



The Rapture

THE RAPTURE

- 1 Thess 4:15-18 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be **caught up** (Greek: harpazō) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.



THE RAPTURE

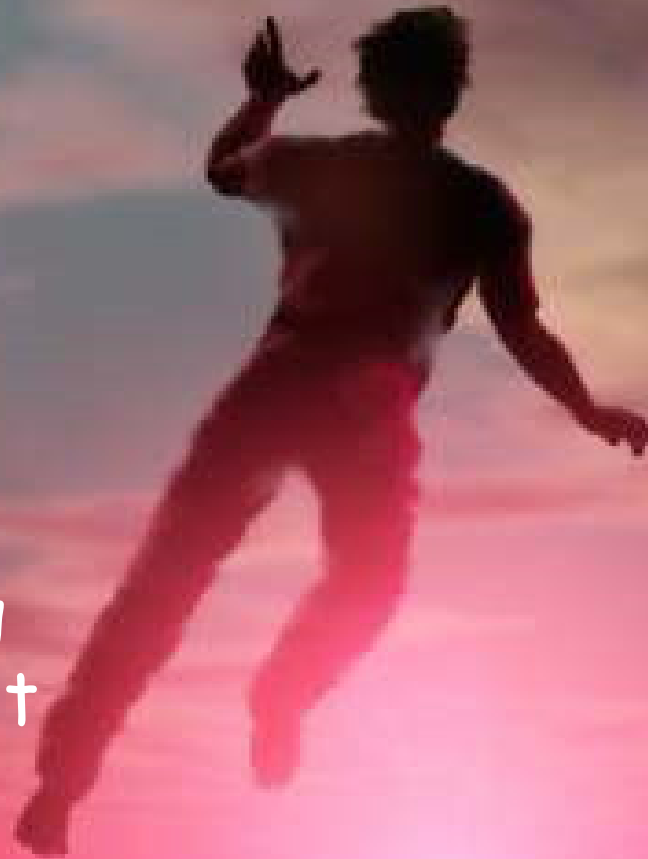
- ❑ Some critics of the doctrine of the Rapture allege that the word 'rapture' is not used in the Bible. While this is true in the English Bible, it is certainly not true of the Scriptures in Latin.
- ❑ 'Rapture', in the context of eschatology, is an English word derived from the Latin verb rapio, found in the Vulgate (i.e. Jerome's) rendering of 1 Thess 4:17.¹
- ❑ Raptus¹ is Jerome's translation of the Koine Greek word harpazō, which means "caught up", "taken away", "abduct", "to seize, carry off by force", "to snatch out or away".

¹ ...deinde nos qui vivimus qui relinquimur simul rapiemur cum illis in nubibus obviam Domino in aera et sic semper cum Domino erimus. (NOTE: The root for the Latin word 'rapiemur' is 'rapio'.)

HARPAZŌ

- ❑ 'Harpazō' is also used in Acts 8:39 where it describes the transporting of Philip suddenly from Gaza to Azotus.
 - Acts 8:39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord **suddenly took** (harpazō) Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again...
- ❑ It is used of Paul being caught up to the third heaven:
 - 1 Cor 12:2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was **caught up** (harpazō) to the third heaven.
- ❑ And again it is used of the man-child being "snatched up (harpazō) to God and to his throne." (Rev 12:5)

In similar fashion, 1 Thess 4:17 tells us that we who are still alive at the time of Jesus' coming will be "caught up" (harpazō) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.



Dominic Jones

- Premillennialists hold 3 main views on the timing on the Rapture (Jesus' coming for His church)

