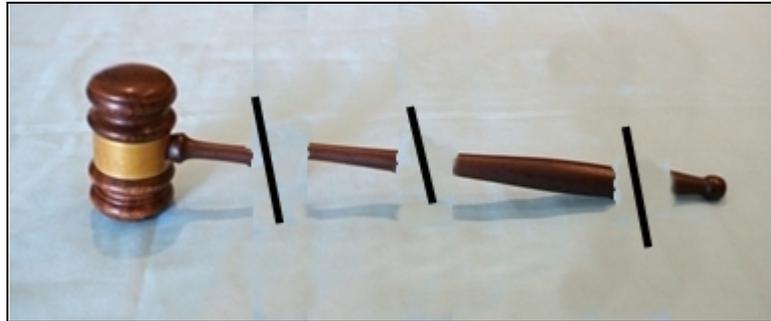


# Why the Enemy Hates the Pre-Tribulation Rapture

by Jeremy James



Have you ever wondered why the doctrine of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture (PTR) is attacked so frequently and with such vigor? It is because the Enemy hates it intensely.

Last year a DVD – *Left Behind or Led Astray?* – was released by Pastor Joe Schimmel and Pastor Jacob Prasch which simply bubbled with contempt for the PTR and everyone who believed in it. They could hardly contain their disgust as they poured out one calumnious accusation after another. This went on for nearly four and half hours, a spectacle so tedious and so odious that viewers could be forgiven for believing the pair were quite mad.

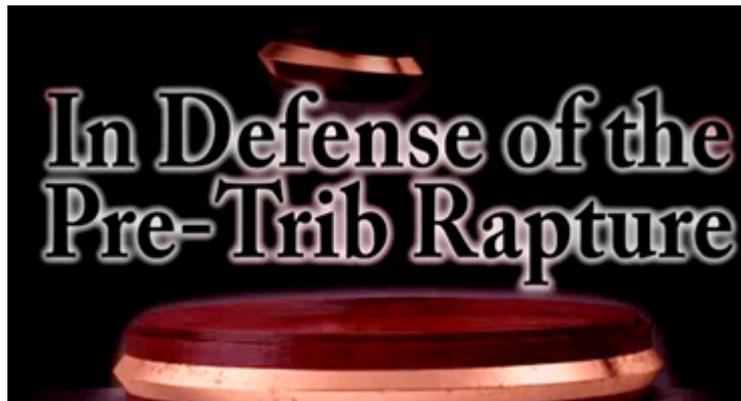
At the time I wondered why the enemies of the PTR would make such a facile case. My question was answered when the official 'rebuttal' appeared. This was a more measured treatment of the subject by Lamb and Lion Ministries, led by Pastor David Reagan, who also featured as the main speaker on the DVD, *In Defense of the Pre-Trib Rapture*.

Ostensibly, this was meant to be a serious effort on the part of the Bible-believing church to defend the Word of God and the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. After all, Dr Reagan and his team were taking on the 'baddies' and giving them what they deserved – or were they?

## **A missed opportunity**

Apart from a very short interview towards the end with Charles Ryrie, the scriptural content of the work was abysmal. Dr Reagan and his team had a rare opportunity to present a well-reasoned, Bible-based elucidation of the PTR doctrine to a receptive audience. He could have taken his viewers step by step through the many passages in Scripture which either teach or imply this doctrine. He could have shown how it fitted in perfectly with the LORD's plan of salvation for mankind, the nature and role of the church, the seventy weeks of Daniel, the many Old Testament events that foreshadow the PTR, and much else besides. Instead he gave a rambling, repetitive and thoroughly unconvincing case for the PTR, aided and abetted along the way by several speakers whose input in many instances was as vague and repetitious as his own.

Let's take one example. The Schimmel-Prasch DVD cited 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 over and over again as 'proof' that a PTR was not Biblically tenable. Their interpretation of this passage was a central pillar of their argument and as close as they ever got to dealing with the question in a scriptural manner. So why didn't Dr Reagan show that their interpretation was grossly in error and, in doing so, highlight for the benefit of his viewers the damage that this inflicted on their case? Instead he spent a great chunk of his time reciting the spurious claims made by Pastors Schimmel and Prasch – such as those relating to a demented Scottish woman – and failed to present a cohesive Bible-based defense of the PTR doctrine.



This is the passage in 2 Thessalonians:

**[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.**

Pastors Schimmel and Prasch claim in their exegesis that Paul is teaching that the Rapture cannot occur **unless** two conditions have been fulfilled: (1) that the great apostasy of the professing church has already occurred and (2) that the identity of the man of sin, the Antichrist, has been revealed. Dr Reagan refers briefly to this claim but fails to show what a ghastly mess the two pastors made of this passage.

