

The Rapture of the Church

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Overview of Lecture Series

- I. The introduction to the rapture.
 II. The extent of the rapture.
 III. The time of the rapture.
 A. The mid-tributational view
 B. The post-tributational view
 C. The pre-tributational view

I. The introduction to the study of the rapture.A. A definition of the rapture: the resurrection of the church to meet the Lord in the air at the time of His return.

1. The "church" may focus upon living Christians (1 Cor. 15.51-52)

51 Behold, I tell you a ^amystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be ^bchanged,

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for ^athe trumpet will sound, and ^othe dead will be raised ^limperishable, and ^ewe shall be changed.

Some will be alive when they are given immortality bodies

2. The "church" may focus upon all Christians (1 Thes. 4.13-18)

13 But ^awe do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who ^bare asleep, that you may not grieve, as do ^cthe rest who have ^dno hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, ^aeven so God will bring with Him ^bthose who have fallen asleep ^lin Jesus.

15 For this we say to you ^aby the word of the Lord, that ^bwe who are alive, ^land remain until ^cthe coming of the Lord, shall not precede ^dthose who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord ^aHimself ^bwill descend from heaven with a ^lshout, with the voice of ^dthe archangel, and with the ^etrumpet of God; and ^fthe dead in Christ shall rise first.

17 Then ^awe who are alive ^land remain shall be ^bcaught up together with them ^cin the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always ^dbe with the Lord.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

B. The descriptions of the rapture.

1. 1 Thes. 4.13-18

13 But ^awe do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who ^bare asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have ^dno hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, ^aeven so God will bring with Him ^bthose who have fallen asleep ^lin Jesus.

15 For this we say to you ^aby the word of the Lord, that ^bwe who are alive, ^land remain until ^cthe coming of the Lord, shall not precede ^dthose who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord ^aHimself ^bwill descend from heaven with a ^lshout, with the voice of ^dthe archangel, and with the ^etrumpet of God; and ^fthe dead in Christ shall rise first.

17 Then ^awe who are alive ^land remain shall be ^bcaught up together with them ^cin the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always ^dbe with the Lord.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

2. 1 Cor. 15.50-58

50 Now I say this, brethren, that ^aflesh and blood cannot ^binherit the kingdom of God; nor does ¹the perishable inherit ^{2c}the imperishable.

51 Behold, I tell you a ^amystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be ^bchanged.

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for ^athe trumpet will sound, and ^bthe dead will be raised ¹imperishable, and ^cwe shall be changed.

53 For this ¹perishable must put on ^{2a}the imperishable, and this ^bmortal must put on immortality.

54 But when this ¹perishable will have put on ¹the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "^aDEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.

55 "^aO DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?"

56 The sting of ^adeath is sin, and ^bthe power of sin is the law;

57 but ^athanks be to God, who gives us the ^bvictory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 ^aTherefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in ^bthe work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.

3. Jn 14.1-3

questionable support of @ text.
^aLET not your heart be troubled; ¹believe 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 ^aI go to prepare a place for you.

3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, ^aI will come again, and receive you to Myself; that ^bwhere I am, *there* you may be also.

C. The precursors of the rapture.

1. In the Old Testament

2. In the intertestamental period.

D. The necessity of a rapture.

1. The presence of living believers at Christ's return

2. The presumption of a continuance of space-time history

E. The literature on the rapture.

1. From a pretribulation perspective:
 - a. The Rapture, Dr. Ryrie
 - b. The Rapture Question, Dr. Walvoord
 - c. The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation, Dr. Walvoord
 - d. Things to Come, Dr. Pentecost
 - e. Revelation 3.10 and the Rapture of the Church", Bib. Sac., 1978, John Townsend
 - f. The Pretribulation Rapture, Allen Beechick
2. From a mid-tribulation perspective
 - a. The End, N. Harrison
 - b.
3. From a posttribulation perspective.
 - a. The Church and the Tribulation, Dr. Robert Gundry
 - b. A Critical Evaluation of the Pretribulation Rapture Doctrine in Christian Eschatology, Dr. Wm. Bell
 - c. The Approaching Advent of Christ, Alexander Reese (1932)
4. From a bibliographical perspective
 - a. Gundry
 - b. Walvoord
 - c. Bell

II. The extent of the rapture

- A. The partial rapture view: only the more faithful Christians will be raptured.

1. It is implied by prerequisites qualifying one for rapture.

- a. Endurance is a prerequisite Lk. 21.36

36 "But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

- b. Eager expectation is a prerequisite Philip. 3.20; Titus 2.13; 2 Tim. 4.8; Heb. 9.28

Philip. 3.20

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly await for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

Titus 2.13

13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;

2 Tim. 4.8

8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Heb. 9.28

28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, not to bear sin, to those who eagerly await Him, for salvation.

c. Obedience is a prerequisite Rev. 3.10

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 upon the earth.

2. It is allowed by the several stages of the first resurrection.

B. The total church rapture view: all Christians will be raptured.

1. The prerequisites added to simple regeneration are invalid.

a. The endurance prerequisite is not for the rapture.

*Titus 2:13, 2 Tim 4:8 - don't speak of qualify - 7
reference to the rapture*

b. The expectation "prerequisites" are descriptions of all believers. Rom. 8.23, 25; 1 Cor. 1.7; Gal. 5.5; Philip. 3.20; Heb. 9.28

Rom. 8.23, 25

23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, awaiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

1 Cor. 1.7

7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, ^aawaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Gal. 5.5

5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are ^awaiting for the hope of righteousness.

Philip. 3.20

20 For ^aour ¹citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly ^bwait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Heb. 9.28

28 so Christ also, having been ^aoffered once to ^bbear the sins of many, shall appear ^ca second time, ^{1d}not to bear sin, to those who ^eeagerly await Him, for ^fsalvation.

c. The obedience prerequisite of Rev. 3.10 is one of at least three possibilities

1) It is perhaps a Johannine designation of every believer. (Townsend)

Jn. 8.51; 14.23, 24; I Jn. 2.3; I Jn. 5.3-5

Jn. 8.51

51 "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone ^akeeps My word he shall never ^bsee death."

