

E. The Church in God's prophetic plan

1. Where is the church in Old Testament prophecy?

a. The church is a mystery Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 2:11-3:12; Colossians 1:24-27  
The church was never revealed in the Old Testament  
The church (Body of Christ, new man) was created by Christ after His ascension  
That the Jews and Gentiles would be on equal footing in one body was totally new

b. The rapture of the church is a mystery 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

2. When did the church begin? Matthew 16:18

a. Views:

- 1) Adam
- 2) Abraham
- 3) Gospels
- 4) Acts 2
- 5) Epistles

b. The Head of the church

1) Headship based on resurrection Colossians 1:18

2) Headship based on ascension Ephesians 1:19-23; 4:9-11

c. The foundation of the church Ephesians 2:19-22

d. The birth of the church

1 Corinthians 12:13 - The Holy Spirit baptizes believers into the body of Christ

Matthew 3:11 - The baptism of the Spirit is still future in this verse

Matthew 16:18 - Christ says the church is still future

John 7:37-39 - The new ministries of the Spirit began after the glorification of Christ

Acts 1:4-5; John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26 - The new ministries of the Spirit were still future while Christ was on earth

Acts 2:1-12, 33 - The Holy Spirit began His new ministries on the Day of Pentecost

Acts 10:44-48 - The Gentiles receive the Spirit

Acts 11:1-18 - Peter states that the Gentiles received the Spirit like the Jews did in Acts 2

Galatians 3:26-27 - The Spirit is now given at the point of salvation

**THERE IS NO CHURCH WITHOUT THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST,  
WITHOUT THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS AND  
WITHOUT THE SPECIFIC NEW MINISTRIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

3. What is the relationship of the church to Israel?

a. The church is in a distinct time

1) Daniel allows for it Daniel 9:24-27

2) Paul demands it Romans 11; Ephesians 2:11-3:11

The Old Testament allows for this present time, but does not specifically prophesy about it.

b. The church is a distinct entity.

1) In the New Testament, God distinguishes between Jew, Gentile, and the church.  
1 Corinthians 10:32

From Genesis 1-12, God dealt with people individually.

From Genesis 12 – Acts 2, God dealt with people through the nation of Israel.

From Acts 2 – present, God deals with people through the body of Christ.

2) In the New Testament, Israel is called Israel and the church is called the church. These two separate entities are not confused or combined. The church is not Israel and Israel is not the church.

3) According to Romans 9-11, Israel's promises will be fulfilled by Israel when God completes His present work with the church. Israel is not cast away; the nation of Israel will be saved. Romans 11:1, 25

4) In the Old Testament there were Jews and Gentiles; in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile. Genesis 18:18; Isaiah 49:5-6; Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11

5) Israel's promises are spiritual and earthly. Genesis 15; Deuteronomy 30; 2 Samuel 7; Jeremiah 31

The churches' promises are spiritual and heavenly. Ephesians 2:6; Philippians 3:14; Colossians 3:1-4; 1 Peter 1:4

6) Since the church began on Pentecost in Acts 2, the church is not Israel.

7) Since the body of Christ was a mystery which was not revealed in the Old Testament, the body of Christ can't be Israel. Ephesians 3:1-10

4. What is the church's future?  
1 Corinthians 15:51-58

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

5. Will the church go through the tribulation?

a. Definitions:

**1) Pretribulational Rapture**

- a) **Proposition** - Christ takes the church to heaven before the 7 year tribulation  
The rapture is imminent - at any moment
- b) **Proponents** - John MacArthur, Dwight Pentecost, Charles Ryrie, John Walvoord
- c) **Problems** - The rapture is not referred to in the Old Testament or Revelation.  
The timing of the rapture is not revealed in the Bible. Since the church is promised persecution, it will not be delivered from the tribulation.

