

THE RAPTURE AND THE TWO WITNESSES—IS THERE A CONNECTION?



When we think of end times prophecy, three things immediately pop into our minds: the Rapture, the Tribulation (a.k.a. the **Great** Tribulation), and the return of Christ to earth to set up His millennial kingdom. There are many verses throughout both the Old Testament and the New Testament which refer to end times prophecy. The book of Revelation, although not exclusive to this study, is especially useful because most of it is in chronological order—a very important characteristic, since it is critical in helping us to determine the correct sequence of prophetic events in these last days in which we live.

Before I continue, I would like to point out that if you just quickly read through this study, you will learn absolutely **nothing**. If, however, you carefully read all the details, I think that I can convince you that what I have to say is not only 100% scriptural, but is also very logical, and you can learn some new, important things, that you will probably never hear in your church.

The word Rapture is a term created by theologians for one of the 15 or more resurrections recorded in the Bible.

Let me start this study with the Rapture. Many complain that the word “Rapture” is found nowhere in scripture. That it is true. It is not. But as someone very accurately pointed out, neither is the word “Trinity;” but most of us believe in that, don’t we? How about the phrase “the Total Depravity of Mankind”? That’s not in there, either. Or “the Great Commission”—Where’s that? How about “the Virgin Birth”? All of these phrases (including “the Rapture”) and more, are simply terms created by theologians in order to get an idea across quickly without having to go into a long detailed explanation every time we talk about a recurring topic. Admittedly, it is sometimes annoying; however, it serves its purpose.

I’m not going to waste your time by attempting to go into how the word “Rapture” came into being, or how it became recognized as an acceptable theological term. You’ve probably heard the explanation enough times to give you a migraine headache. So have I. The important thing is that using the term lets everyone know

right away exactly what you are talking about. The correct biblical term for the word Rapture is actually "resurrection." You are probably saying to yourself, like I did in the past, "Then why don't they just say **resurrection** instead of **Rapture**?" The reason is because there are many resurrections recorded in the Bible, most of which have already taken place, and a few still to come. By using the word **Rapture** one immediately knows **which** resurrection is being talked about. The Bible doesn't always state that an event is a resurrection, but the details that it gives about such events make it clear that they are resurrections. Some resurrections are temporary, allowing those who are resurrected to continue living until the end of their mortal life, for example in the case of Lazarus. Other resurrections, like those of Enoch (Heb. 11:5) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11) took them straight to heaven, body and all, without experiencing death. Then of course, there was the resurrection of Jesus, who died, was resurrected, and went straight to heaven several days later, body and all.

Here's a list that I have compiled of **past** resurrections which I was able to find in the Bible:

1. Enoch-Hebrews 11:5
2. Elijah-2 Kings 2:11
3. The Shunammite's son-2 Kings 4:32-37
4. The man who was put into Elisha's tomb-2 Kings 13:20-21
5. The widow's son-Luke 7:11-17
6. The ruler's daughter-Matthew 9:18-26
7. Lazarus-John 11:38-44
8. The saints at Jesus' crucifixion-Matthew 27:51-53
9. Our Lord Jesus Christ-Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-7
10. Tabitha (a.k.a. Dorcas)-Acts 9:36-43
11. Eutychus-Acts 20:9-12

Here's a list of the resurrections that I was able to find in the Bible that are **still to come**:

1. The two witnesses-Revelation 11:11-12
2. The Rapture (the resurrection of all believers since creation)- John 11:24-26; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2.
3. The First Resurrection (the resurrection of all believers who get saved and martyred during the ***bowl** judgments)- Revelation 20:4-6 [*Please note: All references to "**bowl(s)**" (New King James Version) in this document are translated as "**vial(s)**" in the King James Version.]
4. The Second Resurrection (not named, but implied, in contrast with the First Resurrection. The eternally damned, the unbelievers of all time, will be resurrected at the Second Resurrection.)- Revelation 20:5a, 13; Matthew 10:28; Acts 24:15.