Jn. 14. 23. 24

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will ^bkeep My word; and ^cMy Father will love him, and We ^dwill come to him, and make Our abode with him.

24 "He who does not love Me ^adoes not keep My words; and ^bthe word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

I Jn. 2.3

3 And ^aby this we know that we have come to ^bknow Him, if we ^ckeep His commandments.

I Jn. 5.3-5

3 For ^athis is the love of God, that we ^bkeep His commandments; and ^cHis commandments are not burdensome.

4 For whatever is ^{1a}born of God ^bovercomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

5 And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who ^abelieves that Jesus is the Son of God?

2) It is perhaps a Johannine designation of a faithful believer who is promised a reward that is, nevertheless, common to every believer.

a) The keeping of Jesus' commandments in John is frequently a mark not of Christian birth but of Christian maturity.

b) The promise to the faithful of rewards common to every believer is perhaps common in John.

Rev. 2.7, 11

7 ^aHe who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. ^bTo him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of ^cthe tree of life, which is in the ^dParadise of God.

11 ^aHe who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. ^bHe who overcomes shall not be hurt by the ^csecond death.

Rev. 3.5

5 ^aHe who overcomes shall thus be clothed in ^bwhite garments; and I will not ^cerase his name from the book of life, and ^dI will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.

Rev. 3.10

10 ^aBecause you have ^bkept the word of ^cMy ^dperseverance, ^eI also will keep you from the hour of ^ftesting, that ^ghour which is about to come upon the whole ^hworld, to ⁱtest ^jthose who dwell upon the earth.

3) It is perhaps a prerequisite protection but not for rapture.

2. The designations of the raptured believers refer to all.

a. The designation in 1 Cor. 15.51 refers to all.

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be ^bchanged.

b. The designation in 1 Thess. 4.13-18 includes all.

13 But ^awe do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who ^bare asleep, that you may not grieve, as do ^cthe rest who have ^dno hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, ^aeven so God will bring with Him ^bthose who have fallen asleep ^cin

15 For this we say to you ^aby the word of the Lord, that ^bwe who are alive, ¹and remain until ^cthe coming of the Lord, shall not precede ^dthose who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord ^aHimself ^bwill descend from heaven with ¹a shout, with the voice of ^dthe archangel, and with the ^ctrumpet of God; and ^fthe dead in Christ shall rise first.

17 Then ^awe who are alive ¹and remain shall be ^bcaught up together with them ^cin the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always ^dbe with the Lord.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- 1) It implicitly states it is as inclusive as those who have fallen asleep in Jesus (without additional prerequisites).
 - 2) It explicitly states that it includes "we who are alive and remain" (without additional prerequisites).
 - 3) It implicitly describes, therefore, an experience of the entire church.
- c. The designation in 1 Thess. 5.9-11 includes all. It explicitly affirms that deliverance from the coming wrath is independent of the believer's faithfulness.

9 For God has not destined us for ^awrath, but for ^bobtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

10 ^awho died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.

11 Therefore ¹encourage one another, and ^abuild up one another, just as you also are doing.

- 1) Two words for "to sleep" are used in Paul's epistles.
 - a) Koimaō means "to sleep" but in Paul it is always figurative, and always figurative of death.
 - 1 Cor. 7.39; 11.30; 15.6, 18, 20, 51; 1 Thess. 4.13, 14, 15.
 - 1 Cor. 7.39 **39** ^aA wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband ¹is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only ^bin the Lord.
 - 1 Cor. 11.30 **30** For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number ^asleep.
 - 1 Cor. 15.6 **6** After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until this day.

1 Cor. 15.18

18 Then those also who ^ahave fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

1 Cor. 15.20

20 But now Christ ^ahas been raised from the dead, the ^bfirst fruits of those who ^care asleep.

1 Cor. 15.51

51 Behold, I tell you a ^amystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be ^bchanged,

1 Thess. 4.13, 14, 15

13 But ^awe do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who ^bare asleep, that you may not grieve, as do ^cthe rest who have ^dno hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, ^aeven so God will bring with Him ^bthose who have fallen asleep ⁱin Jesus.

15 For this we say to you ^aby the word of the Lord, that ^bwe who are alive, ⁱand remain until ^cthe coming of the Lord, shall not precede ^dthose who have fallen asleep.

Elsewhere in the N.T. it is either literal (Matt. 28.13; Luke 22:45; Jn. 11.12; Acts 12.6) or figurative for death (Matt. 27.52; Jn. 11.11; Acts 7.60; Acts 13.36; 2 Pet. 3.4)

Matt. 27.52

52 and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the ⁱsaints who had ^afallen asleep were raised;

Jn. 11.11

11 This He said, and after that He ^asaid to them, "Our ^afriend Lazarus ^bhas fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awaken him out of sleep."

Acts 7.60

60 And ^afalling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, ^bdo not hold this sin against them!" And having said this, he ⁱfell asleep.

Acts 13.36

36 "For ^aDavid, after he had ⁱserved ^bthe purpose of God in his own generation, ^cfell asleep, and was laid among his

2 Pet. 3.4

4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His ^{becoming?} For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."

- b. Katheudō also means "to sleep" but in Paul it's always figurative, and always figurative of spiritual lethargy. While it is true that Eph. 5.14 ~~was~~ ^{was} the word figuratively for death, it must be remembered that this reflects LXX usage. So on the one hand Paul never used (unless in 1 Thess. 5.9-11) the word as figurative of death, but on the other hand he was aware of that usage.

(1 Thess. 5.6, 7, 10)

- 2) The distinction between koimaō and katheudō̄ is present in the context: Koimaō is figurative for death in 1 Thess. 4. 13-15; katheudō̄ is figurative for spiritual lethargy in 1 Thess. 5.5, 6

- 3) The continuance of the distinction in 1 Thess. 5.10 is confirmed by the antithesis in that verse between gregoreō̄ (to watch) and katheudō̄ (to be asleep).