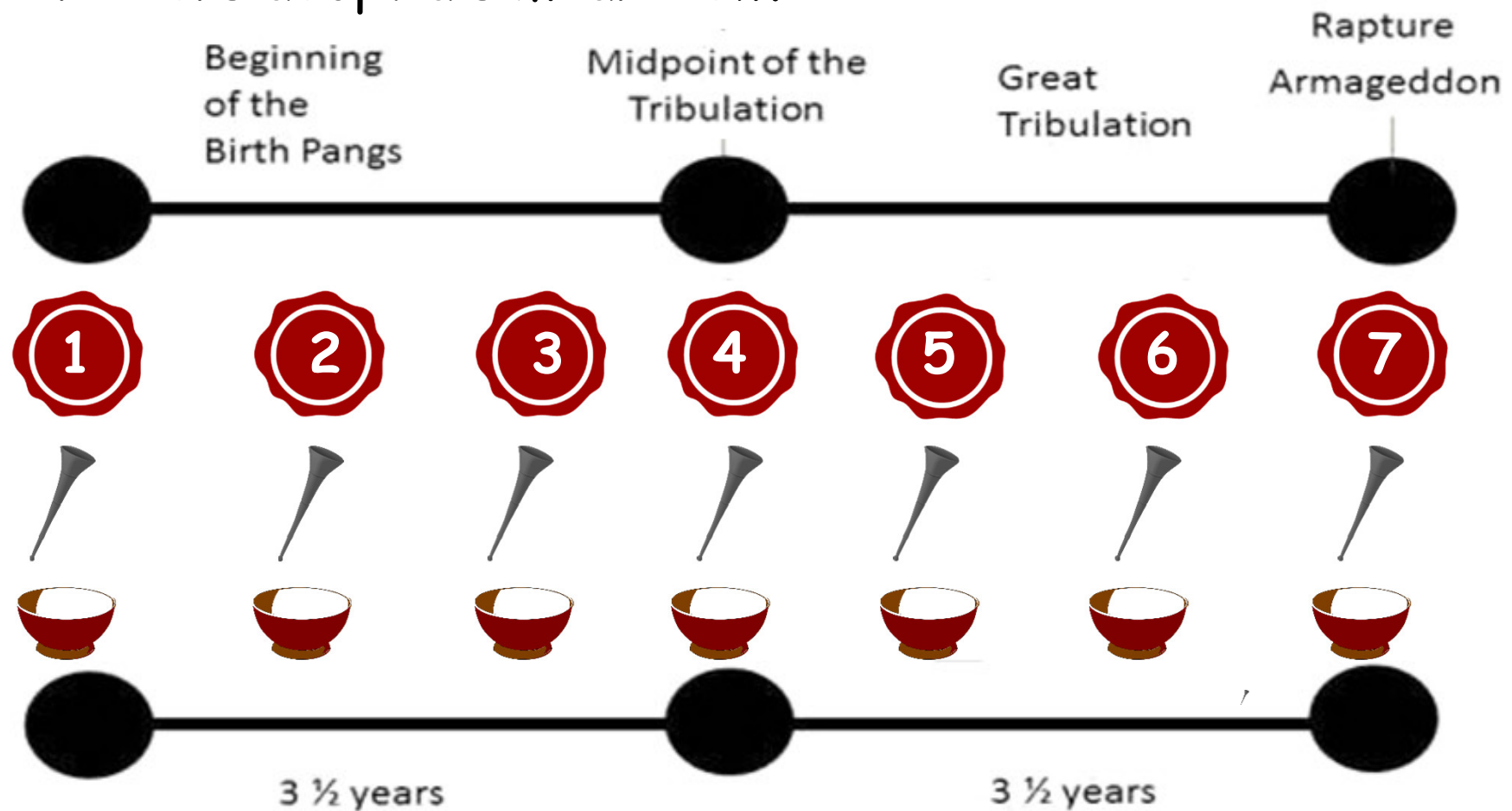


TIMING OF THE RAPTURE

- ❑ In the Amillennial and Postmillennial views, as well as in the Post-Tribulation Premillennial position, there are no distinctions in the timing of the rapture. These views regard the Rapture as described in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 as either identical to the Second Coming of Jesus as described in Matthew 24:29-31, or as a meeting in the air with Jesus that immediately precedes his Second Coming to the earth. **Within Premillennialism, the Pre-Tribulation position is the predominant view that distinguishes between the Rapture and Second Coming as two events.** There are also two minor positions within Premillennialism that differ with regard to the timing of the rapture, the Mid-Tribulation view and the Partial Rapture view.¹

¹ Wikipedia

- Do the seals, trumpets, bowls happen concurrently or do the seals occur first, trumpets second, and finally the bowls? In order to solve timing problems with their view, some Post-Trib adherents claim that the bowls are the same as the trumpets and seals, simply restated. Some Pre-Tribbers adopt a similar view.



THE LAST TRUMPET

- ❑ The following scripture indicates that the bowls are unique judgments. If the bowls were the last plagues, what were the first ones - if indeed they are identical to the trumpets.
 - Rev 15:1 I saw in heaven another great and marvellous sign: **seven angels with the seven last plagues**—last, because with them God's wrath is completed.
- ❑ While the 2nd, 3rd and 4th trumpets and bowls do have similarities, the others don't. The seals have no similarity to either the trumpets or the bowls.
- ❑ The view of concurrency is used to make a preconceived interpretation "fit". It is more reasonable to see these as sequential and consecutive, which is the natural reading of the text.

THE LAST TRUMPET

- ❑ Those who hold to a mid-tribulation rapture teach that the seventh trumpet of Rev 11:15 and the last trumpet of 1 Cor 15:52 and 1 Thess 4:16 are identical. But the 7th trumpet in Revelation is not the same as the last trumpet of 1 Thess. The Bible speaks of different kinds of trumpet calls:

1. Trumpets for gathering the people

- Lev 10:1-2 The LORD said to Moses: "Make two trumpets of hammered silver, and use them for calling the community together and for having the camps set out."