So then, based on the above scriptures, there are at least 11 resurrections which have already taken place, and at least four more to come. That's a total of 15 at the very least. Perhaps now you can understand one of the possible reasons why

theologians came up with a special name for the resurrection that we are looking forward to most—i.e., the Rapture. It cuts down on a lot of time, helping others to quickly identify what we are talking about. This being the case, I will continue to use the word “Rapture” throughout the remainder of this study; not to mention that it is also the most universally recognized term for the particular resurrection that it is commonly identified with.

Introducing Me...and My Fears

Before I go any further, please be aware that I have been a student of the scriptures for over forty years. I’ve sat under hundreds of different preachers, read books on theology, and studied for the ministry in Bible college. The way that this benefits you is that I am familiar with all the different teachings and arguments about the timing of the Rapture, which is the single hottest end times topic for believers today. I have also read the Bible from cover to cover, I estimate some 60 to 70 times or more; and my greatest desire is to give you the truth as the Lord has revealed it to me—not to impress you with strange new ideas (and there are many of those today), or make you feel good just so that I will be popular... because in the end, I am going to give account to God **for every word that I say**. I hope to enlighten you with important facts from certain scriptures which have gone unnoticed by virtually every preacher out there—things which God has brought to my attention, which are pretty much either not understood by the typical theologian of today, or they are ignored, because they don’t fit into today’s popular Rapture teachings.

The thing that disturbs me—even **terrifies** me—is the carnal condition of the body of Christ today. As a result of this carnality, instead of seeking **all** of God’s truth at **any** cost, most believers today are only interested in what makes them feel good—whether it is true or not. Even lies are accepted as truth, as long as they are popular, desirable, and promoted by our churches. This keeps God’s people from learning God’s truth fully, and keeps them locked into a carnal lifestyle. If you are willing to learn **all** of God’s truth—no matter how scary it is from time to time—because you know that God always has your best interests at heart, then I might be able to teach you something new. If you just want me to make you feel good, then you will probably be more comfortable reading someone else’s writings, which promote the popular Rapture teachings of the day, because that is not my goal. My goal is to give you critical biblical information which has been overlooked by well-meaning, respectable, popular men of God.

The Nature of the Rapture and the Other 14 Resurrections

Before I discuss the important connection of the two witnesses to the Rapture, I want you to understand the nature of the Rapture and the other 14 resurrections which are mentioned in scripture. What exactly do we mean by the Rapture? Are we talking about the mere resurrection of the soul into God’s presence, spoken of by Jesus to the Sadducees? (Matt. 22:31-32) No. This happens to each and every believer at the time of their death—obviously not all at the same time. But the Bible speaks of a one-time event when all believers will be resurrected together (in their

bodies)—including those who are already dead—whose souls are **already** in heaven. And those who are alive when this happens will not die, but will have their bodies changed and immortalized. Yes, my friend... this resurrection is talking about a bodily resurrection. Remember that after Jesus rose from the dead, and later went up into heaven, He was not just merely a spirit, but He had a body as well. And Philippians 3:21 tells us that our bodies will be like His body: “who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body....”

By the way, **all** 15 of the resurrections are actual **events** in which **the body is included**. The **only** time that Jesus used the word “resurrection” in reference to souls without bodies in heaven (They will actually receive their bodies back again, immortalized, at the Rapture—1 Cor. 15:51-53) was when He was using Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as examples to prove the reality of the resurrection in His debate with the Sadducees (Matt. 22:31-32, mentioned above). In every other case, whenever resurrections are spoken of, the body is **always** included along with the soul.

When the two witnesses are raised from the dead (Rev. 11:11-12) and go up to heaven, they go up **body and all—not** just their souls. That’s what’s going to happen to “the dead in Christ” at the Rapture—they are going up **body and all**. When Elijah was taken alive into heaven, he was taken up **body and all—not** just his soul (2 Kings 2:11). That’s the same thing that’s going to happen to “we who are alive and remain” at the Rapture. We are going up **body and all**.

This will blow your mind: Jesus and Martha spoke of the Rapture.

