

# Topical Study: *The Timing of the Rapture*

Sunday, January 1, 2012

Various Scriptures (S-948-KL)

(All Scriptures are from the New King James Version (NKJV) unless otherwise indicated.)

## Scriptures that state that Christians will be taken off of the Earth while still alive.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 15:

1 Corinthians 15:50 – 52: *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep [die], but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.***

In the future, a trumpet blast from heaven will occur and:

1. The bodies of those Christians who have died in the past will be raised to join their souls which are already in heaven with God (2 Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:23). Their new bodies will never die again.
2. Those Christians who are alive at this time will be “changed” – also given new bodies that will never die.

1 Corinthians 15:53 – 57: *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Turn to 1 Thessalonians 4:

1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 15: *But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep [a believer who has died], lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 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 by no means precede those who are asleep.*

Those who die in belief are not missing out on something. There is no reason to sorrow as if they are forever gone. But unbelievers who die are forever separated from God.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 – 18: *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, **and with the trumpet of God.** And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds **to meet the LORD in the air.** And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

(Note: This is the same sequence of resurrection as in 1 Corinthians 15.)

The phrase “*caught up*” comes from the Greek word *har-pad’-zo*; from a derivative of “to seize” (in various applications) translated by the King James into *catch* (away, up), *pluck*, *pull*, *take* (by force).

Latin vulgate word is *rapiemur*, from which we derive the word “Rapture.” Therefore, the word Rapture does come from the Bible, referring to “*caught up*.”

Important to note that these scriptures say that we are caught up *to meet the LORD in the air*.

## **But in the Second Coming, Jesus comes to the earth *with* the saints**

Jude 14 and 15: *Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”*

Zechariah 14:1-5: *Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst. Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with You.*

Matthew 25:31 – 33: *“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.*

At the Rapture, the Church (all believers on Earth at that time), translates into Heaven (where Jesus is) to wait for the Tribulation Period to play out on Earth (the Pre-Trib view). After the Tribulation, the Church accompanies Jesus at his physical return to Earth. From the moment the Rapture takes place, we (the Church) will *“always be with the LORD.”*

## **Reasons for believing the Rapture is *before* the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel (commonly referred to as the Seven Year Tribulation Period).**

Turn to Revelation 3. (Note: Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 are messages from God to the churches on Earth. While the churches mentioned by name in these chapters were actual First Century cities / churches, the messages were not only to them specifically, but also to future churches of the same “type.”)

Revelation 3:7 – 10: *“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, ‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, **He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens**:. I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie — indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept My command to persevere, **I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.**”*

God promises that He will keep the Philadelphia church from the global hour of trial. This could not have been referring to the actual church of Philadelphia in Paul’s day because there was no trial which came upon the whole world at that time. Rather Philadelphia is symbolic of the last days believing church, which God promises to keep from the hour of trial (known as the Tribulation Period).

Revelation 3:20 – 22: *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and **opens the door**, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

This is the very last time “church” or “churches” is used in the Book of Revelation until the last chapter where Jesus says he wanted the book of Revelation to be read by the churches. In all the judgments described in Revelation Chapters 6 through 19, the church is never mentioned. Persecuted believers during the tribulation are referred to as “Saints.” Revelation chapters 4 through 19 shift to an earthly Jewish, rather than a church, emphasis; consistent with the prophecy of Daniel Chapter 9:

Daniel 9:24: “*Seventy weeks are determined For **your people** [the Jews] and for your holy city [Jerusalem], to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.*”

Revelation 4:1: *After these things [the things of the Church Age] I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”*

“After these things” – To understand the meaning of this phrase, see Revelation 1:19 for the context. Why was John shown things on earth (the Church Age) and then pulled away into Heaven, at the sound of a trumpet, to record things that he sees (from Heaven) happening on Earth? Could this be a clue to the timing of the Rapture of the Church?

Turn to 1 Thessalonians 5 - The Rapture *must* happen before the wrath of God is poured out on the world:

1 Thessalonians 5:1 – 3: *But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the LORD [Second Coming to Earth] so comes as a thief in the night. For when **they** say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes **upon them**, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And **they** shall not escape.*

After the Church is gone, the earth’s inhabitants will believe that the world government and antichrist are bringing peace to the whole world. They will be greatly deceived and surprised when Jesus returns.

1 Thessalonians 5:4 – 8: *But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.*

We know that the formation of global government, finance and religion will not bring peace, and we know that we will not have to be here for the judgment and death that comes during the Tribulation Period.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 – 11: *For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that whether we wake [are alive] or sleep [have died], we should live together with Him [at the resurrection/rapture]. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

**Based on these verses and many more, nearly all Bible-believing Christians agree that the Rapture will happen before the wrath of God is poured out on earth.**

## Another Promise that God will Protect us from His Wrath

Turn to 2 Peter 2

2 Peter 2:4 – 11: *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly [Genesis 7-8]; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot [Genesis 18-19], who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to*

*day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) — then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.*

## **So when does the wrath of God start, so that we can know when the Church must be gone?**

Turn to Revelation 6

*Rev 6:1- 2: Now I saw when the Lamb [Jesus in Heaven] opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.” And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to Him, and He went out conquering and to conquer.*

This marks the beginning of the judgments that come to the earth. All the judgments of the Book of Revelation (seals, trumpets, bowls) are the result of Jesus opening the seals of the scroll. The opening of the seals symbolizes the outpouring of the wrath of God. For those of us who hold to the Pre-Trib view, we cannot be here (on Earth) for any part of this sequence. Those with a different view, maintain that the wrath of God does not actually begin until the sixth seal (Revelation 6:12-17).