2. A trumpet to summon for war

- Lev 10:9 When you go into **battle** in your own land against an enemy who is oppressing you, sound a blast on the trumpets...

THE LAST TRUMPET

- ❑ The Rapture is linked to the "LAST TRUMPET"
 - 1 Cor 15:51-52 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the **last trumpet**. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.
- ❑ Rapture (LAST TRUMPET) is a **gathering trumpet**
 - 1 Thess 4:16-17 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the **trumpet call** of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be **caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air**.

THE LAST TRUMPET

- ❑ The 7th trumpet in Revelation is not the "last trumpet" of 1 Cor 15:51 - as the 7 trumpets are **war trumpets**.
- Rev 8:7 The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.



A RECENT DOCTRINE?

- ❑ In its first 3 centuries of existence the church held clear Premillennial views and expected an impending apocalypse along with the return of Jesus. Amillennialism was popularized by Augustine in the 5th century and subsequently became the predominant view.
- ❑ However some of the writings of the early Church Fathers indicate that they believed that the Church (rather than Israel) would suffer the wrath of the Antichrist.¹
- ❑ It must be remembered though that the Jews of Jesus' time (including the disciples) didn't yet even differentiate between the First and Second Coming of Jesus until they received further clarification by Jesus. Hence the apostles ask Jesus just before his ascension, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6)

¹ e.g. Hippolytus of Rome

A RECENT DOCTRINE?

- ❑ Some critics of Pre-Trib Rapture view maintain that the belief is a **recent doctrinal development** and that the doctrine or any semblance of it was **unknown before the early 19th century** and the writings of John Nelson Darby.
- ❑ However there is an explicit extra-Biblical reference to the Pre-Trib rapture in a document (Pseudo-Ephraem) dated between 374-627 AD.
 - For all the saints and Elect of God are gathered, prior to the tribulation that is to come, and are taken to the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to overwhelm the world because of our sins.

19TH CENTURY ORIGIN?

- ❑ The rise in belief in the 'Pre-Tribulation' rapture is often wrongly attributed to a 15-year old Scottish-Irish girl named Margaret McDonald, who in 1830 had a vision of the end times which **describes a Post-Tribulation view** ¹ of the Rapture that was first published in 1840. ²
- ❑ Scottish minister, Edward Irving (1792-1834) ³ taught a two-phase return of Christ, the first phase being a secret rapture prior to the rise of the Antichrist. ⁴

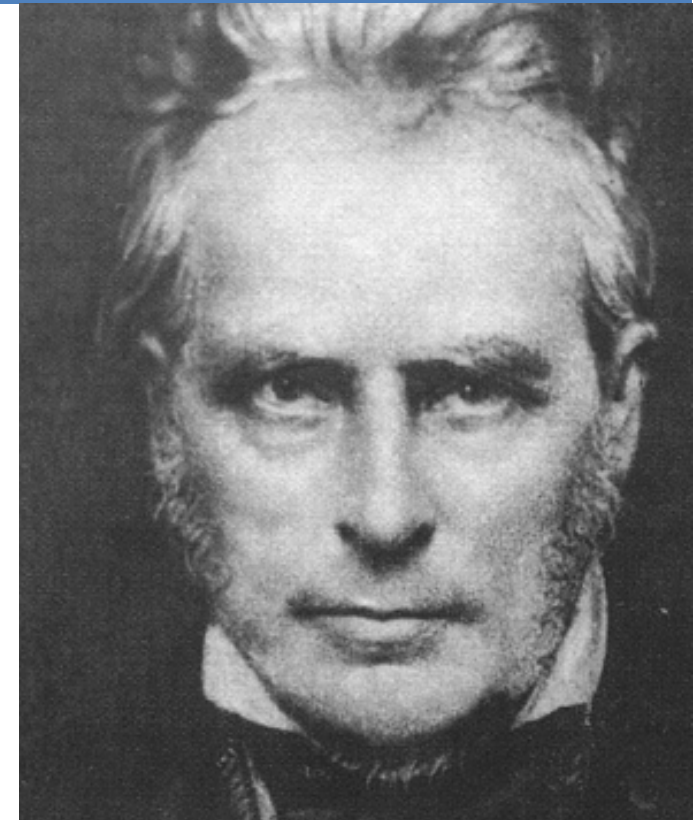
¹ It was published again in 1861 but two important sentences demonstrating Post-Tribulation were removed... The two removed sentences were, "This is the fiery trial which is to try us. - It will be for the purging and purifying of the real members of the body of Jesus" and "The trial of the Church is from Antichrist. It is by being filled with the Spirit that we shall be kept". ² Wikipedia (Rapture) citing "Margaret MacDonald's Complete Vision" (<http://www.bibleprophecy.org/vision.htm>)