The fact that the Rapture is a one-time universal event was acknowledged by Martha when she was discussing the resurrection of Lazarus with Jesus. Here is what she said to Him: “I know that he will rise again **in the resurrection at the last day**.” (John 11:24) She was not talking about the mere resurrection of Lazarus’ soul. Lazarus was already dead and his soul in heaven. Neither was she talking about Lazarus’ imminent resurrection from the tomb by Jesus. No; she was talking about a specific day way off in the future (“at the last day”) when **all** believers would experience a **bodily** resurrection. Once again, this is not just talking about the resurrection of the soul into heaven. That happens at the time of each believer’s death—not all on the same day. Martha was actually talking about the Rapture, a physical, bodily resurrection!

Let me continue this passage of scripture. I’m going to quote **all** of John 11:23-26. Pay attention carefully, because it took me nearly 40 years of reading this passage of scripture before God showed me exactly what it means. I guess I should have asked Him a lot sooner!

John 11:23-26:

23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother [Lazarus] will rise again.”

24 Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

As I said, in verse 24 Martha is talking about the Rapture. Now here comes the part that **really** confused me: Whenever I read verses 25 to 26, I basically saw this as Jesus proclaiming His power. But...it is so much more than that. As I said, it took almost 40 years before God showed me the exact meaning. For so long I kind of just mindlessly read through the passage with the attitude of, "Okay, I get it. Jesus is proclaiming His power. But I really don't understand His words completely." Then about one or two years ago I said to the Lord, "Lord, I really don't get this. Okay, I understand that You are the resurrection and the life. But how about the rest of it...What exactly does it mean? Verse 26 doesn't even make sense to me. You say there that whoever lives and believes in you shall never die. **Everybody** dies. What does this mean?" And then He showed me: **No. Not everybody dies!** The believers who are still alive when the Rapture takes place will **never** die! Their bodies will be transformed, immortalized, and taken straight to heaven (just like Elijah). These are the ones who He was talking about! This entire passage—from verse 23 to verse 26 is not only a declaration of Christ's power. It is also a direct reference to the Rapture! By the way, for those of you who say that Jesus never spoke of the Rapture, well...there it is (obviously not in name, but definitely in concept)!

So that you can get a clearer understanding of what I am saying here, let me compare this passage to 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17:

16 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.

17 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.

Okay, now what I am going to do is help you to interpret scripture with scripture by inserting parts of 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 into John 11:25-26 so that you can compare them. I will do this by putting partial quotes from 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 into brackets to help you see the parallel between the two passages:

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. **He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.** ["...the dead in Christ will rise first."] 26 And **whoever lives and believes in Me** ["we who are alive and remain"] **shall never die** ["...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."] Do you believe this?"

By the way, 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 also speaks of this Rapture event:

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not **all** sleep [die], but we **shall** all be changed—

52 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.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Here Paul says that we shall not all die (because “we who are alive and remain” will not die—we shall be raised); and those that are “sleeping” (implied) when this event takes place are “the dead in Christ.” Both verses mention that both the dead in Christ and those who are alive and remain will have their mortal bodies transformed and taken straight to heaven.

The Identity of the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11

Who are the two witnesses of Revelation chapter 11, and what do they have to do with the Rapture? When I think of the two witnesses, I get all excited. As strange as it might sound, one of the reasons I get so excited about these two prophets is that they will have fire coming out of their mouth to protect themselves from God’s enemies. Hey...I’m a guy; so of course I think that’s cool! Anyway, here’s the Bible passage for you below (Rev. 11:3-12):

3 “And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”

4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.

5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.

6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

7 When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves.

10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

11 Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.

12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.

For 40 years I’ve heard all these theories about who the two witnesses might be. And my answer to them all is that nobody except for God knows; and it will not be known until they are actually seen in action. One thing I **can** tell you for certain, however, is who they are **not**. They are **not** the church and Israel. This relatively new theory is one of the most outrageous interpretations of scripture that I have ever heard. First of all, there are so many indicators in this passage that make it clear that the two witnesses are men. It never ceases to shock me how “super

theologians" can impress their followers by assigning nonsensical symbolic meanings to any given scripture that they simply don't understand. Literally **any** verse in the Bible can be given a symbolic meaning if you have a big enough imagination.