*Revelation 6:12 – 17: I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”*

But *all* the seals are the result of Jesus’ wrath. The increased intensity of judgment finally awakens unbelieving man to acknowledging the wrath of God, just like during the plagues of Egypt, Pharaoh did not relent until the tenth plague.

*Exodus 12:31 – 32: Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, “Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the Lord as you have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also.”*

## **More on the Timing of the Rapture**

Turn to 2 Thessalonians 2

*2 Thessalonians 2:1 – 4: Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ [to Earth] and our gathering together to Him [Rapture], we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come [the final days of the Tribulation Period]. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [final days of the Tribulation Period – Jesus’ return] will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all*

*that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

The “Great” tribulation will not take place until after the Jewish temple is rebuilt and the antichrist world leader has defiled the temple declaring that he is god.

2 Thessalonians 2:5: *Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?*

About 40 years before John writes Revelation.

2 Thessalonians 2:6 – 7: *And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 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.*

The Holy Spirit (He) that is indwelling the believers on earth as salt and light.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 – 12: *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

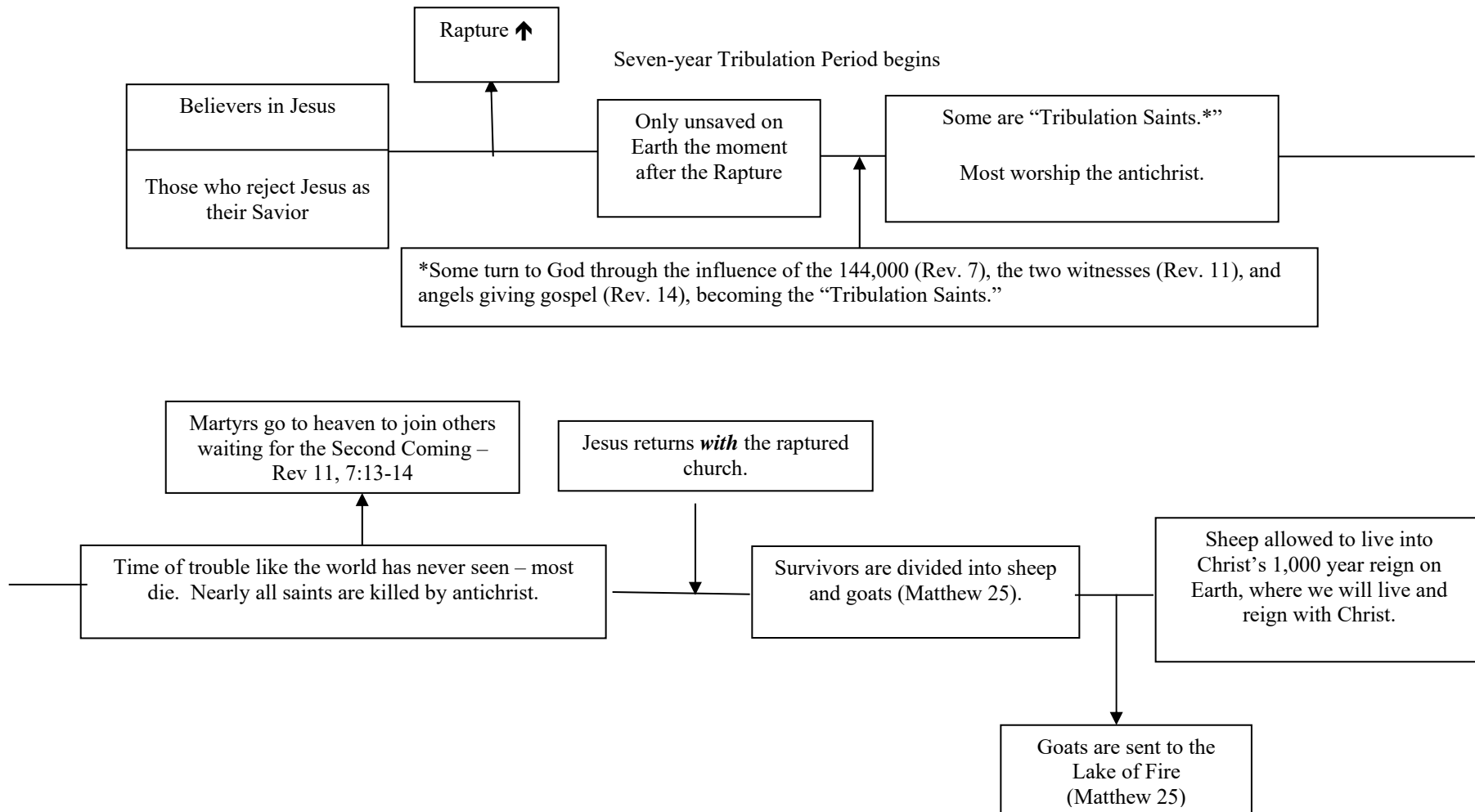
The Church is included in what is called the Bride of Christ in Revelation 19. How could Jesus subject His bride to the time of the tribulation where Jesus is unleashing judgments on the earth starting with the first seal? Jesus does not beat His wife before taking Her to heaven in the Rapture.

## Conclusion

Turn to Revelation 22

Revelation 22:13-21: *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.” Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.” And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. **Even so, come, Lord Jesus!** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

## PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE TIME LINE



### Pre-Wrath Rapture Timeline