- a) In the 23 references to gregoreo in the N.T. it always refers to moral alertness, as it does in 1 Thess. 5.5, 6. But it is never figurative for "to be alive".

- b) Moral alertness is a more appropriate opposite to spiritual lethargy than to physical death.

- 4) The affirmation of ultimate deliverance apart from faithfulness is consistent with Pauline theology.

2 Tim. 2.11-13

- 11 It is a trustworthy statement:
For ^bif we died with Him, we shall also live with Him;
- 12 If we endure, ^awe shall also reign with Him;
If we ^bdeny Him, He ^aalso will deny us;
- 13 If we are faithless, ^aHe remains faithful: for ^bHe cannot deny Himself.

1 Cor. 3.10-15

10 According to ^athe grace of God which was given to me, as a wise masterbuilder ^bI laid a foundation, and ^canother is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it.

11 For no man can lay a ^afoundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, ¹precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

13 ^aeach man's work will become evident; for ^bthe day will show it, because it is *to be* revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test ¹the quality of each man's work.

14 If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall ^areceive a reward.

15 If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet ^aso as through fire.

The concept of the rapture is not derived from grace

1 Cor. 6.11

11 And ^asuch were some of you; but you were ^bwashed, but you were ^csanctified, but you were ^djustified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

III. The time of the rapture.A. The alternative viewpoints.1. The posttributitional position.

a. The classical view.

b. The semi-classical view.

c. The futurist view.

1) The covenant premillennial view.

2) The dispensational premillennial view.

2. The midtributitional position.

3. The pretribulational position.
 - a. The historic premillennial view.
 - b. The dispensational premillennial view.
 4. The incalculable rapture position.
- B. The midtribulational position.
1. This position is based on some arguments it shares with the post-tribulation position.
 - a. It denies that the imminency of the rapture is taught by the N. T. (Only the classic posttribulational view implies it perhaps).
 - b. It argues that the Scripture promises tribulation to the church.
 - c. It argues that a transitional period between dispensations allows for its view.
 2. This position is based also on some distinctive arguments.
 - a. It argues that the first judgments of the tribulation are of men and not God, and therefore deliverance from these first judgments is not promised.
 - b. It argues similarly that only the latter half of the tribulation is intensely catastrophic, and therefore deliverance from the first judgments is not necessary.

Distinctive Arguments

c.

It argues that a correlation of the seventh trumpet of judgment in Rev. 10.7 must correspond to the last trumpet of 1 Cor. 15.52 and the trumpet of 1 Thess. 4.16, and this would place the rapture at the mid-point of the tribulation.

3. An analysis of the distinctive arguments.

- a. The first judgments are said to be from God.

Rev. 6.17

17 for ^athe great day of their wrath has come; and ^bwho is able to stand?"

Rev. 11.18

18 "And ^athe nations were enraged, and Thy wrath came, and ^bthe time *came* for the dead to be judged, and *the time* to give their reward to Thy ^cbond-servants the prophets and to the ^dsaints and to those who fear Thy name, ^ethe small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."

- b. The first half of Daniel's seventieth week is quite tribulational.

- 1) The seal judgments correspond to the signs of the end promised by Christ.

- 2) The martyrdom of believers is widespread.

Rev. 6.9-11

9 And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw ^aunderneath the ^baltar the ^csouls of those who had been slain ^dbecause of the word of God, and because of the ^etestimony which they had maintained;

10 and they cried out with a loud voice; saying, "^aHow long, O ^bLord, ^choly and true, ²wilt Thou refrain from ^djudging and avenging our blood on ^ethose who dwell on the earth?"

11 And ^athere was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should ^brest for a little while longer, ^cuntil *the number* of their fellow-servants and their brethren

- 3) The judgments of the "two witnesses" of Rev. 11.1-13 are most likely exercised in the first half of the tribulation.

- c. The seventh trumpet of judgment in salvation does not correspond to the last trumpet of deliverance in 1 Cor. 15.52 or the trumpet of deliverance in 1 Thess. 4.16.
- 1) In Jewish apocalyptic, trumpets signaled great eschatological events such as judgment, the gathering of the elect, and resurrection. It is unwarranted to equate a trumpet of judgment with one of deliverance.
 - 2) The last trumpet of 1 Cor. 15.52 does not denote the end of a series but a trumpet at the end of the age. (Kittel)

C. The posttribulational position.

✓ 1. It argues first of all that the burden of proof rests upon other positions, since indisputable passages teach that the first resurrection is after the tribulation, and the rapture is part of the first resurrection. (Dan. 12.1-3; Rev. 20.4-6)

2. It argues secondly that this burden of proof is not borne by the pretribulational passages.

a. No rapture is mentioned in Jn. 14.1-3.

b. No pretribulational rapture may be inferred from 1 Thess. 4.13-18.

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who ^bare asleep, that you may not grieve, as do ^cthe rest who have ^dno hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, ^eeven so God will bring with Him ^bthose who have fallen asleep ^hin Jesus.

15 For this we say to you ^aby the word of the Lord, that ^bwe who are alive, ^hand remain until ^cthe coming of the Lord, shall not precede ^dthose who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord ^aHimself ^bwill descend from heaven with a ^cshout, with the voice of ^dthe archangel, and with the ^etrumpet of God; and ^fthe dead in Christ shall rise first.

17 Then ^awe who are alive ^hand remain shall be ^bcaught up together with them ^cin the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always ^dbe with the Lord.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- 1) The comfort is not a pretribulation rapture but with Christ's coming a reunion with loved ones, whose rewards would not be diminished because of their deaths before that coming.

- 2) The scene presupposed in the passage is not so much the rising of the saints as their descent with Christ and their rising is not to escape judgment but to give a royal greeting to the returning king. Such is the implication of "to meet" (a *parousia*) in "to meet the Lord in the air".

- c. No pretribulation rapture may be inferred from 1 Thess. 5.1-11.
 - 1) The posttribulation interpretation must be true if, as is likely, the day of the Lord refers to the very last part of Daniel's seventieth week.
 - a) The day of the Lord begins only after the middle of the seven years according to 2 Thess. 2.1-4.