Here is how I addressed the question in my earlier paper:

Let's look at the context. The Thessalonians were greatly troubled by rumours that the Rapture had already taken place (verses 1 and 2). Paul tries to reassure them that their concerns were totally unfounded and asks that they never again be "**shaken in mind**" or "**troubled**" by such rumours, whatever their source. In order to set their minds at rest, he points out that, *had* the Rapture already taken place and *had* they been left behind, they would **already** have witnessed the great apostasy (which they hadn't) and learned the identity of the man of sin, the Antichrist (which they hadn't).

Paul was obviously **not** telling them that, before the Rapture could take place, they would first have to witness the great apostasy and learn the identity of the man of sin. Rather, he was saying the **very opposite!** He was telling them that, since the great apostasy had not yet happened and since the man of sin had not yet been revealed, the Rapture could not possibly have taken place.

We could cite many other occasions where the opportunity to make a powerful statement in support of PTR is allowed to pass and some pointless observation about the many evident defects in the earlier DVD is made instead.

### **Corrie ten Boom**

Let's take another example of Dr Reagan's ambivalence. Shortly into his presentation he refers in glowing terms to Corrie Ten Boom and posts a large photo of her – for a full ten seconds. However, he fails to mention that Corrie Ten Boom rejected the doctrine of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture in fairly strong terms! It is inconceivable that Dr Reagan could not have known this.



Screen shot from DVD

### **The strong Roman Catholic content**

The Catholic Church assigns an almost scriptural significance and authority to the writings of the so-called Church Fathers. Their official Catechism is as likely to quote one of the 'Fathers' in support of its doctrines as it is to quote a passage from Scripture. Why, then, does Dr Reagan spend so much time discussing the views of the so-called Church Fathers – along with those of Jesuits and other apostates – and so little time quoting and exploring the Word of God?

Even when he mentions Martin Luther, the great enemy of Rome, he is quick to remind us that this courageous reformer published a bitter antisemitic work near the end of his life. Lest we missed the innuendo, he followed his caustic observation by displaying a photo of Hitler. What this had to do with the Pre-Tribulation Rapture is anyone's guess.

## **A common Scriptural error**

Dr Reagan quotes Luke 21:36, which in the KJV reads: "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." In doing so he is reinforcing (and endorsing) the "escape" view of the Rapture, which both Pastor Schimmel and Pastor Prasch despise. Dr Reagan cites this verse as proof that Christ himself described the Pre-Tribulation Rapture as an "escape." But this is incorrect.

Let's look at Luke 21:36 in context, with reference to the verse before it, which reads:

**"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 21:35-36)**



The Lord is almost certainly referring to a very special "escape" by the Jewish people – the audience to whom he is speaking – in the End Time. This will occur when the "abomination of desolation" takes place in the Temple and the Jews living in Israel realize to their horror that the Antichrist is in their midst. They will all rush to evade his wrath and will literally have only minutes to find their way to the miraculous escape route that the LORD will provide. Jesus said that, when they see this, the abomination of desolation, they must make haste immediately – instantly! – and not delay for a moment:

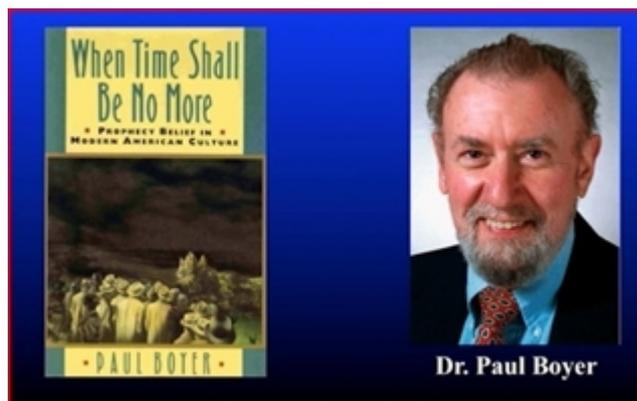
**"But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains: And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house: And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter." (Mark 13:14-18)**

**"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 Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:" (Matthew 24:15-20)**

This is the "escape" to which Jesus is referring in Luke 21:36, not the Rapture. It is a physical escape, a major exodus – just like the Exodus itself – to flee the wrath of the End Time pharaoh. Just as the LORD parted the Red Sea in order to provide His chosen people with a means of escape, so also will He provide a special exit route for the Jews on this momentous occasion.

### **A shallow, secular summing up**

Near the end of the DVD, Dr Reagan quotes at length a secular expert whose opinion he obviously shares. This is presented to the viewer, it would seem, as a summing up of the case made to that point in support of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture. The quotation comes from *When Time Shall Be No More* by secular Harvard historian, Dr Paul Boyer, published in 1994:



Here are the screen shots of the quotation read out by Dr Reagan at the 80-minute mark:

**“In a sense, Darby’s system contained nothing new. His focus on the future fulfillment of prophecy followed the eschatology of the early Christians. Premillennialism had been an option for Protestant evangelicals since Joseph Mede’s day (1586-1639), while rudimentary forms of Dispensationalism go back at least as far as Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202).**

...continued overleaf

**“Even Rapture doctrine . . . can be found in the writings of early interpreters, including Increase Mather (1639-1723). But Darby wove these diverse strands into a tight and cohesive system that he buttressed at every point by copious biblical proof texts, then tirelessly promoted through his writings and preaching tours.”**

We are asked to believe that this obscure academic observation constitutes a defense of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. In essence, Dr Reagan is saying that we believe in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture today because a number of Christians throughout history seemed to think it was true.