**2) Partial Rapture**

- a) **Proposition** - Only faithful believers who are watching & waiting will be raptured
- b) **Proponents** - G.H. Pember, J.A. Seiss
- c) **Problems** - The rapture is part of your salvation, not a reward. All believers, not just a few, are raptured 1 Cor 15:51

**3) Midtribulational Rapture**

- a) **Proposition** - Christ takes the church to heaven at the midpoint of the 7 year tribulation. Distinguishes between the rapture in the air and the second coming of Christ to earth. Believers endure the wrath of man (Seal & Trumpet Judgments) during the first 3 1/2 years, but escape the wrath of God during the last 3 1/2 years.
- b) **Proponents** - Gleason Archer, J. Oliver Buswell, Norman Harrison, Robert Gundry
- c) **Problems** - The last trumpet of 1 Cor 15 is not identical to the 7th trumpet of Rev 11:15. Are the Seal & Trumpet judgments only the wrath of man? The rapture is not imminent, at any moment. There are many prophetic events that must occur before the rapture.

**4) Prewrath Rapture** - a variation of the mid-tribulation position

- a) **Proposition** - Christ will rapture the church after the 6th seal (before the wrath of God). The church will experience the wrath of man and Satan, but not the wrath of God. The rapture occurs before the 4th quarter of the tribulation (the last 21 months). The tribulation has 3 distinct time periods: Beginning of sorrows-3 1/2 years; Great Tribulation - 21 months; the Day of the Lord - 21 months
- b) **Proponents** - Marvin Rosenthal, Robert Van Kampen
- c) **Problems** - The seal judgments are from God, not just man and Satan Rev 5-6  
The Day of the Lord is longer than 21 months. Joel 3; Zech 14; 2 Pet 3:10  
Are all judgments in the first 5 1/4 years from man and Satan? How does the Bible define the wrath of God and judgments in relation to God? Christ can't return for 5 1/4 years into the 7 year tribulation.

## 5) **Postributional Rapture**

- a) **Proposition** - Christ raptures the church after the 7 year tribulation and immediately returns to the earth
- b) **Proponents** - Millard Erickson, Robert Gundry, George Ladd, Doug Moo
- c) **Problems** - There is no distinction between the rapture in the air and the second coming of Christ to earth. Is the purpose of the tribulation for Israel or the church? Is there a distinction between Israel and the church?

## 6) **No Rapture**

- a) **Proposition** - There is no rapture. We are in God's Kingdom. The Kingdom was inaugurated at Christ's first appearing and will be consummated when Christ returns to create a new heaven and a new earth. Someday, Christ will come back and everybody will stand before Him to be judged.
- b) **Proponents** - Hank Hanegraaff, R.C. Sproul, all amillennialists and most covenant theologians.
- c) **Problems** - There is no distinction between Israel and the church. There is no 7 year tribulation or 1000 year kingdom. Nero is the antichrist and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD fulfilled Peter's prophecy in 2 Peter 3:10-13 (Hanegraaff's view). Prophecy is interpreted symbolically and allegorically, not literally and physically.

## 7) **Pan Rapture**

b. Distinctions of the Pretribulational Rapture

- 1) It is the only view which has a consistent, literal hermeneutic.
- 2) It is the only view which clearly distinguishes between Israel and the church.  
1 Corinthians 10:32
- 3) It is the only view which gives the correct purpose for the tribulation. It is a time of judgment and preparation for Israel and the nations to enter the kingdom.  
Ezekiel 20:30-38, 41; 39:21-29; Daniel 2:44; 7:14, 23; 9:24-27; 12:1;  
Zechariah 12:1-5; 13:8-9; 14:1-19
- 4) The pretribulational rapture position is the only view which teaches true imminence, i.e., at any moment.
- 5) During the tribulation and the kingdom, God is dealing with the inhabitants of earth as nations on an international scale based on their relationship to Israel and God.  
Zechariah 12:1-9; 14:1-21. Presently, God is dealing with individuals, not nations, based solely on their relationship to Christ, not Israel.
- 6) The godly remnant in Revelation 7:4-8 is called Israel, not the church. Again, in Revelation 7:9-17, the slain multitudes in heaven are related to nations and people groups, not the church.
- 7) It is the only view which gives a correct interpretation of the tribulation. The tribulation is said to be for Israel not the church. Daniel 9:24-27; Jeremiah 30:7
- 8) The church is not appointed to the wrath; therefore, it won't enter the tribulation.  
1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 5:9; Revelation 6:17
- 9) The church will not be overtaken by the Day of the Lord; therefore it will not enter the tribulation period at all. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
- 10) The church of Philadelphia was promised deliverance from the hour of trial which will come upon all the world. Revelation 3:10

