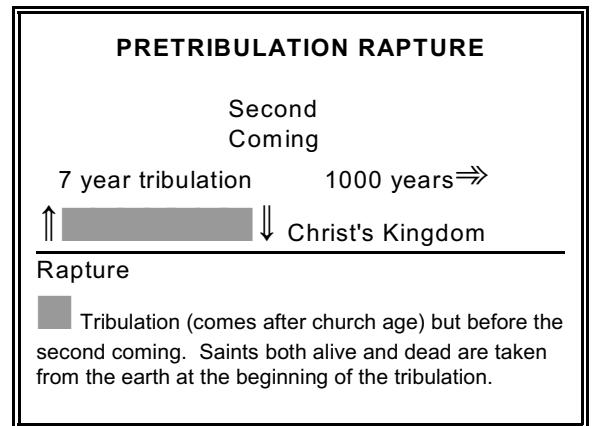


THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH
The Resurrection and Glorification of Believers
Lesson 4

The rapture or translation of believers is a fascinating subject. The Bible clearly teaches that the dead in Christ and the living in Christ will at one point in history be instantly glorified. The bodies of those who have died in Christ will be resurrected in glory and united with the spirits of their previous owners. Believers who are still alive on earth will not experience death but will be instantaneously glorified and caught up to be with the Lord in the air. Though all Bible believing Christians anticipate the rapture there are four major views concerning when the rapture will take place among those who believe in a thousand year reign of Christ on earth (premillennialists). While it would be fascinating to explore the various views of the rapture along with their strengths and weaknesses, in this lesson we will focus on the Pretribulation view of the Rapture (rapture before the tribulation) which is what we teach at Calvary Bible Church.

I. THE PRETRIBULATION RAPTURE

A. **Pretribulation Rapture** is the view that believes the rapture happens at the beginning of the tribulation i.e., Daniel's 70th week. Believers both alive and dead will be caught up together in the air to be with the Lord forever. After the rapture a seven year period of tribulation will ensue. The man of sin, i.e. the antichrist, will rise to power, God's wrath will be poured out on the earth through supernatural catastrophes.



B. There Are Two Key Texts Which Discuss the Rapture

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

2. I Thess. 4:13-18 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.
 - a. “we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep”
 - b. “the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air”
 - c. “Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

II. ARGUMENTS FOR THE RAPTURE HAPPENING BEFORE THE TRIBULATION

- A. **Distinction between Israel and the Church** is critical in discussing the rapture for if the church has replaced or become the new Israel then the pretribulation rapture makes no sense. But if there is a distinction between Israel and the church, then the rapture makes perfect sense. Jesus, at His first coming, offered the kingdom to the Jews. They rejected it and so the kingdom of God was taken away from them and offered to the Gentiles. This time when the kingdom is being offered to Gentiles is the church age. During the church age God, for the most part, sets Israel aside. The church is comprised primarily of Gentiles. After the church age, God removes the church in the rapture and then the tribulation begins. The tribulation is when God again seeks to bring Jews to repentance after having made them jealous through the salvation of many Gentiles.
 1. When Jesus gave the parable of the landowner (Mt. 21:33-46) the Jewish leaders condemned themselves. Jesus then said in Mt. 21:43, “*Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.*” From this text alone it might seem that God permanently rejected Israel. Yet many other texts still speak of a future for Israel.
 2. In Rom. 11:1-32 Paul provides a lengthy discussion of God’s future purpose and plan for the Jews and mentions that just because they have been set aside for a time, this does not nullify the promises of God. Some of the key phrases are listed below in this portion of Romans.

3. Rom. 11:1-32 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! . . .

God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. . .

What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; just as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, Down to this very day." And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, And a stumbling block and a retribution to them. "Let their eyes be darkened to see not, And bend their backs forever." I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! . . .

For if their [the Jews] rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? . . .

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. . .

And they also [the Jews], if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. . .

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob." "This is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins." From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

4. The rapture then is a unique event, revealed in and relating to the church age. After the church has been removed God will again turn His attention to Israel.

- B. **Doctrine of Imminence** also argues for the pretribulation rapture. If the rapture happened at the same time as the second coming, imminence would be impossible because of all the signs and prophecies which describe the details and events of the tribulation. Though the tribulation saints will not know the exact day or hour of Christ's coming, they will be able to guess with some accuracy as they will be able to calculate from the breaking of the treaty with Israel by the antichrist three and a half years. The rapture, unlike the second coming, is something that happens without any prior signs or warnings. In order for something to be imminent you can't know that it will happen soon. Knowing something will happen soon is contrary to imminence. Imminence means it could happen any time but you don't know when it will happen. Imminence is taught in many New Testament texts (I Cor. 1:7; Phil. 3:20; I Thess. 1:10; Tit. 2:13; etc.)