NOW we request you, ^abrethren, with regard to the ^{1b}coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our ^cgathering together to Him,

² that you may not be quickly shaken from your ^{1c}composure or be disturbed either by a ^aspirit or a ^{2b}message or a ^cletter as if from us, to the effect that ^dthe day of the Lord ^ehas come.

³ ^aLet no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the ^{1b}apostasy comes first, and the ^cman of ^flawlessness is revealed, the ^dson of destruction,

⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above ^{1a}every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, ^bdisplaying himself as being God.

- b) The wrath from which the church is delivered is therefore only the wrath at the end of the tribulation.

2) The posttribulation interpretation would still be true if, as is likely, "not appointed to wrath" or "deliverance from wrath" (1 Thess. 1.10) refers to something other than physical deliverance.

a) It may refer to deliverance through the wrath.

b) It may refer to deliverance through death.

2 Tim. 4.17-18

17 But the Lord stood with me, and ^astrengthened me, in order that through me ^bthe proclamation might ¹be ^cfully accomplished, and that all ^dthe Gentiles might hear; and I was ^edelivered out of ^fthe lion's mouth.

18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will ¹bring me safely to His ^bheavenly kingdom; ^cto ²Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Rev. 12.11

11 "And they ^aovercame him because of ^bthe blood of the Lamb and because of ^cthe word of their testimony, and they ^ddid not love their life even to death.

d. No pretribulation rapture may be inferred from the removal of the restrainer in 2 Thess. 2.6-8.

6 And you know ^awhat restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed.

7 For ^athe mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only ^bhe who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way.

8 And then that lawless one ^awill be revealed whom the Lord will slay ^bwith the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the ^cappearance of His ¹coming;

a) The restrainer may be something other than the Holy Spirit.

b) The Holy Spirit need not be identified with the church.

c) The Holy Spirit is still active in the tribulation.
(Matt. 24.14; Mk. 13.11; Rev. 7.9-14)

e. No pretribulational rapture may be inferred from Rev. 3.10.

a) The promise of Rev. 3.10 may be restricted to one particular church and have no reference to tribulation wrath.

b) The promise of "deliverance from" (téreō ek) may mean "protection through".

1) ek means "out from within"

2) Téreō ek occurs elsewhere only in Jn. 17.5 and refers to protection within.

5 "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I ever had with Thee before the world was.

3. It argues thirdly that the burden of proof is not borne by the pretribulational principles.

a. The distinction between Israel and the church does not require a pretribulation rapture.

b. The imminency of the second coming does not require a pretribulation rapture.

c. The necessity of repopulating a millennial kingdom does not require a pretribulation rapture.

d. The absence of explicit mention of the church in Rev. 4-19 does not require a pretribulation rapture.

e. The typology of Lot and Noah does not require a pretribulation rapture.

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4. It argues positively that the three central sections of Scripture most relevant to the discussion teach a posttribulation rapture.

a. Matt. 24.1-44 favors a posttribulation rapture. *cf. Grandin*

Chronology
1) The description of the rapture occurs after a description of the signs of the end.

2) The ones addressed in this discourse are believing Christians.

b. The Thessalonian epistles favor a posttribulation rapture.

- 1) The wrath from which believers are delivered is the wrath of the very last part of the tribulation.

*1 Thess 5⁹ — right @ the end of the trib.
2 Thess 2¹⁻⁴ — Day of the Lord*

- 2) The deliverance may be a deliverance "through" rather than "from".

2 Tim 4:17, 18

- 3) The rest promised to believers does not come until the Lord's coming when, at the same time, unbelievers are judged. (2 Thess. 1.6-10)

6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you.

7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,

8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

9 And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.

2 Thess. 2.1

vision from of a man, some years ago
gather together cf. Matt. 24:3
To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:
The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

c. The prophecies of Revelation favor a posttribulation rapture.

- 1) No rapture of the church is mentioned before the tribulation begins.

- 2) No explicit mention of the church in Rev. 4-19 is insignificant.

- 3) The implicit presence of the church in Rev. 4-19 is clear from the descriptions of the believers in these chapters.

Rev. 1.9; 6.9; 12.17; 14.12^a; 20.4; Rev. 14.13

9 ^aI, John, your ^bbrother and ^cfellow-partaker in the tribulation and ^dkingdom and ^eperseverance *which are* in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos, ^fbecause of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

9 And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw ^aunderneath the ^baltar the ^csouls of those who had been slain ^dbecause of the word of God, and because of the ^etestimony which they had maintained;

17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to ^amake war with the rest of her ^boffspring, who ^ckeep the commandments of God and ^dhold to the testimony of Jesus.

12 Here is ^athe ^bperseverance of the ^csaints who ^dkeep the commandments of God and ^etheir faith in Jesus.

4 And I saw ^athrones, and ^bthey sat upon them, and ^cjudgment was given to them. And I saw ^dthe souls of those who had been ^ebeheaded because of the ^ftestimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not ^gworshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the ^hmark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they ⁱcame to life and ^jreigned with Christ for a thousand years.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, ^aBlessed are the dead who ^bdie in the Lord ^cfrom now on!" "Yes," ^dsays the Spirit, "that they may ^erest from their labors, for their ^fdeeds follow with them."

of Luke 21²⁴ what does capturing mean?

5. In conclusion, then,
- a. The burden of proof is upon a non-posttributitional position.
 - b. The pretributitional passages and principles cannot bear that burden.
 - c. The central sections of Scripture relevant to the issue favor a posttributitional rapture.

D. The pretribulational position.

1. The fact of a "burden of proof" is significant but not decisive.

a. It may tell us only what has been revealed at a certain time most clearly.

1) The tri-unity of God

2) The deity of the Messiah

3) The transitional stage of the future kingdom

b. The passages creating the burden of proof may certainly harmonize with a pretribulational rapture.

1) Dan. 12.1-3

“**N**OW 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 ^asuch as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the ^bbook, will be rescued.