This is not a Biblical defense of a major doctrine but a shameful abdication of responsibility. By offering a 'defense' that consisted mainly of views and opinions, and by dwelling largely on historical details instead of the Word of God, Dr Reagan gave the distinct impression that the PTR doctrine is, at best, problematic and rests on a weak scriptural foundation. In doing so he has given the Enemy all the room he needs to overturn this doctrine in the minds of many believers.

### **Tim LaHaye**

He even interviewed the late Tim LaHaye, co-author of the famous *Left Behind* series of books. These works have caused a lot of confusion in the minds of believers. They indulge in speculation that detracts considerably from the edifying purpose of End Time prophecy. They also invite readers to identify foolishly with those who are 'left behind' and to question, perhaps unwittingly, the righteous judgment of God.

Both Mr LaHaye and his wife, Beverly, were leading members of the Council for National Policy (CNP), an Elite forum in the US for drawing all churches into the coming One World Religion. The CNP was founded by LaHaye himself in 1981. Many CNP members are also members of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the exclusive body that controls the United States on behalf of the New World Order. It is important to understand that these people secretly loath Christianity and have pledged to destroy it. [For a sample of the membership of the CNP and their pagan affiliations, see **Appendix A.**]

As part of the ongoing drive to bring Evangelicals closer to Rome, the LaHayes endorsed the policy document, *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* (1994). For many years LaHaye would gladly appear at public forums and endorse speakers whose ecumenical, charismatic, or apostate credentials were well known. These included Yonggi Cho, Benny Hinn, Oral Roberts, Tony Campolo, Frank Peretti, Greg Laurie, Jerry Boykin, Paul Crouch and Chuck Missler. He also had close professional ties with the famous false messiah and cult leader, Sun Myung Moon, whose Unification Church did immense spiritual harm to many. LaHaye even lobbied publicly on behalf of Moon to secure his release from prison on charges of tax evasion.



**Tim LaHaye [screen shot from Dr Reagan's DVD]  
Note his matching Masonic rings – gold and black onyx,  
much favored by Freemasons the world over.**



We could present more evidence along these lines, but it is hardly necessary. It was obvious from his rambling contribution on the DVD that LaHaye had no interest in refuting the allegations made by Pastors Schimmel and Prasch.

Born-again Christians who love God's Word should be **greatly** troubled by all of this.

### **Masonic Gavel**

One of the most surprising features in the DVD – though likely one that many viewers will not notice – is the recurring use of the Masonic gavel. It hammers down on a few occasions during the documentary itself and 7-8 times in the closing credits:



**A screen shot from the DVD.**

Every Freemason receives a gavel similar to the one on the DVD and makes use of it during certain lodge rituals. One website describes its purpose as follows:

While a "common" implement of the Mason, the gavel is a constant reminder of our need for self-improvement and watchfulness. Perfection in conduct, like that of a perfectly flat surface or perfect stone, comes through work and constant vigilance. Placed in our hands as Entered Apprentices, the gavel is a symbol of that responsibility and opportunity to be better men and Masons.

[http://www.themasonictrowel.com/Articles/degrees/degree\\_1st\\_files/the\\_common\\_gavel\\_gltx.htm](http://www.themasonictrowel.com/Articles/degrees/degree_1st_files/the_common_gavel_gltx.htm)

Here are two examples of a typical Masonic gavel for sale on eBay:



Why on earth would anyone include such an implement in a DVD purporting to uphold God's Word and then repeat its hammering motion over and over again? It defies belief. The implication is clear – the people who made this DVD are connected in some way with high-level Freemasonry.

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### **The Case that SHOULD have been made**