- C. **Purpose of the Tribulation** argues for the pretribulation rapture. The tribulation is not for the church but Israel. The tribulation is the “*time of Jacob’s distress*” (Jer. 30:4-9). It is when God goes forth to save a righteous remnant of Jews before the second coming of Christ.
1. **One third of Israel will be purified and saved.** Zech. 13:7-9 “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, And against the man, My Associate,” Declares the Lord of hosts. “Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; And I will turn My hand against the little ones. 8 “It will come about in all the land,” Declares the Lord, “That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; But the third will be left in it. 9 “And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are My people,’ And they will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’ ”
 2. **All of the chosen remnant of Israel will be saved.** Rom. 11:25-26 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.”
 3. **Multitudes are saved during the tribulation.** Rev. 7:4, 9-10, 13-14 And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: . . . 9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; 10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” . . . 13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?” 14 I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
 4. **All through the church age a small remnant of Jews have been saved and added to the church. The reason for this is that it is God’s plan to set Israel aside during the church age because of their rejection of the Messiah. History has shown this to be true. Yet during the tribulation multitudes of Jews are saved as it is no longer the church age. The church has been raptured, removed, taken out of the way. The tribulation is a time for “*all Israel to be saved.*”**
 5. **Another purpose for the tribulation is that it gives God a chance to pour out His wrath on the unrepentant**
 - a. Dan. 12:1 “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.
 - b. Mt. 24:21-22 “For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. 22 “Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

- c. Why is it significant that the tribulation is a time of unprecedented judgment from God on the peoples of earth? Because the New Testament clearly teaches that God has *“not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation”* (I Thess. 5:9). Revelation makes it clear that many tribulation saints are martyred and two thirds of the earth’s population is destroyed. So there are only two options, either God miraculously preserves the church during the tribulation or the church is not present having already been raptured.
6. During the tribulation Satan is also given permission by God to put his power on display in order to deceive those who will not repent and kill those who have.
- a. II Thess. 2:1-8 tells us about the rise of the antichrist and then in vss. 9-12, it speaks of the power behind the antichrist and how God allows Satan to empower the antichrist so that the antichrist, as Satan’s representative will deceive those who love wickedness and will not repent and believe the gospel (see also Rev. 13:1-18). The text reads: that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.
 - b. Mt. 24:24 “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.
 - c. Rev. 12:12-13 “For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.”
 - d. Rev. 20:4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.
 - e. During the tribulation God allows Satan unparalleled freedom to persecute believers and deceive unbelievers. Since God has not destined the church for wrath, it is reasonable to believe God will remove the church before the tribulation, which is not only a time of God’s wrath but a time of Satan’s wrath where he attempts and succeeds in killing many believers. It is hard to reconcile mass persecution and martyrdom with God “not destining believers for wrath but to obtain salvation.” The tribulation is the greatest expression of God and Satan’s wrath that will ever occur.

D. The Rapture is not the Second Coming

RAPTURE John 5:25-29; Jn. 14:1-3; I Cor. 15:51-52; I Thess. 4:13-18	SECOND COMING Zech. 14:4-5; Matt. 24:30-31; 25:31-32; Rev. 19:11-21
Jesus comes back FOR the Church	Jesus comes back WITH the Church
The rapture is a “mystery” revealed for the first time in the New Testament . I Cor. 15:51	The Second Coming was previously known in the Old Testament and the gospels.
All saints both alive and dead are resurrected and or instantaneously glorified	Only those saints who have died during the tribulation are resurrected at the second coming, believers living at that time enter into the Millennium as mortals
Saints are caught up to be with the Lord in the air (heaven)	Saints separated from unbelievers by angels and brought to Christ who is on earth
The rapture is imminent and there are no signs to observe or events which must take place before it happens	The second coming is not imminent for many prophetic events must take place before the second coming of Christ happens
The rapture is a time of salvation and blessing for believers and is never associated with God’s judgment	Second coming is a time of salvation for believers but is associated with great judgment for unbelievers
The rapture is never associated with the millennial kingdom of Christ	The second coming is associated with the millennial kingdom of Christ
Rapture happens before God and Satan’s wrath is poured out on the earth	Second coming happens after God and Satan’s wrath is poured out on the earth
After the rapture unbelievers will remain alive on the earth	After the second coming all unbelievers will be executed and only believers will remain