2 “And ^amany of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, ^bthese to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting ^ccontempt.

3 “And ^athose who have ^binsight will ^cshine brightly like the brightness of the ^dexpanse of heaven, and those who ^elead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

2) Rev. 20.4-6

4 And I saw ^athrones, and ^bthey sat upon them, and ^cjudgment was given to them. And I saw ^dthe souls of those who had been ^ebeheaded because of the ^ftestimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not ^gworshipped the beast or his image, and had not received the ^hmark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they ⁱcame to life and ^jreigned with Christ for a thousand years.

5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. ^kThis is the first resurrection.

6 ^lBlessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the ^msecond death has no power, but they will be ⁿpriests of God and of Christ and will ^oreign with Him for a thousand years.

3) 1 Cor. 15.23-25

23 But each in his own order: Christ ^athe first fruits, after that ^bthose who are Christ's at ^cHis coming,

24 then *comes* the end, when He delivers up ^athe kingdom to the ^bGod and Father, when He has abolished ^call rule and all authority and power.

25 For He must reign ^auntil He has put all His enemies under His feet.

2. The passages cited in support of a pretribulation are of uneven value.

a. The removal of the restrainer in 2 Thess. 2.6-8 is inconclusive.

(1) The restrainer may be something other than the Holy Spirit.

(2) The Holy Spirit need not be identified with the church.

(3) The Holy Spirit is still active in the tribulation.

b. The promise of Christ's coming in Jn. 14.1-3 is inconclusive.

- c. The promise of the rapture in 1 Thess. 4.13-18 is inconclusive.
- (1) The comfort in the passage is not a pretribulation rapture but with Christ's coming a reunion with loved ones, whose rewards would not be diminished because of their deaths before that coming.
 - (2) The passage does not favor a posttribulation rapture either. Even if "to meet" (apantēsis) suggested in the original a "meeting in order to accompany back", a seven year interlude would be but a short time in the prophetic perspective to precede the accompaniment of Christ back.
- d. The promise of deliverance in 1 Thess. 5.1-11 favors a pretribulation rapture.

Now as to the ^atimes and the epochs, brethren, you ^bhave no need of anything to be written to you.

2 For you yourselves know full well that ^athe day of the Lord ¹will come ^bjust like a thief in the night.

3 While they are saying, "^aPeace and safety!" then ^{1b}destruction ²will come upon them suddenly like ^cbirth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4 But you, brethren, are not in ^adarkness, that the day should overtake you ^{1b}like a thief;

5 for you are all ^asons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of ^bdarkness;

6 so then let us not ^asleep as ^{1b}others do, but let us be alert and ^{2c}sober.

7 For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get ^adrunk at night.

8 But since ^awe are of *the* day, let us ^bbe ¹sober, having put on the ^cbreastplate of ^dfaith and love, and as a ^ehelmet, the ¹hope of salvation.

9 For God has not destined us for ^awrath, but for ^bobtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 ^awho died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.

11 Therefore ¹encourage one another, and ^abuild up one another, just as you also are doing.

(1) The wrath in view to which Christians are not destined is tribulation wrath.

- (a) The lexical evidence predisposes one to think of eschatological wrath more than eternal punishment.

Matt. 3.7

7 But when he saw many of the ^aPharisees and ^bSadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You ^cbrood of vipers, who warned you to flee from ^dthe wrath to come?"

1 Thess. 2.16

16 ^ahindering us from speaking to the Gentiles ^bthat they might be saved; with the result that they always ^cfill up the measure of their sins. But ^dwrath has come upon them ^lto the utmost.

Rom. 2.5

5 But ^lbecause of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart ^ayou are storing up wrath for yourself ^bin the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Rom. 1.18

18 For ^athe wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who ^bsuppress the truth ^lin unrighteousness,

Rom. 2.8

8 but to those who are ^aselfishly ambitious and ^bdo not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

Rom. 3.5

5 But if our unrighteousness ^ldemonstrates the righteousness of God, ^bwhat shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (^cI am speaking in human terms.)

Rom. 4.15

15 for ^athe Law brings about wrath, but ^bwhere there is no law, neither is there violation.

Rom. 5.9

9 Much more then, having now been justified ^lby His blood, we shall be saved ^bfrom the wrath of God through Him.

Rom. 9.22

^l 22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much ^apatience vessels of wrath ^bprepared for destruction?

Rom. 12.19

19 ^aNever take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY, SAYS THE LORD."

Rom. 13.4, 5

4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.

5 Wherefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

Rev. 6.16, 17

16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;

17 for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?"

Rev. 11.18

18 "And the nations were enraged, and Thy wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Thy bond-servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Thy name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."

Rev. 14.10

10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

Rev. 16.19

19 And the great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.

Rev. 19.15

15 And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

- (b) The association of it with "times and seasons" in the introduction to the passage suggests the end time tribulation wrath preceding the kingdom.

Dan. 2.21

21 "And it is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men,

Dan. 7.12

12 "As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.

Acts 1.7

7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority:

(c) The occurrence of it in the "day of the Lord" suggests the tribulation wrath which reveals God's glory.

(d) The coming of it "like a thief in the night" suggests the tribulation wrath which comes suddenly and dramatically upon a surprised world.

Matt. 24.43

43 "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

2 Pet. 3.10

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

(e) The coming of it "when people are saying peace and safety" suggests the tribulation wrath which comes upon a world anticipating tranquillity.

Matt. 24.37-39

7 "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like days of Noah.

8 "For as in those days which were before the flood they

39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of Man

Lk. 17.26-30

26 "And just as it happened ^bin the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man:

27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 "It was the same as happened in ^athe days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building;

29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and ^lbrimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

30 "It will be ^ljust the same on the day that the Son of Man ^ais revealed.

2 Pet. 3.3-10

3 ^aAnd let not your adornment be external *only*—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, and putting on dresses;

4 but *let it be* ^athe hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, ^awho hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands.

6 Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, ^acalling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right ^lwithout being frightened by any fear.