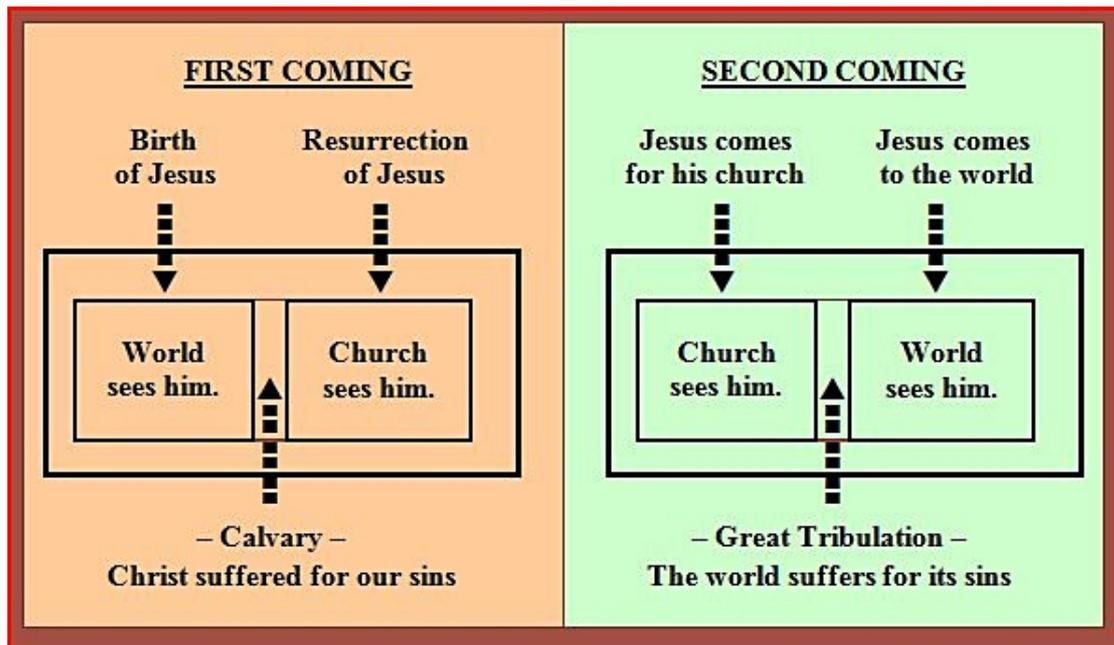
We will now summarize the case made in our earlier paper – *Be Not Soon Shaken in Mind: Clear Scriptural Proof of a Pre-tribulation Rapture* (March 2016) – which proves beyond doubt that the Bible teaches the PTR doctrine (For a more detailed treatment of the Scriptural evidence, please consult our earlier paper). Our summary will show just how little effort was made in the Lamb & Lion DVD to deal comprehensively and responsibly with the subject. We would estimate that, of the 21 substantive points given below, only a handful were broached in the DVD, and even these were allowed to fade quickly from view as Dr Reagan chased after yet another irrelevancy.

#### **1. The price has already been paid**

The bride of Christ will not go through the Great Tribulation since Christ has already taken the wrath of God upon himself on her behalf. That was what our Lord achieved for us on Calvary! "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus..." (Romans 8:1) How then can the church be required to pay a debt that the Son of God has already paid? It is impossible.

## 2. Christ will come twice at his second coming

At his first coming Christ was seen first by the world and then by the church. At his second coming, he will be seen first by the church and then by the world. In the first part of his second coming, when he comes as the morning star, he will call the church from the earth. The Apostle Peter was referring to the first part of the Second Coming when he spoke of the "day star" (Christ) dawning in the hearts of all true believers – "...until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Peter 1:19)



## 3. The Day of Christ will come before the Day of the LORD

The *day of the Christ* is not the day of the LORD (implying wrath) but rather the day of the Resurrection/Rapture (implying salvation) that precedes the day of the LORD: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6)

The day of Christ is the day for which the church is patiently waiting: "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." (2 Thessalonians 2:2)

Paul rebuked the church at Corinth for tolerating fornicators in their midst and asked that they expel a certain individual – both for his own good, as well as that of the church: "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (1 Corinthians 5:5) It was possible that the wayward individual would come to his senses and repent of his sin "**that the spirit [of the individual] may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.**" Thus Paul is not speaking here of judgment in that day, but the very opposite. The day of the Lord Jesus is the day of redemption, when the church is taken from the earth by the Holy Spirit.

#### 4. The Blessed Hope

The words "Anathema Maranatha" mean 'let him be accursed, the Lord is coming.' The wrath to come is for those who are *Anathema*, set apart for destruction, while those who are saved live daily in the prayer of rejoicing, *Maranatha* – 'the Lord is coming': **"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."** (1 Corinthians 16:22)

The technical meaning of Anathema is *set apart by God for destruction*, being the natural condition of all who reject the gift of salvation. Thus Paul is not asking that they be accursed – since they already are – but that their awful condition be acknowledged. At the same time he reminds them of their own blessed state, that as heirs to salvation they should be ever mindful that the Lord Jesus is coming.

Paul reminded Titus that all true believers are **"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"** (Titus 2:13) In his first letter to the Thessalonians he directly connects the "glorious appearing" of Christ with the deliverance of the church from the day of the LORD's wrath: **"And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."** (1 Thessalonians 1:10).



This shows conclusively that, living in **"the blessed hope"**, the church is waiting and praying for **"the day of Christ"** and not **"the day of the LORD"** which comes after it.