³ Irving is generally regarded as the main figure behind the foundation of the Catholic Apostolic Church. ⁴ SOURCE: Wikipedia (Rapture)

DISPENSATIONALISM

1	Noah	Government
2	Moses	Law
3	Aaron	Priesthood
4	Kingly	Manasseh
5	Spirit	Gentile

- ❑ John Nelson Darby, founder of the Plymouth Brethren, is regarded by many as the father of modern Dispensationalism.
- ❑ Darby's view of a **Pre-Tribulation rapture** was accepted among many other Plymouth Brethren in England. The Brethren Movement impacted American Christianity, primarily through their writings.¹



**John Nelson Darby
(1800-1882)**

¹ Ibid

DISPENSATIONALISM

- ❑ Dispensationalism is a view that biblical history is best understood as a series of dispensations, or separated time-periods. Each dispensation is said to represent a different way in which God deals with man.
- ❑ C. I. Scofield explains, "Each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgment—marking his utter failure in every dispensation."
- ❑ Along with Dispensationalism came the belief in a Pre-Tribulation rapture.

DISPENSATIONALISM

- ❑ This view holds to a very literal interpretation of Scripture and a **rigorous distinction between God's program for Israel and for the Church**. They believe that Israel has a separate irrevocable covenant with God and will be restored.
- Rom 11:25-27 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: **Israel has experienced a hardening in part** until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way **all Israel will be saved**. As it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.
- ❑ The restoration occurs after the rapture of the church.

DISPENSATIONALISM

- ❑ American Baptist pastor and author, Clarence Larkin, published many books and charts illustrating Dispensational Millennialism views, which had a profound impact on conservative Protestant culture in the 20th century.
- ❑ In the 20th century, Dispensationalism became the most popular eschatological perspective in the US especially among nondenominational Bible churches, Baptists, Pentecostal and Charismatic groups.



**Clarence Larkin
(1850-1924)**

DISPENSATIONAL COVENANTS

	Scofield	Larkin
1	Innocence	Edenic
2	Conscience	Antediluvian
3	Human Government	Postdiluvian
4	Promise	Patriarchal
5	Law	Legal
6	Grace	Ecclesiastical
7	Kingdom	Messianic
8		The fullness of times

WHY PRE-TRIB?

- ❑ Why do we believe that the Rapture and the Second Advent are 2 separate events and that the Rapture will take place before the 7 year Tribulation?
 - 1) Can there be 2 Second Comings?
 - 2) Does the church experience God's wrath?
 - 3) Is the day known or unknown?
 - 4) Where is the church in the Revelation?
 - 5) What is the "blessed hope"?
 - 6) Who populates the Millennial earth?
 - 7) Righteous removed or wicked removed?
 - 8) The Lord himself or with the angels?

(1) 2 SECOND COMINGS?

- ❑ It is often contended that Pretribulationists teach a first 'Second Coming' and a second 'Second Coming'.
- ❑ But remember that **there were two phases to the First Coming.**
 - 1) Jesus Christ ministered **to all** until his death.
 - 2) After his resurrection he appeared again, but now **only to believers.**
- ❑ The 2 phases of the First Coming were separated by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

1st Coming	Phase 1	Appears to all
	Phase 2	Appears only to believers

(1) 2 SECOND COMINGS?

- ❑ As with his First Coming we believe that there will be 2 **phases to his Second Coming**.
 - 1) The Rapture - when Jesus **appears only to believers**.
 - 2) The Second Advent - when he **appears to all** and comes as judge (7 years after the Rapture).

1st Coming	Phase 1	Appears to all
	Phase 2	Appears only to believers
2nd Coming	Phase 1	Appears only to believers
	Phase 2	Appears to all

(2) ESCAPE GOD'S WRATH

- ❑ Another accusation launched against Pre-Tribulationists is that their motivation for wanting to miss the Tribulation is because they do not want to suffer.
- ❑ The Bible plainly teaches that Christians will suffer in this present age. However we need to differentiate between man's (or Satan's) wrath - and God's wrath. The Tribulation is God's wrath on sinful man, not Satan's wrath in the form of persecution.
- ❑ In the context of the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 5 we are told that "God did not appoint us to suffer wrath".
 - 1 Thess 5:4,9 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that **this day** should surprise you like a thief... For **God did not appoint us to suffer wrath** but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

(2) ESCAPE GOD'S WRATH

- ❑ The Tribulation (or "Day of the Lord") is not man's wrath - it is God's wrath and judgment on man.
- Rev 6:16-17 They called to the mountains and the 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 their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