7 ^aYou husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker ^bvessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow-heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

8 ^lTo sum up, ^alet all be harmonious, sympathetic, ^bbrotherly, ^ckind-hearted, and ^dhumble in spirit;

9 ^anot returning evil for evil, or ^binsult for insult, but ^lgiving a ^cblessing instead; for ^dyou were called for the very purpose that you might ^einherit a blessing.

10 For

"^aLET HIM WHO MEANS TO LOVE LIFE AND SEE GOOD DAYS
REFRAIN HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM
SPEAKING GUILE.

(f) The coming of it "as birth pangs upon a woman with child" suggests the tribulation wrath which comes suddenly upon the world.

Matt. 24.8

8 "But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth-pangs.

Mk. 13.8

8 "For nation will arise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: there will be earthquakes in various places:

Acts 2.24

24 "And ^aGod raised Him up again, putting an end to the ²agony of death, since it ^bwas impossible for Him to be held in its power.

1 Thess. 5.3

3 While they are saying, "^aPeace and safety!" then ^bdestruction ²will come upon them suddenly like ^cbirth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

(g) The structural equation of the destruction of the day of the Lord in 1 Thess. 5.1-3 with the wrath of 1 Thess. 5.9 confirms that the wrath is the tribulation wrath of the end time:

A They will be surprised, (5.2-3)

B Who live in darkness (and are overtaken like a thief in the night)

C They shall not escape (5.3)

A¹ You will not be surprised (5.4)

B¹ Who live in the light (and are not overtaken like a thief in the night (5.4)

(Live as children of light, awake;

but whether awake or asleep...) (5.6-8, 10)

C¹ You are not destined for wrath. (5.9)

not considered if

(2) The promise of no destiny to tribulation wrath is likely a promise of physical deliverance from it.

(a) The meaning of "destined" (etheto, tithemi) suggests this.

(b) The antithesis of it to "escape" in 5.3 suggests this.

- (c) The equation of it to "deliver" in the structure of the book suggests this. (1 Thess. 1.9, 10)

<u>Past</u>		<u>Present</u>		<u>Future</u>	
how you turned to God from idols		to serve the living and true God		to wait for his son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus	the one who delivers us from the coming wrath
1	3	4.1	4.12	4.13	18
					5.1
					11

- (d) The better harmony of it with the condition of the promise, "whether we wake or sleep".

- (3) The conclusion nevertheless may be challenged.

- (e) The promise of deliverance in Rev. 3.10 favors a pretribulation rapture.

- (1) The basis of the promise presents a preliminary problem.

- (a) It may be evidence that a rapture is not in view in the promise.

- (b) It may be evidence that faithfulness is a prerequisite for surviving the tribulation, for deliverance from the great wrath at the end and therefore be evidence that a post-tribulation rapture is in view.

Matt. 24.13

13 "But the one who endures to the end, it is he who shall be saved.

Lk. 21.34-36

34 "Be on guard, that your hearts may not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day come on you suddenly like a trap;

35 for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.

36 "But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

- (c) It may, on the other hand, be harmonized with a pretribulation rapture, and be either
 (i) a Johannine designation of every believer
 (.) Jn. 8.51

51 "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."

(..) Jn. 14.23, 24

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.

24 "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

(...) 1 Jn. 2.3

3 And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

- (ii) a designation of a faithful believer who is promised a reward that is, at least in some respects, common to every believer.

(.) Some of the passages above describe a maturing believer in John and 1 Jn.

(..) Some of the rewards promised overcomers are perhaps in some respects common to every believer.

Rev. 2.7

7 ^aHe who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. ^bTo him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of ^cthe tree of life, which is in the ^dParadise of God.'

Rev. 2.11

11 ^aHe who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. ^bHe who overcomes shall not be hurt by the ^csecond death.'

Rev. 3.5

5 ^aHe who overcomes shall thus be clothed in ^bwhite garments; and I will not ^cerase his name from the book of life, and ^dI will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.

Rev. 3.20

20 'Behold, I stand ^aat the door and ^bknock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, ^cI will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

(2) The extent of the promise presents a preliminary problem.

a) It may be evidence that the promise is only to the church at Philadelphia.

b) It may, on the other hand, be argued that the promise to one church is a promise to all.

(i) The book as a whole is addressed to the seven churches.

Rev. 1.4, 11

4 ^aJohn to ^bthe seven churches that are in ^cAsia: ^dGrace to you and peace, from ^eHim who is and who was and who is to come; and from ^fthe seven Spirits who are before His throne;

11 saying, ^a"Write in a ^bbook what you see, and send it to the ^bseven churches: to ^cEphesus and to ^dSmyrna and to ^ePergamum and to ^fThyatira and to ^gSardis and to ^hPhiladelphia and to ⁱLaodicea."

(ii) The churches are apparently representative.

(.) Their number testifies to this.

(..) The omission of certain well-known churches testifies to this.

(iii) Each individual letter concluded with an admonition to all the churches. "Let him who has ears to hear, hear what the Spirit says to the seven churches". All the churches were to heed all the letters.

(3) The meaning of the promise favors a pretribulation rapture.

(a) The meaning of "I will keep from (tēreō ek) more likely means "preserve outside" than "protect through".

(i) Townsends lexical data supports this.

(ii) The other N.T. usage of this in John 17.15 supports this.

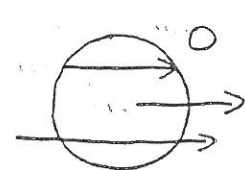
15 "I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them ¹from ^{2a}the evil one.

(iii) The choice of this phrase over others clearly meaning "protect through" favors this.

- (.) Tēreō dia I will keep through
- (..) aireō ek I will take out of
- (...) tēreō en I will preserve in
- (....) tēreō ek I will preserve out from

*Not a tribulation rapture
to preserve a tribulation
preserving the rapture*

*Cl. 100
tribulation
support of
750
tribulation*



(b) The meaning of hour (ōra) may easily refer to a time period the length of the tribulation.
(i) It may at times refer to a literal hour.
John 1.39

39 He said to them, "Come, and you will see." They

John 4.6

6 and Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the ¹sixth hour.