- 11) After the rapture, the church goes to the Father's House not back to earth. John 14:1-3
- 12) Believers before the tribulation are told to look for Christ's coming in the air.  
1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 4:13-18; Titus 2:13
- Believers during the tribulation are told to look for signs of Christ's coming to earth.  
Joel 2:28-32; Zechariah 14:1-5; Matthew 24:3, 15, 24, 29-30; Luke 21:8-11, 20-28
- The church is not in the time of signs; therefore we are not to look for signs of the time.
- 13) The rapture of the church is not mentioned in passages dealing with Christ's advent to earth after the tribulation.
- 14) The exhortation of comfort is meaningless if the church goes through the tribulation.  
1 Thessalonians 4:18
- 15) Tribulation saints are not translated to heaven after the tribulation. They remain on earth to go into the kingdom. Isaiah 65:20-25; Matthew 25:31-34
- 16) The rapture of church saints is a mystery only revealed in the New Testament, but the second advent of Christ to earth is often prophesied in the Old Testament. Therefore, they are separate events. Zechariah 15:1-5; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52.
- 17) The rapture only relates to the saved; the second advent of Christ relates to the saved and the lost. Matthew 25:31-46; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
- 18) No prophecy has to be fulfilled for the rapture to occur. All prophecies dealing with the tribulation have to be fulfilled before Christ can return to earth. Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24-25; Revelation 4-19

# Will Christians Escape the Seven Year Tribulation?

Part 2

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

1. The wrath of God in the Old Testament is seen through the curses and judgments of Deut 28-30; 2 Chron 34:23-25; Deut 29:24-28
2. The curses and judgments of God's wrath in Deuteronomy 28-30 are related to loss of health, wealth, family, life and land
  - A. Family failure 28:30
  - B. Health failure 28:21
  - C. Farm failure 28:31, 38, 41
  - D. Economic failure 28:43-44
  - E. National failure - war, defeat, slavery & death 28:25-26, 41
3. The judgments of God's wrath are FROM God
  - A. Through the nations Deut 28:49; 2 Sam 7:14
    1. Assyria - Shalmaneser - the Rod of God's Wrath Isaiah 10  
A ten year event 732 BC - 722 BC
    2. Babylon - Nebuchadnezzar Jer 25  
The Hammer of the whole world Jer 50:23  
A 20 year event 605 BC - 586 BC
  - B. Through demons and false prophets 1 Kgs 22
  - C. Through angels and the angel of Jehovah Gen 18-19; Ex 11-12; 14; Deut 29:23; 2 Kgs 18-19
  - D. Through sword, famine and plague Jer 14:11-12  
This phrase is used 15 times of God's judgment in Jeremiah
  - E. Through frogs, flies, diseases, boils, hail, locusts, darkness and death of firstborn Ex 7-12
4. The 70th week of Daniel (a future period of 7 years) is the final climax of these judgments and the ultimate fulfillment of the curses in Deuteronomy 28-30
5. Daniel's 70th week is fulfilled in Revelation 4-19 as a final judgment of God's wrath on Israel, the nations, the earth and the heavens in order to establish Christ's 1000 year reign on earth.
  - A. The Seal Judgments are FROM God  
THROUGH Satan, antichrist, nations, famine, diseases & death  
AGAINST people, earth and heavenly bodies Rev 5-6
    1. The Seven Seal Scroll is in God the Father's right hand and unleashed by Christ 5:1, 4-5
    2. The antichrist 6:1-2
    3. Sword, famine, plague 6:7-8 (15 times in Jeremiah)

World War II - 40-50 million died

If Fourth Seal were today - 1 1/2 billion die

4. The Sixth Seal 6:12-17

Who is speaking? The ungodly

What are they saying? Hide us from God and His wrath

Why? Because of what they experienced in first five seals

B. The Trumpet Judgments are FROM God

THROUGH angels and demons

AGAINST people, earth and heavenly bodies Rev 8-11

1. 1/3 of water is contaminated 8:11-12

2. 1/3 of mankind is killed 9:13-16

C. The Bowl Judgments are FROM God

THROUGH angels

AGAINST antichrist followers, people, earth and heavenly bodies

1. Sores on antichrist followers 16:2

2. Great earthquake & 100 pound hailstones 16:17-21

Each set of judgments are shorter in duration, more intense in their severity and more directly from God than the previous set.