E. The Pretribulation Rapture Parallels the Life of Enoch. One of the examples in Scripture which parallels the pretribulation rapture is the life of Enoch. Gen. 5:24 says, “*Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.*” Enoch, of course, was the father of Methuselah, the oldest man who ever lived. After Methuselah died God sent the flood. During the time of Enoch the earth was a very wicked place. In fact Gen 6:5 describes it in these words, “*Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*” Because of the wickedness of men God sent a flood upon the earth, yet Enoch was raptured before the flood and never saw death. In the same way believers before the tribulation will be living in times of great evil and then will be raptured before the tribulation.

F. The Church is New Testament Doctrine and a Mystery

1. Eph. 3:4-6 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; 6 to be

specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. . .

2. Col. 1:25-27 Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, 26 that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, 27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
3. The texts above teach us what a mystery is and that the church itself is a mystery or truth never revealed before in the Old Testament. This has huge implications because the Old Testament and the gospels do speak of the tribulation and the second coming in relation to Israel but not the church for the doctrine of the church had not yet been revealed. The Jew would have never imagined that they would have crucified their own Messiah and been set aside and that both Gentiles and Jews would be brought together into the body of Christ the church. Yet this was God's plan, a mystery hidden from ages past. This fits in with the pretribulation rapture as the church age is for the church and culminates in the pretribulation rapture. Then Daniel's seventieth week ensues (the tribulation) which is the last week of Israel's history before the second coming of Jesus Christ to set up His kingdom.

G. The Church is Never Warned or Told to Prepare for the Great Tribulation

1. The church is told that there will be:
 - a. False prophets (Acts 20:29-30; I Pet. 2:1; I Jn. 4:1-3; Jude 4)
 - b. Increased ungodliness (Eph. 4:25-5:7; I Thess. 4:3-8; II Tim. 3:1-10, 13)
 - c. Trials and Persecutions (I Thess. 2:13-14; II Thess. 1:4; all of I Peter)
2. Yet the church is never told to prepare for the tribulation. Though it is an argument from silence it seems like a glaring omission that the New Testament writers would neglect to tell the church what to do during the time of unprecedented global judgment. Jesus, on the other hand, explained to His disciples that Jews living in the tribulation would have to flee for their lives half way through the tribulation and warned them of the many judgments to come. When Jesus taught this the church did not exist and was still a mystery along with the rapture. But in the New Testament letters to the churches you find no teaching instructing the church what to do during the great tribulation. Instead the church is told to anticipate Christ's return (I Cor. 1:7; Phil. 3:20; I Thess. 1:10; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 9:28).

- H. **The Rapture Is Never Mentioned in Rev. 19-20 Which Contains the Most Detailed Descriptions of Christ at His Second Coming.** If the rapture happened at the time of the second coming you would think that the most detailed description of this event would mention it. Yet no rapture of the church is mentioned. Instead Christ comes back with “*the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean*” (Rev. 19:14). The near context reveals that these are the saints (vs. 8). It speaks of those martyred during the tribulation as being resurrected to reign with Christ for a thousand years (Rev. 12:4). Yet there is nothing that resembles the description of the rapture. It would seem a glaring omission if the rapture and second coming were simultaneous events.
- I. **The Rapture is a New Testament Doctrine and a Mystery.** The second coming and the resurrection of believers was predicted in both the Old Testament and in the gospels. The rapture however was first revealed by Paul to the church in I Cor. 15:51-52 which says, “*Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.*” If the rapture is synonymous with the resurrection and second coming predicted in the Old Testament then it could not be a mystery revealed by Paul for the first time.
- J. **The Pretribulation Rapture Fits Best With Daniel’s Seventy Weeks.** Dan. 9:24-27 “Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. 25 “So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. 26 “Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. 27 “And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.” Notice what Daniel’s seventy weeks are:
1. “For your people and your holy city” speaking of the Jews not Gentiles (vs. 24)
 2. By the completion of the seventy weeks “everlasting righteousness” is established (vs. 24) which happens when Christ returns to earth and sets up His kingdom where he will rule in righteousness forever and ever.
 3. That the Messiah is killed after the 7+62 weeks or 69th week and we know this happened 2,000 years ago.
 4. So there is only one week left, the seventieth week, which when completed will bring in “everlasting righteousness.” The period in between the 69th and 70th week is the church age.