John 11.9

9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.

John 19.14

14 Now it was ^athe day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the ¹sixth hour. And he ^esaid to the Jews, "Behold, ^cyour King!"

Rev. 9.15

15 And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were ^areleased, so that they might kill a ^bthird of ¹mankind.

(ii) It may at times refer to a general period of time.

John 2.4

4 And Jesus ^esaid to her, "Woman, ¹what do I have to do with you? ^cMy hour has not yet come."

John 4.21, 23

21 Jesus ^esaid to her, "Woman, believe Me, ^aan hour is coming when ^bneither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father.

23 "But ^aan hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father ^bin spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

John 5.25, 28, 35

25 "Truly, truly, I say to you, ^aan hour is coming and now is, when ^bthe dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who ^chear shall live.

28 "Do not marvel at this; for ^aan hour is coming, in which ^ball who are in the tombs shall hear His voice,

35 "He was ^athe lamp that was burning and was shining and you ^bwere willing to rejoice for a while in his light.

other passages: John 7.30; 8.20; 12.23; 13.1; 16.2, 4, 21, 25, 32; 17.1; 1 Jn. 2.18; Rev. 14.7, 15.

(c) The meaning of "testing" favors reference to the tribulation wrath preceding the kingdom.

(i) The article perhaps suggests it is the well-known tribulation testing of 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 ^asuch as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the ^bbook, will be rescued.

Zech. 14.1-4

BEHOLD, a ^aday is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you.

2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the ^ahouses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city.

3 Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as ^bwhen He fights on a day of battle.

4 And in that day His feet will ^astand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be ^bsplit in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

Rev. 6-19

(ii) The extent of the testing "upon all the earth" (*epi tēs oikoumenēs holēs*) suggests it is the worldwide tribulation testing.

(.) The phrase may refer to a limited part of the earth.

Lk. 2.1

NOW it came about in those days that a decree went out from ^aCaesar Augustus, that a census be taken of ^ball ^cthe inhabited earth.

Acts 11.28

28 And one of them named ^aAgabus stood up and *began* to indicate ^bby the Spirit that there would certainly be a great

Acts 17.6

6 And when they did not find them, they *began* ^adragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have upset ^bthe world have come here also;

Acts 19.27

27 "And not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess ¹Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of ^{2a}Asia and ^bthe ³world worship should even be dethroned from her magnificence."

Acts 24.5

5 "For we have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout ¹the world, and a ringleader of the ^asect of the Nazarenes.

(..) The phrase normally refers to all the earth, particularly in its other two references in Revelation.

Matt. 24.14

14 "And this ^agospel of the kingdom ^bshall be preached in the whole ^{1c}world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.

Acts 17.31

31 because He has fixed ^aa day in which ^bHe will judge ^{1c}the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has ^dappointed, having furnished proof to all men ^{2b}by ^eraising Him from the dead."

Rom. 10.18

18 But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have:

"^aTHEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH,
AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE ¹WORLD."

Heb. 1.6

6 And ¹when He again ^abrings the first-born into ^{2b}the world, He says,

"^cAND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM."

Heb. 2.5

5 For He did not subject to angels ^{1a}the world to come, concerning which we are speaking.

Rev. 12.5 12:9 "Satan exerts to deceive the world"

5 And she gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is to ^{1a}rule all the ²nations with a rod of iron; and her child was ^bcaught up to God and to His throne.

Rev. 16.14

14 for they are ^aspirits of demons, ^bperforming signs, which go out to the kings of the ^cwhole ^lworld, to ^dgather them together for the war of the ^egreat day of God, the Almighty.

(...) The worldwide testing contrasts the brief local testing of Rev. 2.10.

10 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be ^atested, and you will have tribulation ^bten days. Be ^cfaithful until death, and I will give you ^dthe crown of life.

(iii) The purpose of the testing "to test the ones who dwell upon the earth" (tous katoikountas epi tēs gēs) suggests it is the tribulation testing designed to come upon the unbelievers.

(.) The term likely originated in Isaiah's little apocalypse where its virtual Hebrew equivalent yōšbē hā'āretz refers to those upon the earth in the tribulation period.

(..) The term in Revelation certainly seems to be used consistently as a designation of unbelievers.

Rev. 6.10

10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "^aHow long, O ^bLord, ^choly and true, ²wilt Thou refrain from ^djudging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

... "earth dwellers" - unbelievers

Rev. 8.13

13 And I looked, and I heard ^lan eagle flying in ^amid-heaven, saying with a loud voice, "^bWoe, woe, woe, to ^cthose who dwell on the earth; because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the ^dthree angels who are about to sound!"

Rev. 11.10

10 And ^athose who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry; and they will ^bsend gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented ^athose who dwell on the earth.

Rev. 12.12

12 "For this reason, ^arejoice, O heavens and ^byou who dwell in them. ^cWoe to the earth and the sea; because ^dthe devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that

Rev. 13.8, 12, 14

8 And all who ^adwell on the earth will worship him, *every one* ^bwhose name has not been ¹written ^cfrom the foundation of the world in the book of life of ^dthe Lamb who has been slain.

12 And he ^aexercises all the authority of the first beast ^bin his presence. And he makes ^cthe earth and those who dwell in it to ^dworship the first beast, whose ^efatal wound was healed.

14 And he ^adeceives ^bthose who dwell on the earth because of ^cthe signs which it was given him to perform ^din the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who ^ehad the ^fwound of the sword and has come to life.

Rev. 14.6

6 And I saw another angel flying in ^amidheaven, having ^ban eternal gospel to preach to ^cthose who ¹live on the earth, and to ^devery nation and tribe and tongue and people;

Rev. 17. 2, 8

2 with whom ^athe kings of the earth committed *acts of immorality*, and ^bthose who dwell on the earth were ^cmade drunk with the wine of her immorality."