If the Day of the LORD preceded the Day of Christ, then every time a believer prayed for the return of Christ, for example through the Maranatha prayer, he or she would be praying also for God's wrath to fall upon the earth. The prophet Amos forbade any believer to do this: **"Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light."** (Amos 5:18)

The following verse confirms that the church, the bride of Christ, will not face the wrath of the Great Tribulation: **"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night...For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."** (1 Thessalonians 5:1 and 9)

This comfort, this blessed hope, is grounded in the return of Christ for his Bride. The word "wrath" always refers to the working out of God's anger on earth. Thus the "salvation" to which the above verse refers is deliverance from the wrath to come, from the seven years of the Great Tribulation

## 5. The church is already glorious in God's eyes

The Tribulation is the ultimate expression of God's wrath:

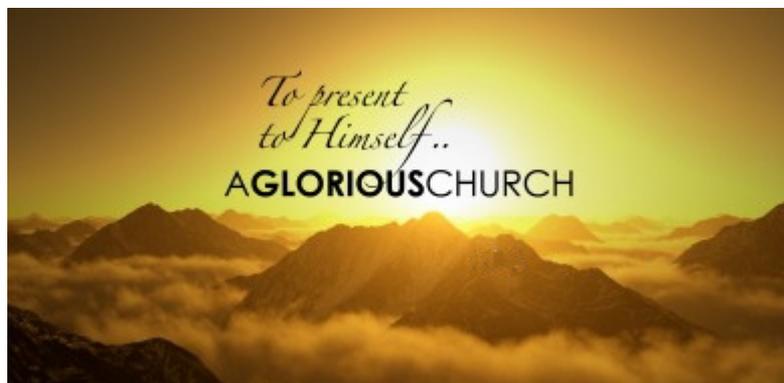
**"The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land [i.e the earth]." (Zephaniah 1:14-18)**

The wrath of God, which will fall upon the entire earth, is known as **the great day of the LORD**. It is being held patiently in reserve by Him until the End Time. The apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear that the wrath of the LORD will be directed only at those who hold the truth in unrighteousness: **"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18)** Furthermore, it will come **"upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."** (Revelation 3:10) Since the church does not hold the truth in unrighteousness she cannot possibly be on earth during the time of His wrath, when **"the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy."**

The LORD sees the church exactly as His Son sees her, **"... a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing..."** (Ephesians 5:27).

Given that the church is already the body of Christ, the view that she might nonetheless be subject to the wrath of God, if only in part, is in direct conflict with the completeness and perfection of the Substitutionary Atonement.

As the apostle Paul says, **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus..." (Romans 8:1)** In what sense, then, does the church need to 'go through' the Great Tribulation in order to be 'purified' in the eyes of God? In no sense whatever! The very idea conflicts utterly with all that the Bible teaches about the church and about our loving Father, **"whose mercy endureth forever"**.



## 6. Departure of the Holy Spirit

Very shortly before He destroyed the earth in the Flood, the LORD said, "**My spirit shall not always strive with man...**" (Genesis 6:3). The LORD made a similar declaration in relation to the Great Tribulation when He said He would remove "**He who now restrains**" (2 Thessalonians 2). The striking parallel between these two great Judgments would strongly suggest that "**My spirit**" and "**He who now restrains**" are the same. Since the Holy Spirit dwells in the church and will never leave her, He must carry her with Him when He is "**taken out of the way**" (2 Thessalonians 2).

## 7. The Philadelphian Church

Since the church, the body of Christ, cannot be divided into segments, the promise to the church at Philadelphia in Revelation 3:10 must apply to the Bride as a whole, namely the sum of all living church-age believers: "**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 Greek word for "dwell" in the phrase "**dwell upon the earth**" has an important connotation not found in its English counterpart. The more usual Greek word is *oikeo*, which means simply "to dwell", while the word used by John is *katoikeo*, which means "to dwell permanently". It is used, for example, to describe the fullness of the Godhead that dwelt in Christ (Colossians 2:9). Therefore "**them that dwell upon the earth**" are those who see the earth as their true home. As such they are citizens of the earth by choice, in contrast to church-age believers whose "**citizenship is in heaven**" (Philippians 3:20) [NKJV].

*katoikeo* - to dwell permanently

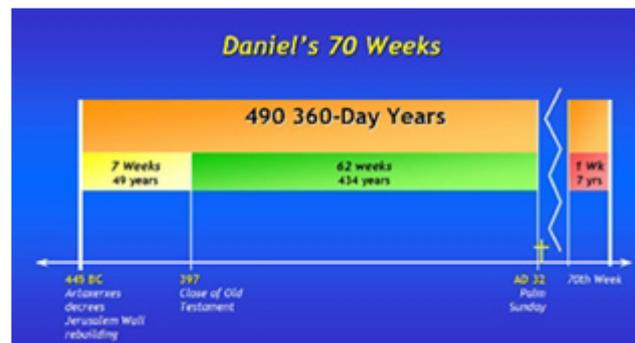
## 8. Thief in the Night

The second part of the second coming of Christ (when he defeats the Antichrist) is preceded by very specific signs. However the Rapture of the church-age saints can come at any time, with no advance warning: "**For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.**" (1 Thessalonians 5:2) Obviously, if this is the case, the Rapture must occur before the startling events that will signal the beginning of the seven-year Tribulation.