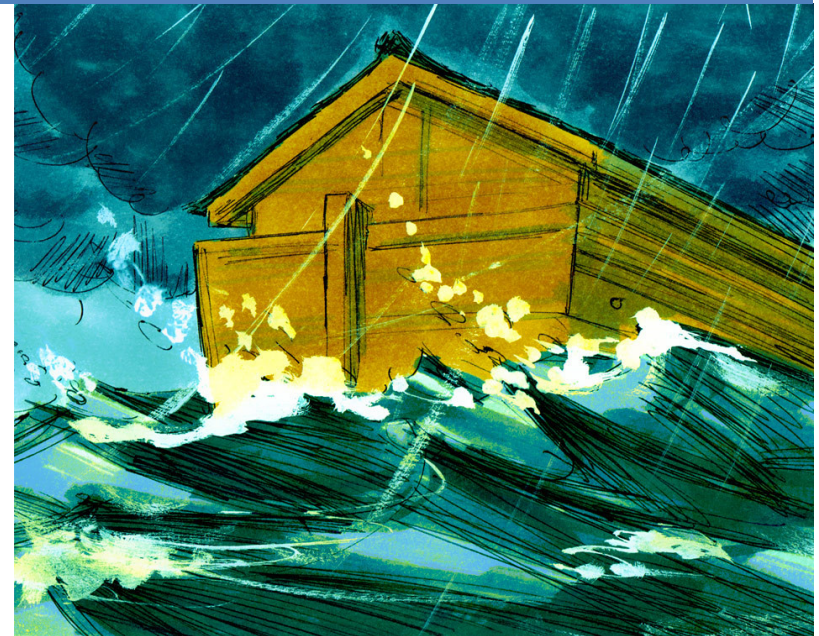


(2) ESCAPE GOD'S WRATH

- ❑ Christians will be kept from the "hour of trial".
 - Rev 3:10-11 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, **I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.**
 - 1 Thess 1:9-10... They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and **to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.**

(2) ESCAPE GOD'S WRATH

- ❑ Jesus compares his coming to both the judgment of the Flood and of Sodom.
 - Luke 17:26-28 "Just as it was in **the days of Noah**, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man... It was the same in **the days of Lot**..."
- ❑ Now Noah did not go through the Flood (God's judgment). He and his family were **removed** by being placed in the ark. Likewise Lot and his family were spared the judgment on Sodom by being **removed** from the city.



See
NOTE 2

(2) ESCAPE GOD'S WRATH

- ❑ Abraham said to God when 'negotiating' about Sodom, "**Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?**... Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, **treating the righteous and the wicked alike.** Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen 18:23-25). **Like the Flood and the destruction of Sodom, the Tribulation is God's judgment on unrepentant men.**

Thus it is Scripturally consistent to believe that the righteous are removed before the judgment of God.

- ❑ Will Jesus return **unexpectedly** and take us to heaven, leaving sinners behind to go through the 7-year tribulation?

(2) ESCAPE GOD'S WRATH

- Matt 24:37-44 (NIV) As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man ... Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.
- ❑ Some claim the above passage actually refers to the Second Advent. However people are shown as being caught up in their day to day business when an unexpected return of Jesus occurs.

(2) ESCAPE GOD'S WRATH



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**PRESENT
AGE**

**7-year
Tribulation**

**AGE TO
COME**

Rapture

2nd Advent

Millennium

**MAN'S
WRATH**



**GOD'S
WRATH**



(3) A THIEF IN THE NIGHT

□ Twice in John's book of Revelation, Jesus warns:

➤ Rev 3:3 But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

➤ Rev 16:15 "Behold, I come like a thief!
Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."

□ A thief does not announce the time of his coming, but instead comes when he is least expected.



(3) A THIEF IN THE NIGHT

- ❑ But if the Rapture occurs at the end or the middle of the 7 year Tribulation, then how will it be unexpected? We know that there are 2 sets of 1260 days ($3\frac{1}{2}$ years) which comprise the Tribulation so anyone could work it out.
 - 2 Pet 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.
- ❑ If Jesus comes at the end or the middle of a known 7-year Tribulation period, what possible sense would the previous passage and one like this make?
 - Luke 12:46 The master of that servant **will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.**

