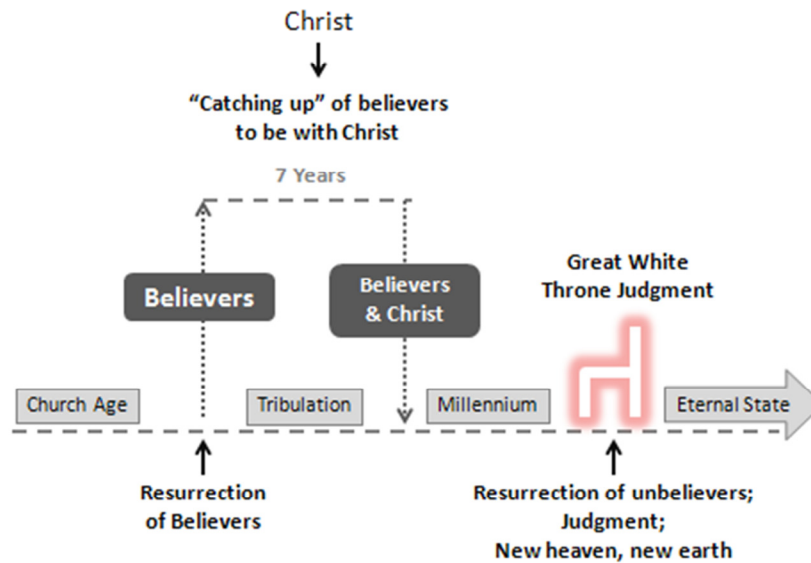


# WHAT ABOUT THE RAPTURE? 1/29/12 PM



1. There will be a time of *Great Tribulation* just prior to Christ's return to establish His kingdom. Matthew 24:4-28; Revelation 6-19

**Matthew 24:9** Then they will deliver you to *tribulation*, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.

**Matthew 24:15** "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),<sup>16</sup> then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.

This time is referred to as:

- ◆ The 70th week of Daniel cf Daniel 9:24ff
- ◆ The Time of Jacob's troubles cf Jeremiah 30:7; Romans 11:26
- ◆ The Day of the Lord 100+X

**Matthew 24:21** "For then there will be a *great tribulation*, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.

**Matthew 24:29-30** "But immediately after the *tribulation* of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.<sup>30</sup> "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

**Revelation 7:14** I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of *the great tribulation*, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

*The question is, "Will church-age Christians go through the Great Tribulation or will we be removed before it occurs?"*

2. God will remove His people from this world just prior to the Tribulation period. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53

a. This is commonly called the "Rapture."

The word "rapture" is not found in our English Bibles, but it describes a Biblical concept.

Like the word "Trinity"

Rapture- Latin "rapio"- a snatching away

**1 Thessalonians 4:16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.<sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-53** Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will 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 imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

This is called a mystery, but Christ's return to establish His Kingdom is frequently prophesied in the OT.

**b. God has promised to preserve church-age Christians from the wrath of the tribulation. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Revelation 3:10**

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

How will God protect Christians from His coming wrath?

God could either preserve us within the tribulation or take us out.

Revelation 3:10 'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, *I also will keep you from the hour of testing*, that *hour* which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

Kept from the hour of testing, not protected within

**3:13** This is made to all the churches

**c. But the Bible also teaches that there will be Christians in the tribulation who will undergo tremendous persecution and martyrdom. Revelation 6:9-11; 14:13**

Christians are certainly not preserved within the tribulation from suffering and persecution.

But many believers are martyred during the Great Tribulation period. cf Revelation 6:9-11

Jesus is the one who breaks the seals on all the judgments.

Even the wrath of the Antichrist is ultimately God's wrath.

But God promises that we won't face His wrath on the day of the Lord

Four possible solutions

**1.) God contradicts Himself.**

He lied to the Thessalonians

**2.) Only a special group of Christians are raptured.  
(Partial rapture)**

**1 Thessalonians 5:9-10** For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.

**3.) Christians will be protected from God's wrath, but not the wrath of the Antichrist.**

But all of the wrath of the tribulation is ultimately God's judgment upon the earth.

It is Christ who opens the Seal Judgments which includes the bringing forth of the Antichrist.  
Revelation 5:2-5; 6:1ff

The sword, famine, beasts, and plagues are often spoken of as God's judgment.

What's more, it wouldn't be an encouragement to church age believers to tell them that though they won't be killed by God's wrath, they will be killed by the Antichrist's wrath.

**4.) The church age saints are raptured, but those who come to Christ during the tribulation will face suffering and persecution.**

*But you may ask, "Who are the tribulation saints and where do they come from if all of the church-age Christians are gone?"*

Two supernatural witnesses Revelation 11:3ff

Angel flying over the earth with the everlasting gospel. Revelation 14:6

144,000 Jewish evangelists Revelation 7; 14

**d. The best explanation is that church-age Christians will be raptured from the earth just prior to the start of the Great Tribulation.**

- 1.) This best explains how God can exempt church age Christians from the *wrath* experienced by believers who are living during the tribulation. 1 Thessalonians 5:9 cf Revelation 6:9-11
- 2.) This explains why the church is not mentioned in Revelation 4-18.
- 3.) A pretribulation rapture explains who will populate the coming millennial kingdom. cf Mt 22:30
- 4.) The rapture is called a mystery while Christ's coming to establish His Kingdom is clearly taught in the Old Testament. 1 Corinthians 15:51

The second coming is promised throughout the OT. cf Isa 9:7; Dan 7:13-14, 27

3. There are a number of differences between the rapture and Christ's second coming.

**RAPTURE**

**SECOND COMING**

Removes believers	Removes unbelievers
Jesus returns to heaven	Jesus comes to earth
Jesus claims a bride	Jesus brings a bride
Brings on tribulation	Brings in a kingdom
Imminent (No signs)	Preceded by many signs
Relates to the church	Relates to Israel & the world
A mystery (Revealed in the New Testament)	Revealed in the Old Testament
Believers are rewarded	Unbelievers are judged
Leaves creation unchanged	Many changes in creation
Before a time of wrath	After God's wrath
Only believers involved	All are affected
Believers go into Christ's presence	Believers go into an earthly kingdom

**What Difference Does It Make?**

**1. Preparation**

Are you ready?

**2. Comfort I Thess 4:16-18**

**3. Purity I John 3:2-3; cf 2:28**

**1 John 3:2** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

**4. Steadfastness I Corinthians 3:13-15; 9:32-27; 15:58; Galatians 6:9**

**Galatians 6:9** Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

**5. Hope**

New life, new body, new home, new nature, new relationship