As Scripture tells us, the resurrection of church-age believers will take place on the same day as the Rapture. Paul told Timothy that two false teachers, Hymenaeus and Philetus, were teaching that "**the resurrection is past already**" (2 Timothy 2). If that was true, then the Rapture would have taken place also. The fact that some believers were taken in by this deception is proof that the early Christians knew that the resurrection – just like the Rapture – could occur at any time, with no prophetic signs to mark its approach. Since the resurrection is an imminent event, then so too is the Rapture, and both must occur before the seven-year Tribulation.

## 9. The 70 Weeks of Daniel

The great seven-year Tribulation is concerned with both the judgment of rebellious Israel (from which a remnant will be preserved) and the judgment of rebellious Gentile nations (from which a remnant will be preserved). The church has no role or place in either of these tumultuous programs.



The 70 weeks of Daniel all pertain to Israel. The first 69 have elapsed, but the 70<sup>th</sup> – being the 7 years of the Tribulation – has yet to commence. The 69<sup>th</sup> ended just before the church was founded on Pentecost. At that point Israel's prophetic clock was put on hold and will not restart until the church is complete and removed from the earth. Israel was the LORD's chosen witness on earth up to the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> week, whereupon the church took over this unique role. Israel cannot resume that role and become God's chosen witness again on the earth, as promised in Scripture, until the church is removed.

## 10. Those who endure to the end

The Holy Spirit will depart from the earth with the church in a Pre-tribulation Rapture. When He has left the earth (in the special sense that He was present on earth during the church age), He will no longer 'seal' new believers as He did during the church age. Therefore, in order to be saved during the great tribulation converts must remain faithful, unto death if necessary: **"But he who endures to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13).**

The book of Revelation gives further confirmation of this: **"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." (Revelation 12:11).**

As Jesus warned, anyone who tries to save his life – by taking the Mark of the Beast – will lose it. Once the mark is taken, that soul is lost forever.

It should be noted that the 144,000 Jewish evangelists are sealed by angels, not by the Holy Spirit (see Revelation 7:2-3).

### **11. The Rapture as a Sign to the Jews**

The Word of God tells us that " **the Jews require a sign...**" (1 Corinthians 1:22). What sign therefore will the 144,000 receive? These men must go through an extraordinary spiritual transformation to convert from Judaism to Christ, all at virtually the same time, and become ardent missionaries and witnesses across the entire earth. It has been suggested that the Rapture of the church is such a sign. The sudden and inexplicable disappearance of millions of born-again Christians, as well as thousands of Jews who had converted to Christianity, will trigger this momentous event. This almost certainly has to occur very close and prior to the commencement of the Great Tribulation if the 144,000 are to have enough time to evangelize the entire world and lead many to Christ.

Just as Elisha picked up the mantle of Elijah (2 Kings 2) and continued on from where his mentor left off, so the saved remnant of Israel, beginning with the 144,000, will pick up the mantle of the Church and continue the work of the LORD.



### **12. Avenging blood**

In Revelation 6:10 the saints who were slain during the Great Tribulation cry with a loud voice to God to avenge their blood. Church-age saints would not have made an imprecatory prayer of this kind since they would have known and been obedient to the great commandment that Jesus gave the church, namely to love her enemies and not call down punishment upon them. This shows that the saints who died for their faith during the Great Tribulation were not part of the church. Since this is the case, the church must have been completed and removed from the earth before the Great Tribulation began.

### **13. The Twenty-four Elders**

The twenty-four elders in the Book of Revelation are of special significance. Before the events of the Tribulation commence, they are seated on twenty-four thrones and wearing crowns on their heads. The KJV translates *thronos* as "seat" but it is actually a place of distinction, a throne in the real sense.

The crown is given by the Lord as a reward to the saints but **only** on the day of the Bema: "**Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.**" (2 Timothy 4:8) The expression "*at that day*" refers to the day of Christ, when the Lord comes for his bride, the church.

The twenty-four elders are the representatives of both the Raptured church and all who died in Christ and were resurrected on the day of Christ. Since they are wearing crowns, they must already have gone through the Rapture/Resurrection and been judged by the Lord at the Bema.

#### **14. The Two Witnesses**

The two witnesses in Revelation 11:3 are clothed in sackcloth, a coarse fabric woven from goat hair, which is found only in the Old Testament and never in the New, and are able to call down flaming judgment upon the enemies of Israel. This judicial power is given only to Old Testament saints and never to church-age believers – Christ specifically forbade James and John to think in those terms (Luke 9:54-55).



**Goat hair cloth**

From this we can see that the two witnesses mark a resumption of Old Testament judgment, which plays no part in the prayers, thoughts or actions of church-age believers. This would suggest that the church had already left the earth before the two witnesses arrive in Jerusalem to commence their remarkable mission.