(3) A THIEF IN THE NIGHT

**AN
UNKNOWN
DAY**

**A
KNOWN
DAY**

**PRESENT
AGE**

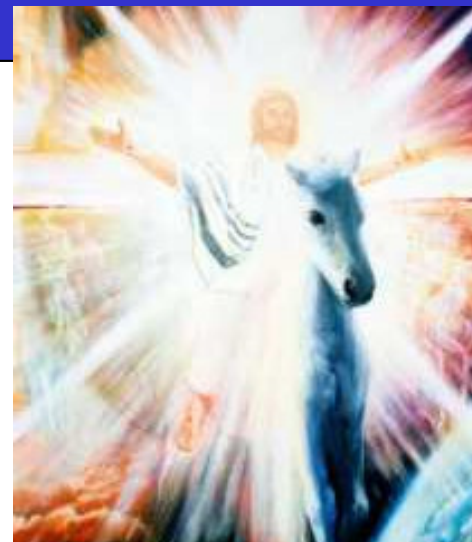
**7-year
Tribulation**

**AGE TO
COME**

Rapture

2nd Advent

Millennium



(4) REVELATION

- ❑ Pre-Trib adherents generally place the Rapture either between Revelation 3 & 4 or in chapter 6 (6th seal).
- ❑ You find no mention of the Church in Revelation after chapter 3 until you get to Rev 22:16. There is however mention of Israel (with the 144,000 in Rev 7 and the woman in Rev 12). Also Jerusalem as well as the Temple are featured prominently (Rev 11).
- ❑ Surely if the Church is present during the Tribulation they should merit some mention? This is circumstantial evidence that the church is not present and that God is once again dealing with Israel. This period is referred to in the OT as the time of "Jacob's trouble".¹

¹ Jacob was renamed Israel by God and he was the father of the 12 tribes of Israel.

(4) REVELATION

- ❑ Some try to dismiss Israel and say that God has finished working with her. They try to apply all scripture in the NT concerning Israel to the Church.
- ❑ However the NT clearly teaches the restoration of Israel and clearly differentiates between Israel and the Gentile elect:
 - Rom 11:25-26 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: **Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.** And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob."

**GENTILE
CHURCH
REMOVED**

**PRESENT
AGE**

Rapture

**7-year
Tribulation**

2nd Advent

**AGE TO
COME**

Millennium

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**TIME
OF THE
GENTILES**

**JACOB'S
TROUBLE**

**GOLDEN
AGE FOR
JEW &
GENTILE**

(5) THE "BLESSED HOPE"

- ❑ Israel are told that they should not long for the Day of the Lord (which we identify with the 7-year tribulation).
- ❑ Amos 5:18-20 **Woe to you who long for the day of the LORD!** Why do you long for the day of the LORD? That day will be darkness, not light. It will be as though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him. Will not the day of the LORD be darkness, not light— pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?
- ❑ Indeed Jesus says of this time, "For then there will be **great distress, unequaled from the beginning** of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened." (Matt 24:21-22)

(5) THE "BLESSED HOPE"

- ❑ The appearing of the Lord for the Church is called "the blessed hope". (Titus 2:13) The appearing of the Lord, should it come after the Great Tribulation, as far as the Church is concerned, would be no blessed hope, rather, the blessed hope of church saints would be to die before the coming of the Lord should they have to go through the Great Tribulation.¹

¹ Warren Paynter: "The Pre-tribulation Rapture of the Church"



(5) THE "BLESSED HOPE"

- However for Israel, who are present during the Tribulation, this period (the Day of the Lord) is known as "JACOB'S TROUBLE":
 - Jer 30:7 How awful that day will be! None will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it.
 - If Jesus returns after the Tribulation then his return is not a "blessed hope" for the Church. Instead like Israel, the Church should be told "Woe to you who long for the day of the LORD! " (Amos 5:18)



(6) THE MILLENNIUM

- ❑ If the Rapture comes after the Great Tribulation, then all the saints, including the Jews, will be glorified, and all the wicked will be slain.
- The question is then, who is left to repopulate the earth during the Millennium?



(7) RIGHTEOUS REMOVED

- ❑ The Bible speaks of an event where the righteous are removed and an event when the wicked are removed:
- ❑ RIGHTEOUS REMOVED (Rapture):
 - 2 Thess 2:1-2 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and **our being gathered to him...**
- ❑ WICKED REMOVED (2nd Advent):
 - Matt 13:41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and **they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.**

(8) THE LORD HIMSELF

- ❑ The Bible speaks of an event where Jesus comes alone and an event when he comes with his angels:
- ❑ COMES ALONE (Rapture): There is no need for angelic assistance because we shall be equal to the angels.
 - 1 Thess 4:16-17 For **the Lord himself** will come down from heaven... we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.
- ❑ WITH HIS ANGELS (2nd Advent): The angels are required to gather the wicked for judgment.
 - Matt 13:41 The Son of Man will **send out his angels**, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

(8) THE LORD HIMSELF

❑ Expanding on 1 Thess 4:16:

