Lord promised to keep the church at Philadelphia, but He did not tell us how.

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 (pi-ras-mos'). The definition 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, it is not a good definition for the Great Tribulation. The purpose for the Great Tribulation is not to test or prove, but according to the pretribulation rapture teachers themselves, it is God's wrath or punishment on those who have failed the test. However, **temptation**, is a perfect description of what church of Philadelphia 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 οἰκουμένη (pronounced oy-kou-men'-ay). The definition is:

Feminine participle present passive of οἰκέω (as noun, by implication of γῆ); 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 definition 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 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 [οἰκουμένη not αἰών], to try them that dwell upon the earth [γῆ not cosmos].
- Revelation 3:10*

It seems like it is a big stretch to translate it:

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.

At the beginning of this chapter we looked at the importance of understanding what the words meant to the original authors. As we look at the other text used to prove that we are kept from The Great Tribulation, we will start by doing the same thing. What did Luke mean when he said 'escape'?

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

The word for **escape** in the above passage is ἐκφεύγω. The definition is:

1. To flee out of, flee away
 - a. To seek safety in flight
 - b. To escape

From ἐκ (denoting point of origin) and φεύγω (to run away)

Once we understand that the word *escape* should be translated 'flee away', the question becomes, what are we to flee from? In verse 34, Jesus mentions 'surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life' is it possible Jesus was referring to those things and in doing so we would see the day coming?

If Jesus is telling His disciples to flee the things mentioned in verse 34 (like Joseph fled from Potiphar's wife), this verse was relevant to every generation from the time of Jesus, till now, as they could all do so.

If Jesus was not telling His disciples to flee, then this verse was irrelevant to every generation from then, till now. No matter if they fled, prayed or not, it made no difference, they were not worthy to be raptured.

Mistakes:

The teacher uses his own definitions for the key words, rather than looking them up. In order to understand these passages, we must use the same definitions that John and Luke would have used when they penned their words.

In Revelation 3:10, the teacher

- 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? (If not see Galatians chapter 1)
- Is eisegeting Scripture, rather than exegeting it. Christians with either viewpoint can learn from Revelation 3:10. However, neither side can honestly prove or disprove a pre tribulation rapture from the passage.

- The teacher has made the admonition Jesus gave in Luke 21:36 of no effect to every generation of Christians preceding us.

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

Explanation:

*But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 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, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 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.*

*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. 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?*"

*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. 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? 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 by and associated with Jesus] 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* (Luke 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 eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. - 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 key 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 (9:14) and the sixth vial (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. Incidentally the word church is also missing from the gospels of Mark, Luke and John as well as the first and second epistles of John. Is there no church in any of these books? Even though the word ek-klay-see'-ah is missing from chapter 4 though 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, 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 pre-tribulation 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 happen 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.

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.

There are three other major assumptions in this proof.

1. 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".
2. The twenty-four elders are only assumed to be church elders, their actual identities are not given.

3. 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 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, this proves that the church will be raptured before the Great Tribulation.

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

The argument for Matthew 24
This chapter focuses on Israel not on the church; that is why Jesus does not mention a pre-tribulation 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.

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 also pierced our Lord's side. Because this information is missing in Psalm 22, does it 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

So while the resurrection of the saints is missing in Zechariah's account of the Lord's second coming, it is not missing from Daniel's account (Verses 11:44-12:3). Is there anything else 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.

Rebuttal:

To understand 1st 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. This time of wrath is clearly after the Great Tribulation.

*And [all the people] said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: **For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?***
- Revelation 6:16-17

Yet Christians have gone through, and will continue go through tribulation. Below are a few verses that could be helpful in taking 1st 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.

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; - Philippians 1:29

When the Apostle Paul says, "God hath not appointed us to wrath" he is referring to God's wrath, on the Judgment Day, 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

Some pretrib rapture arguments go as far as to criticize those who do not believe in it as though they want to go through the Tribulation. Christians who do not believe in a pretribulation rapture by no means desire to be persecuted. In one pretribulation website the teacher uses the header "Persecute Me Please" to mock those who disagree with his doctrine. He 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 should have these same desires as Christ.

If we agree that Christians go through some tribulation, the 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 correcting 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

AND

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

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, (Exodus 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, with or 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*

AND

*And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, **These are they which came out of [the] great tribulation**, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. - Revelation 7:14*

Mistakes:

The Teacher

- is mistaking temporary tribulation for the punishment of the wicked on the Day of Judgment.
- 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.
- is appealing to feelings rather than facts. (No one feels like going through the Great Tribulation.)

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 1st 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 also 1st Thessalonians 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 will the dead in Christ rise? Jesus himself said,

*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and **I will raise him up at the last day.** - John 6:44*

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus again tells us when He 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

Daniel also wrote of the order of these 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.

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:

Rapture Ready [www.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?"**

Rapture Me [www.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?" Well maybe we don't *need* to be, but I sure want *want* to meet him. 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, those that came from Jerusalem 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 earth 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. Why is he trying to make going forth to greet our savior on His return seem ridiculous?

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. Three times in Luke 17 Jesus stated 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.

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 mentioned in [Proof 4](#), this verse refers to the middle of the tribulation period. To connect Luke 17:31 with the Abomination of Desolation, see Matthew 24:15-20. Jesus uses Noah and Lot as allegories to show what it will be like during The Great Tribulation when people will be too preoccupied with themselves to see their predicament. Jesus used many parables and similes throughout the Gospels to teach us about the cares of this world.