#### **15. Noah and his family**

The eight righteous people living on earth just prior to the Flood were preserved in the Ark. As a foreshadowing of the Rapture, they too were 'lifted above' the catastrophic judgment that would shortly come upon the face of the entire earth.

It was through the atonement of Christ (which lay in the future) that the family of the righteous (Noah's family) was preserved from the fury of God's wrath, and it is by the same wonderful atonement that the bride of Christ will be 'lifted above' the earth before the Great Tribulation commences.

Furthermore, in the same way that tens of millions of souls will come to repentance during the Great Tribulation, a great many souls may also have repented during the Flood, between the hour the Ark was sealed – a token of the Rapture ("**and the LORD shut him in.**" (Genesis 7:16)) – and the time, possibly a week or so later, when everyone eventually perished.



### 16. Lot and his family

The small number of righteous people living in the region of Sodom and Gomorrah (namely Lot and his family) were also removed from the scene of judgment by the mercy of God immediately before His wrath came flaming down with great fury on the cities of the plain.

The New Testament refers several times to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, clearly to emphasize both the severity and the certainty of the LORD's righteous judgment. We are not saved because of our merits – in God's eyes we have none. We are saved only through our faith in Christ. So we don't 'deserve' to escape the Great Tribulation. However, if the LORD in His mercy has decided to remove the church from the earth before the Great Tribulation begins, then we should humbly rejoice, not only that He will do so, but that, by informing us in advance, He is offering us the comfort of this "blessed hope."



### 17. Rahab and her family

The term "accursed...to the LORD" means given over to the LORD for complete destruction: **"And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent."** (Joshua 6:17) The inhabitants of the city had been scheduled for destruction long before the Israelites crossed the Jordan. Rahab knew this and decided to shelter the two spies. This singular expression of faith was her salvation. It even saved her family – **"all that are with her in the house"**

Notice how Noah's 'house' was saved, along with Lot's 'house' and Rahab's 'house'. The church too is a house and a family, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and she too will be saved or removed completely from the coming destruction known as the Great Tribulation.



### **18. The Time of Jacob's Trouble**

The seven years of the Great Tribulation is "**the time of Jacob's trouble**" (**Jeremiah 30:7**), when the righteous children of Israel are finally delivered from bondage after a period of intense trial and affliction (just as they were delivered from Egypt). We know for certain that Jeremiah is referring to the Great Tribulation because he says "**for that day is great, so that none is like it**".

Chapter 30 of Jeremiah shows that Israel herself is the focus of the Great Tribulation. The Bible gives many other prophecies that link "the isles of the sea" – namely the unregenerate Gentile nations – with the tumultuous events leading to Armageddon, as well as prophecies ("burdens") that foretell the fate of specific Gentile nations, including Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Libya. Nevertheless, despite the significant proportion of Scripture dealing with the Great Tribulation, there is not a single explicit reference to the presence on earth of the church during all this time.

Since the church has already been reconciled to God, she cannot be subject to His wrath in "**the day of the LORD's vengeance**" (**Isaiah 34:8**) and cannot be on earth when that day arrives.

### **19. Fervent prayer**

We know from 2 Thessalonians 2 that the "**restrainer**" will be taken out of the way in order that Satan and all who are in rebellion against God may exult for a short time in their wickedness. If the church was still on earth during the Great Tribulation, she would alert the world to the identity of the Antichrist and his real intentions. The saints would also pray fervently against the works of the Antichrist and thereby hinder him greatly in his deadly program of deception and destruction: "**Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.**" (**Matthew 18:19**). From this fact alone it ought to be apparent, even to the sceptics, that the church cannot be on earth when the Great Tribulation begins.

## 20. The Millennial Gentiles

We know from Matthew chapter 25 that there will be a significant cohort of believing natural Gentiles alive on earth at the end of the Great Tribulation: "**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: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats**" (Matthew 25:31-32). The Rapture could not occur at the end of the Great Tribulation because, if it did, then all believing Gentiles alive at that moment would be taken up into the air and given immortalized bodies. This would leave no believing natural Gentiles on earth to repopulate the nations (The *Sheep and Goats* judgment will ensure that no unbelieving natural Gentiles will enter the Millennial Kingdom).



*Sheep and Goats Judgment* by Guido di Pietro

The believing natural Gentiles who survive to repopulate the nations are those who came to faith during the Great Tribulation and were not martyred by the Antichrist regime (and did not take the Mark of the Beast). However, even though they are saved, they are not part of the church. The church must have been removed from the earth before the Great Tribulation began, as otherwise there would be two categories of Gentiles who came to faith during the Tribulation, namely (1) the natural (non-immortalized) Gentile believers who repopulate the earth and (2) the immortalized Gentile believers who came to faith after the wrath of God fell upon the whole earth but were then taken up in the Rapture. This would divide the church into two parts, the part that faced God's wrath and the part that did not. It would be incomprehensible and completely contrary to all that Scripture says about the church that part should suffer God's righteous wrath and part should not. This can only mean that the Rapture will take place before the seven-years of the Tribulation commence.