K. The Pretribulation Rapture allows time for certain events to take place

1. Believers are said to receive rewards at the judgment seat of Christ which must happen before the second as after the second coming believers will be ruling and reigning with Christ on earth (I Cor. 3:11-4:5; II Cor. 5:10). The pretribulation rapture allows the church to receive rewards before the second coming.
2. Marriage of the lamb celebration is a time of celebration that occurs before the second coming of Christ. Rev. 19:7-9 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God." Here we see believers in heaven celebrating with Christ before the second coming. If the church is still on earth at this time then it seems unlikely that the marriage supper which is for the church would be taking place in heaven.
3. Multitudes to be saved and enter the tribulation as mortals (Rev. 7:4-14). If the rapture happens at the end of the tribulation and at that time all believers are glorified and all unbelievers killed then there would be no mortals left to populate the earth during the tribulation. (See below point "M")

L. Pretribulation Rapture Best Explains Jesus' Promise in Jn. 14:1-3. Jesus comforted his disciples with these words in Jn. 14:1-3 "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. Notice that Jesus comes to take believers to be where He is in heaven which is what the pretribulation rapture view teaches.

M. Pretribulation Rapture Best Explains How Believers, Not Yet Glorified, Enter Into the Millennium Kingdom After the Second Coming

1. We know that there will be people living as mortals in the Kingdom. For instance we read this in Isa. 65:19-25 "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying. 20 "No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Will be thought accursed. 21 "They will build houses and inhabit them; They will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22 "They will not build and another inhabit, They will not plant and another eat; For as the lifetime of a tree, so will be the days of My people, And My chosen ones will wear out the work of their hands. 23 "They will not labor in vain, Or bear children for calamity; For they are the offspring of those blessed by the Lord, And their descendants with them. 24 "It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. 25 "The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpent's food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain," says the Lord. This tells us the kingdom will contain mortals.

2. In the parable of the Separation of Sheep and Goats (separation of believers from unbelievers Mt. 25:31-46) the king tells the sheep (believers) in vs. 34, "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. These are mortals who enter into the kingdom."
 - a. There would be no need for a separation of sheep and goats at Jesus second coming if the rapture happened then because the rapture would have already separated believers from unbelievers.
 - b. Secondly, if one assumes that the separation of the sheep and goats is synonymous with the separation of believers from unbelievers at the rapture, then who is left on earth to enter into the millennial kingdom as mortals? If all believers are glorified with Christ and all unbelievers judged who enters into the kingdom as mortals to live and multiply on earth?
3. It is also clear that mortals live during the millennial reign of Christ because Satan deceives the nations at the end of the millennium as is written in Rev. 20:7-8 which says, When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. Here we see that at the end of the millennial reign of Christ, not only are there mortals but there are many unbelievers who have not submitted themselves to Christ though He is present and reigning on earth. When Satan is released they gather in an attempt to overthrow Christ.

- N. **Pretribulation Rapture Provides the Best Explanation for II Thess. 2:1-7 and the "one who restrains."** II Thess. 2:1-7 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. There are not many options for the "one who restrains." The antichrist is empowered by Satan and is accountable to God. No one else can restrain Satan. So if "the one who restrains" is a reference to the Holy Spirit working in and through the church, when the church is removed, the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit working in the lives of believers is removed.
- O. **Believers Are Told They Will Have Tribulation but Never Told or Described as Going Through "The" Tribulation.** Though another argument from silence it seems amazing that God would allow the church to go through the tribulation and yet never mention the church in the most detailed description of the tribulation period (Rev. chs. 6-19).

P. Believers in the Church are Promised They will Escape the Wrath to Come.

1. I Thess. 1:9-10 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.
2. I Thess. 5:9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,
3. Rev. 3:10 'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.
4. The texts above teach that it is God's intention to rescue, save and keep the church from his wrath. The tribulation is a time when God and Satan's wrath is being poured out on the earth. The pretribulation solves this problem.

III. KNOWING ABOUT THE RAPTURE SHOULD CHANGE THE WAY YOU LIVE

- A. Since Christ could come back at any moment and translate you into his presence how should this affect the way you live?
- B. Since Christ could come back any moment and take the church to be with Him in heaven, how should this affect our evangelistic zeal?
- C. Since there are differing views concerning the timing of the rapture among Bible believing Christians who hold to the same system of Bible interpretation, what does this teach us or what should we learn from this?
- D. Even if the pretribulational view of the rapture isn't true, what encouragement does the doctrine of the rapture give us?