Finally, a better allegory (at least for timing) can be found in the story of Moses leading the Children of Israel out of Egypt (Exodus chapters 4 to 15).

1. The plagues Moses performed are similar to the end days. It is even 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. He is only interested in looking for those allegories that imply a pretribulation rapture, while ignoring the allegories that do not.

Comparing Jesus' words to Paul's letters to Thessalonica

It would be helpful if there were some Bible verse that plainly said, "Thou shalt not believe in the pretribulation rapture." Unfortunately, there are none. However most Christians who believe in a pretribulation rapture agree that it is missing from Matthew 24 and Mark 13, in Jesus' account of His second coming. Conversely, these same Christians believe that the pretrib rapture is most clearly seen in Paul's letters to Thessalonica.

My best evidence to disprove the pretribulation rapture is to compare what Jesus taught in Matthew 24 with what Paul taught in his letters to Thessalonica. Though they each use their own words, what they teach, concerning Jesus Christ's second coming, is identical. To see this let us compare their teachings.

Both Jesus and Paul warned us to take heed and not be deceived

Jesus:

*And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Take heed that no man deceive you.**
- Matthew 24:4*

AND

*For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, **if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.**
- Matthew 24:24*

Paul:

***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;
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3*

AND

*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:**
- 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11*

The words *take heed* and *if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect*, should help us understand the gravity of the situation. Do not think that the elect cannot be deceived; if that were so, neither Jesus nor Paul would have needed to warn us. In truth, there is already a lot of confusion about end time events in the church.

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 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:

*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 1:7-10*

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*

Note how He will be taking vengeance in verse 1:8, therefore He is glorified in saints (1Th 1:10) at His second coming, not during a pretribulation rapture.

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:

*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

AND

*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*

Note how we are given rest when Jesus is revealed with His mighty angels, not seven years earlier in a pretrib rapture.

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

There are also seven trumpets mentioned in the Book of Revelation. At the sound of the last trumpet (Rev 11:15) John said: "*The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever*".

Paul also told the Corinthians we would be changed at the last trump, doesn't this mean we will be changed when *the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord*, or the Lord's second coming?

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
- 1 Corinthians 15:52

The Lord will gather His elect.

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

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

AND

*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.*

- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

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:

*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.*

- 1 Thessalonians 5:3

AND

*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

I come as a thief

Jesus:

*But know this, that **if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come**, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for **in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh**. - Matthew 24:43-44*

AND

*The **lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him**, and in an hour that he is not aware of. - Matthew 24:50*

Paul:

*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.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4*

Notice how the destruction comes upon the world as a thief in the night. Also, Paul did not say that that day would not surprise us because of a rapture. Paul said that that day would not take us because we are not in darkness.

There is only one Second Coming.

As we look at the following verses, note the use of the definite article "the" as "**the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints**" in many of the following verses. By using the definite article, we can understand the verse to mean that there is only one coming. Also note, in all these verses it is Jesus who is coming, there is no mention of anybody else going anywhere.

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

1st Thessalonians 4:15 is two verses before the only passage in the Bible that uses the word *rapture* (verse 17), yet the verse specifically says, "*the coming of the Lord*".

*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

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 1:9-10

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

AND

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:
- 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8

Jesus is being revealed with His angels, in a blazing fire is His second coming.

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

In concluding, it should be easy to see that Paul is only expounding the same gospel that Jesus preached earlier. While Jesus did not tell us about the events 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 in any of His discourses on the end of this age, what does this imply?

Conclusion

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 please contact me at my website and I will 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 reveal this to you.

To the false teachers:

I know that many teachers continue to use passages like 2nd Thessalonians 2 to teach the rapture, even after they have been shown the contradictions in [Proof 1](#).

One teacher addresses the contradiction by changing the meaning 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, 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.

Here is a quote as 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

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***

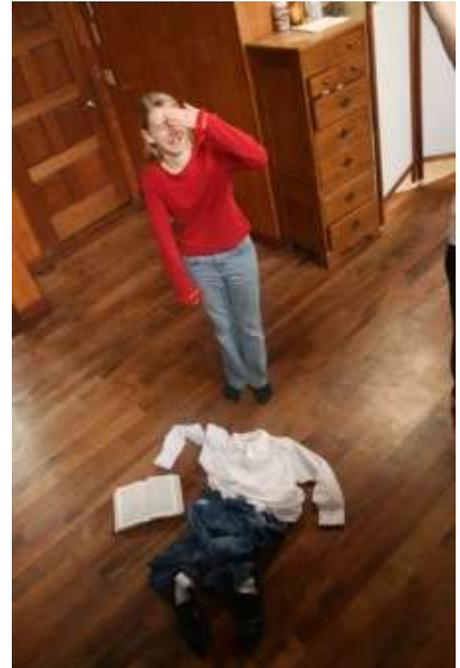
turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

- 2nd Timothy 2:3-4

Chuck Smith (founder of Calvary Chapel) once wrote 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. Yet, the scriptures teach us that no lie is of the truth.

Corrie Ten Boom who, with her sister Betsy, was imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp for her 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." (*When Jesus Returns* by David Pawson, page 199)



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

-Revelation 16:15

The truth is that many do not study end time events because they expect a pretribulation rapture. Prophecy is often hard to understand and there is little motivation when they are not personally relevant. Unfortunately, many Christians 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 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](#)

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I can be reached for questions and comments at jeffrey@the-gospel.org