## 21. The Marriage of the Lamb

The Book of Revelation (19:7-8) clearly states that the marriage of Christ to His bride takes place in heaven before Christ returns to earth at the Second Coming to defeat the Antichrist. However, while the marriage ceremony takes place in heaven, the marriage feast (or supper) will take place on earth at the start of the Millennium (Revelation 19:9). This shows that the Rapture and the Second Coming (when Christ descends to earth on the Mount of Olives – Zechariah 14:4) must constitute two completely separate events.

We know also that the Bible draws a clear parallel between this and the Jewish tradition of engagement, betrothal and marriage, which is a three-phase process. Christ became engaged to the church (in the foreknowledge of God) before the foundation of the world; he became formally betrothed to the church at the Last Supper; and he will be married to the church on the Day of Christ.

It should be obvious to all true believers that God's wrath cannot fall on the earth before his Son's bride is removed.

## CONCLUSION

Christians must take the Word of God very seriously and believe what it says. We cannot interpret the Bible along favored theological lines, picking and choosing as we go. If the Bible teaches a Pre-Tribulation Rapture (PTR) then it behoves all believers to understand what it is saying and gratefully accept it.

Why do so many prominent 'Evangelicals', along with many others, rail so loudly against the PTR? There are a great many doctrinal issues, vain practices, and heretical beliefs that need to be addressed in the church today, but a passionate desire to refute the PTR seems to trump them all. What is more, many of those who profess to defend the PTR are doing a very poor job. No doubt many of these 'experts' are skills positioned by the Catholic Church to undermine the doctrine and mislead the flock.

A widespread belief in the PTR will make it far more difficult for the Illuminati, the generational Luciferians who control the international banking system and the multinational corporations, to carry out their plan. We know that they are doing all they can to prepare the way for the Antichrist, but none of our theologians seem to be alerting the church to an implied Biblical detail of great importance: When the real Antichrist comes on the scene he will be expected to establish his messiahship by destroying a terrifying military figure, a world leader whom the masses had mistakenly believed was the Antichrist. We can think of this person as 'the false Antichrist'.

Please think carefully about this since it has a direct bearing on the plan that the Illuminati are pursuing. They must put in place a false Antichrist whom the real Antichrist can overcome. They have the financial and military resources to do this. However there is one problem. If millions of truly saved Christians believe in a PTR, then they will quickly realize that the false Antichrist is an imposter. They will know that the real Antichrist cannot arrive on the scene until the church has left the earth.

This, apparently, is the reason why such strenuous efforts are being made to quash belief in the PTR, but not in the Rapture itself. They will continue to peddle the *Left Behind* books and spin-off movies since they feed the fatalism and quack theology that only weaken and confuse the public.

People like Corrie ten Boom condemned the PTR as a false doctrine, but she was confused in her theology. The suffering which the church endured during the church age has nothing to do with the wrath of God!

She and others like her mistakenly assumed that belief in the PTR would weaken true believers. She thought it would make them complacent when faced with the rising tide of evil in their midst. Instead of taking the necessary steps to defend themselves, they would simply sit back and await the Rapture.

If that were so, then the Bible would not teach a PTR. The LORD in His mercy has revealed the truth of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture so that all true believers could live in that "blessed hope." But this does not mean we are exempt from tribulation! The history of the church has shown over and over again that true believers can be subjected to intense persecution for their faith. Indeed we could face terrible persecution in our own generation for the same reason – but it would not be the wrath of God!

When it starts the seven years of the Great Tribulation will be unlike anything the world has ever seen. It will be the LORD's righteous judgment on all who dwell in the earth, on the countless millions, the children of disobedience, who have rejected the salvation freely offered to all who believe the Gospel.

Any professing Christian who thinks the church will be required to go through all or part of the Great Tribulation does not understand what Christ achieved for us on Calvary. He does not understand the incredible mercy bestowed on us through the blood of Christ. He does not understand what it means to be part of the body of Christ. And he does not understand what a truly wonderful creation came into existence on the day of Pentecost.

As the Bride of Christ, the church is something of unsurpassing beauty in the eyes of God, a beauty attained solely through the atoning work of His Son.

Will America go through great turmoil and distress in the years ahead? Yes, it will, but whether this turmoil and distress will escalate into the worldwide trauma we know as 'the Great Tribulation' is an entirely different question (which no-one can answer).

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**Jeremy James**  
**Ireland**  
**October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

Please refer also to three earlier papers in this series:

*Be Not Soon Shaken in Mind:*

*Clear Scriptural Proof of a Pre-tribulation Rapture*

*The Morning Star: Christ Came Twice at His First Coming,  
and will Do So Again at His Second*

*Beware of the False Antichrist and a False Rapture*

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