- The Lord himself shall descend from heaven: Here the word translated himself (autos) is emphatic. It means **"he himself and none other."** ¹
- With the voice of the archangel: This is better rendered "with a voice of an archangel." In other words "with an archangel's voice." Thus this statement does not teach that Christ will be accompanied by an archangel but that the sound of his voice, as he summons the dead in Christ from their graves, and summons them together with the living saints to meet him in the air, is like the voice of an archangel. ¹

¹ Ibid

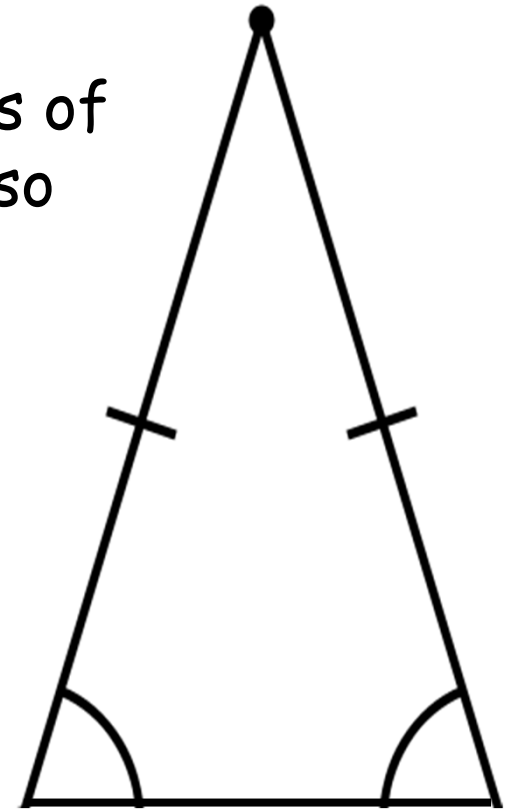
(8) THE LORD HIMSELF

- Paul makes it clear that the resurrection (*of the righteous*) and the Rapture take place at one and the same time. He writes, "The dead will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed." (1 Cor 15:52) Again, "the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them." (1 Thess 4:16-17). Now the Lord Jesus tells us something very important about this event in Luke 20:34-36, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; for they can die no more, for they are **like angels**, and are sons of God, **being sons of the resurrection.**" ¹

¹ Ibid

(8) THE LORD HIMSELF

- ❑ The Greek word translated "like angels" is the word 'isangelos'. The prefix comes from the Greek word 'isos' which means 'equal'.² Thus Jesus said that, when the resurrection takes place, those who are resurrected, and, we know from the epistles of Paul, those who are alive at his coming, are so changed that they are now equal to angels being sons of the resurrection.¹
- ❑ Thus if we are equal to angels at the resurrection, there is no need for angelic assistance to be gathered to the Lord. However the unrighteous at the Second Advent need to be gathered by the angels.