6. The book of Revelation in the New Testament is the fulfillment of the final judgment and wrath of God predicted by the prophets in the Old Testament in order for God to establish the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth.

7. Wrath from every source becomes more and more severe and spirals in intensity until the end of this seven year period

A. The wrath of the nations increases Rev 11:15-18; Ps 2:1-2

B. The wrath of Satan increases Rev 12:7-12

C. The wrath of the antichrist and his followers increases Rev 13:1-8; 17:13-14; 19:19

D. The wrath of the demons increases Rev 12:9; 9:13-21

E. The wrath of Babylon increases Rev 14:8; 17:4-6; 18:3

F. The wrath of God increases Rev 14:9-10; 15:1; 16:1; 18:8; 19:11-21; Ps 2:5-6, 8, 10-12; Jn 3:36

Will Christians escape these events? 1 Thes 1:10; 5:9-10

What should our response be?

Encourage one another 1 Thes 5:11a

Edify one another 1 Thes 5:11b

# WILL CHRISTIANS ESCAPE THE TRIBULATION?

Part 1 - 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

1. Relationship of Christians to the Day of the Lord 5:1-5
  - A. The chronology of the Day of the Lord 5:1-3
    1. Daniel's 70th week Daniel 9:1-2, 24-27
      - a. Context - 490 year period & 70 year exile in Babylon 9:1-2; 2 Chronicles 36:15-21
      - b. Calculation - 490 year prophecy & 7 year tribulation 9:24-27  
483 years ended before the death of Christ  
7 year period is still future = 360 days/year, 30 days/month  
-3 1/2 years = time, times + 1/2 time Daniel 7:25; 12:7  
-1290 days = 3 1/2 years + 30 days Daniel 12:11  
-1335 days = 3 1/2 years + 75 days Daniel 12:12  
-42 months = 3 1/2 years Revelation 11:2; 13:5  
-1260 days = 3 1/2 years Revelation 11:3; 12:6
      - c. Contents - judgment on Israel and the nations  
Zephaniah 1:14-18; Matthew 24-25; Revelation 4-19
    2. The millennium Zechariah 14; Joel 2-3; Revelation 20
    3. The destruction of heavens and earth 2 Peter 3:10-13
  - B. Conclusions about the Day of the Lord
    1. It's connected with times and seasons 1 Thessalonians 5:1
    2. It's not a twenty-four hour period
    3. It's over a 1007 year period of time involving unprecedented judgment & unprecedented blessing
    4. It's primarily Jewish, though it affects all nations
    5. It's about Jehovah fulfilling His covenants to Israel
  - C. Conclusions about the timing of the rapture
    1. Neither the church nor the rapture are revealed in the Old Testament  
1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Ephesians 3:1-10
    2. The rapture is non-sequential in Old Testament prophecy because it wasn't yet revealed
    3. The rapture is non-sequential in the book of Revelation because the book doesn't say specifically when it occurs
    4. The rapture is revealed in the New Testament but the exact timing is not revealed
    5. No man knows the exact sequence or the exact timing of the rapture
- D. The character of Christians 5:4-5
  1. Sons of light - not darkness
  2. Sons of day - not night
2. The response of Christians to the Day of the Lord 5:6-11
  - A. How should we respond? 6-8
    1. Be sensitive
    2. Be sober
    3. Be soldiers
  - B. Why should we respond this way? 9-11
    1. Because we will escape the wrath together 9-10; 1:10
    2. Because we need to encourage one another 11a
    3. Because we need to edify each other 11b