8 "The beast that you saw ^awas and is not, and is about to ^bcome up out of the ^cabyss and ¹to ^dgo to destruction. And ^ethose who dwell on the earth will ^fwonder, ^gwhose name has not been written in the book of life ^hfrom the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that ^ahe was and is not and will come.

(...) The purpose of testing unbelievers contrasts the purpose of the testing of believers in the local testing of Rev. 2.10.

10 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be ^atested, and you will have tribulation ^bten days. Be ^cfaithful until death, and I will give you ^dthe crown of life.

(d) The conclusion is therefore that believers will be preserved outside the sphere of tribulation testing. Only a pretribulation rapture could accomplish this.

(e) This conclusion is tacitly confirmed by the remainder of Revelation.

(i) After Chapters 2 and 3 there is no mention of the church until after the tribulation judgments. This argument from silence is significant for several reasons - *if you are expecting to hear something*

(ii) The pretribulation fulfillment of this promise perhaps harmonizes better with the many martyrs of Rev. 6.9-11.

9 And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw ^aunderneath the ^baltar the ^csouls of those who had been slain ^dbecause of the word of God, and because of the ^etestimony which they had maintained;

10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O ^{1b}Lord, ^choly and true, ²wilt Thou refrain from ^djudging and avenging our blood on ^ethose who dwell on the earth?"

11 And ^athere was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should ^brest for a little while longer, ^cuntil *the number* of their fellow-servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, should be ^dcompleted also.

3. The principles cited in support of a pretribulation rapture are of uneven value.

a. The distinction between Israel and the church is significant but not decisive.

4. The three principal sections of Scripture cited in support of a posttribulation rapture are not convincing.

a. The Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24 is unclear with respect to the rapture and favors, if anything, a pretribulation rapture.

(1) It is unclear with respect to what is being described when "one is taken and one is left". (Matt. 24.36-44)

36 "But ^aof that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

37 "For ¹the ^{2a}coming of the Son of Man will be ^bjust like the days of Noah.

38 "For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were ^amarrying and giving in marriage, until the day that ^bNOAH ENTERED THE ARK,

39 and they did not ¹understand until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the ^{2a}coming of the Son of Man be.

40 "Then there shall be two men in the field; one ¹will be taken, and one ¹will be left.

41 "^aTwo women *will be* grinding at the ^{1b}mill; one ²will be taken, and one ²will be left.

42 "Therefore ^abe on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

43 "But ¹be sure of this, that ^aif the head of the house had known ^bat what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be ²broken into.

44 "For this reason ^ayou be ready too; for ^bthe Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think *He will*.

(a) It is sometimes argued that a judgment at the end of the tribulation is in view.

(i) The parallelism to the flood of Noah suggests that the ones taken are taken in judgment not in rapture.

(ii) The parallelism to the flood of Noah also suggests that the ones who remain are the ones who inherit the earth.

(b) It is, on the other hand, argued that a rapture is in view.

(i) The meaning of "taken" (paralam~banō) in "one shall be taken and one left" is different from taken (airō) in the "flood took them all away" and suggests either rapture or reception into the kingdom.

(.) The word suggests subsequent accompaniment or association with the one taken.

(..) Two days later the word is used to describe what may be the rapture: "I will come again and receive (paralambanō) you to myself". (Jn. 14.1-3)

(ii) The instantaneousness of the event suggests a rapture rather than judgment.

(2) It is unclear with respect to when "one is taken and one is left."

(a) It is argued that it must be after (most of) the tribulation has passed.

(i) The analogy to the days of Noah implies there have been signs of impending judgment.

(ii) The sequence of first the tribulation events (Matt. 24.1-36) and then this event suggests it occurs at the end of the tribulation.

(b) It is argued that it must be before or as the tribulation begins.

(i) The analogy to the days of Noah explicitly identifies the point of comparison as the period of normalcy of the coming of judgment. No signs would precede it.

(ii) The form and content of the chapter suggest that these verses describe when all the events ("these things") of the tribulation will break upon the world.

(.) Chiasm is a common literary pattern in Matthew.

(..) This chapter is apparently chiastically arranged.

(...) The content confirms that these verses answer the question "when will these things be?".

(3) It is unclear with respect to who is in-
volved when "one is taken and one is left".

(a) It is argued that unbelievers are taken and believers remain.

(i) The analogy to the flood of Noah suggests that unbelievers are taken but believers remain to inherit the earth.

(ii) The interchange in Lk. 17.35-37 suggests the ones taken are unbelievers taken in judgment.

35 "There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left."

36 (See marginal note.¹)

36 ¹Some mss. add verse 36.
Two men will be in the field;
one will be taken and the
other will be left. cf. Matt.
24:40

37 And answering they ^asaid to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "^aWhere the body is, there also will the vultures be gathered."

(b) It is argued that believers are taken and unbelievers remain.

(i) The distinction in the words for "taken" suggests that believers are "taken" or "received" into the kingdom.

(ii) The interchange in Lk. 17.35-37 suggests the ones taken are believers.

(4) Conclusion

b. The Thessalonian epistles favor either a pretribulation rapture or are unclear.

(1) 1 Thess. 4.13-18 is unclear. See previous notes.

(2) 1 Thess. 5.1-11 favors a pretribulation rapture. See previous notes.

(3) 2 Thess. 1.7 is unclear.

7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,

(a) The panoramic view of the passage allows for the merging of the events.

(b)

(4) 2 Thess. 2.1-3 is unclear.

NOW we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him,

2 that you may 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,

(a) It is argued that since the day of the Lord will not come until after at least the middle of the tribulation, then so must the rapture come then, since it is part of the day of the Lord.

(b) It is argued, on the other hand, that this passage easily harmonizes with a pretribulation rapture.

(i) It is pointed out that "day of Christ" may be the better reading.

(ii) It is pointed out that the "day of the Lord" is not said to follow the revelation of the man of sin, but rather that it shall not have come unless that has happened.

(iii) It is pointed out that alarm on that the day of the Lord has come makes better sense if the Thessalonians were expecting a pretribulation rapture.

C. The book of Revelation favors a pretribulation rapture.