¹ Ibid

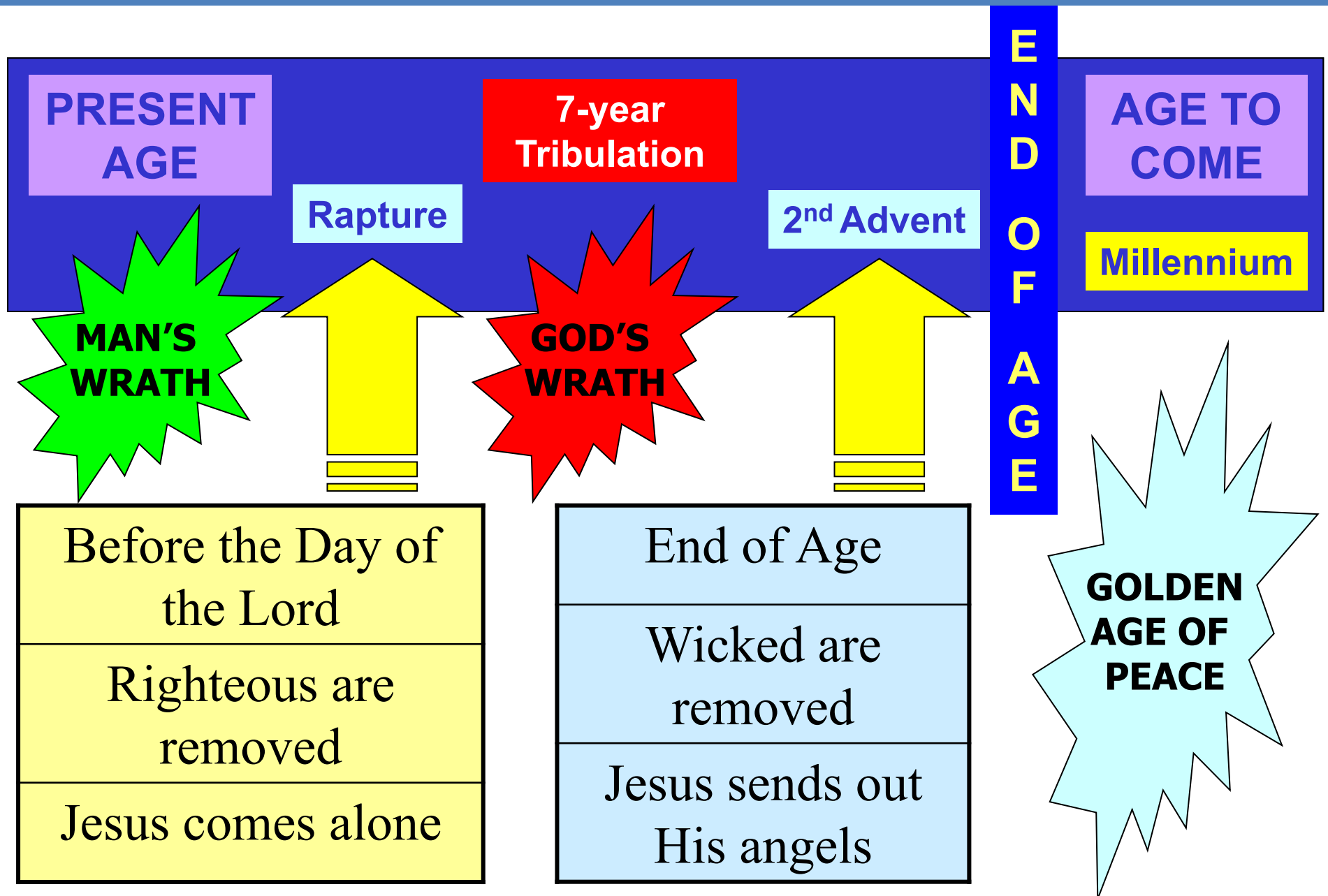
² In English an isosceles triangle is a triangle with two sides which are equal. The first part of the word 'isos' is the Greek word for equal.

RAPTURE & 2ND ADVENT

- ❑ If we note these differences between the Rapture and the Second Advent, we can see it clearly in the different parables. The term "end of the age" is only applied to the 2nd Advent.

RAPTURE	SECOND ADVENT
Before the Day of the Lord (i.e. Tribulation)	End of Tribulation (i.e. End of Age)
Jesus comes alone	Jesus sends out His angels
Righteous are removed	Wicked are removed

RAPTURE & 2ND ADVENT



2ND ADVENT

- ❑ **WHEAT & TARES:** This refers to the Second Advent because the term "end of the age" is used. Also the angels remove the wicked.
- **Matt 13:39-42 ...The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace...**



2ND ADVENT

- ❑ THE NET: refers to the Second Advent because the term "end of the age" is used. Also the angels remove the wicked.
- ❑ Matt 13:48-50 "When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace..."



RAPTURE

- ❑ THE TEN VIRGINS: This refers to the Rapture because the groom comes **unexpectedly** to take only those wise virgins who are waiting for him.
- ❑ Matt 25:2-13 "Five of them were foolish and five were wise... At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom!' ... The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet... Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."



THE TRIBULATION

- ❑ Why do prophecy teachers believe that the Tribulation lasts for 7 years?
- ❑ This is derived from Daniel's Seventy Weeks (aka Seventy Sevens) prophecy (Daniel 9), where the 70th week (i.e. a period of seven years) is the rule of the coming prince (Antichrist) who established a 7-year treaty (the period of the Tribulation) which he breaks half-way.
 - Daniel 9:27 (NIV) He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.

THE TRIBULATION

- ❑ Revelation indicates that the rapture of the righteous occurs before this 7-year period known as the tribulation.
- Rev 7:9-14 (ESV) After this I looked, and behold, **a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne** and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "**Salvation belongs to our God** who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ... Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "**These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.** They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

THE TRIBULATION

- ❑ After that we find 2 periods of $3 \frac{1}{2}$ years that follow - i.e. the Tribulation.
- 1) In the First period of 1260 days ($3 \frac{1}{2}$ year) the two witnesses preach in Jerusalem.
 - Rev 11:2-3 "[The Gentiles] will trample on the holy city for 42 months. And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."
- 2) In the second period the Antichrist prompted by the dragon (Satan) turns on Israel who flees into the desert.
 - Rev 12:6 "The woman [Israel] fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days."

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QUESTIONS

- ❑ Some people believe that Jesus returns unexpectedly and takes the church back to heaven leaving the sinners behind on earth to go through a seven-year tribulation? What is the truth on the matter? Please use scripture to back up your argument.