Second, even if we were to buy into this nonsensical symbolic theory (which I do not), the idea that the church is one of the two witnesses could be tolerable, but the idea that Israel is the other witness is totally absurd! As a whole, Israel rejects Jesus Christ. So how can Israel be one of His two witnesses? Impossible! And Israel will **continue** to remain in this state of unbelief until the **end** of the Tribulation when He returns to earth to set up His earthly millennial kingdom. Then, and only then, will Israel as a whole be saved: "[T]hen they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn." (Zech. 12:10) "And so all Israel will be saved...." (Rom. 11:26)

The two witnesses are also not Elijah, Moses, Enoch, or **any** holy men that have already gone to heaven. How do I know this? Because in verses 7 and 8 of Revelation 11 (above) it says that the two witnesses will die; and God does **not** drag immortal people out of heaven, make them mortal again, and then let them die. It is totally against God's character and His promises. Not only that, but Jesus Himself said that this is impossible: "...**nor can they die anymore**, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." (Luke 20:36) Therefore, since the two witnesses die, they **must be mortal men who are living during the Great Tribulation**, when they will have their worldwide ministry.

Now nobody in their right mind will want to hear what I have to say next. So you have two choices. You can ignore the rest of this work and run away out of fear if you like, or you can think this out logically and search the scriptures for yourself to see if what I am saying is true, no matter how terrifying it is, and despite the fact that it probably contradicts everything you have been taught in church all your life. Here it is:

The Connection Between the Rapture and the Two Witnesses

The two witnesses are a very important part of the Great Tribulation. They will spend approximately three and a half years (1260 days—Rev. 11:3) of that time ministering and calling down God's judgment upon His enemies on earth. The two witnesses are key. So it should come as no surprise that the timing of the Rapture is completely dependent upon their ministry. Here is some very simple logic: Since the two witnesses are not coming from heaven, that means that they are mortal humans living on earth just like you and me. If the Rapture comes before the Tribulation, then these two men will be raptured away with the rest of us, making their ministry during the Tribulation impossible, since they will be gone.

The **only** other **rational** thought is that the two witnesses don't go up in this theoretical pre-Tribulation Rapture, because they are not saved yet. And once they

get saved (after the Rapture), that would supposedly take care of that problem. However, this will not work, either. The Tribulation lasts for seven years. Their ministry lasts for three and a half years before they are killed and raised from the dead. Immediately afterwards, the seventh trumpet will be blown and God's seven bowls of wrath will be poured out upon mankind, which I'm guessing will probably last for about the last six to 12 months of the Tribulation. Even in the best case scenario, let's assume that they get saved immediately after a pre-Tribulation Rapture. This would leave them only about three years of preparation for them to get saved, become mature believers, and somehow become so spiritually mature that they will be capable of bringing God's judgment upon the entire world—all within three short years of preparation. This is not realistic by any stretch of the imagination—not even in God's kingdom.

Here's the approximate math for this hypothetical scenario:

3 years for the two witnesses to get saved and prepare for their worldwide ministry
 3½ years for the two witnesses to fulfill their ministry, followed by their death and resurrection
½ year of God's bowls of wrath at the end of the Tribulation
 7 years total for the Great Tribulation

I'm sorry, but God just does not operate that way, as I'm sure you are probably well aware. God prepares His servants over a lifetime—especially when He is preparing them for a great ministry. And the ministry of the two witnesses is a hundred times greater than them all! Three years of preparation is just not believable. So this scenario is not possible either. So, whether we like it or not, there is not going to be a pre-Tribulation rapture. If you don't like what I have to say, you can move on any time you like; but I would strongly advise against it. You **must** prepare yourself spiritually and emotionally for what's coming—or you will **not** be ready. Before I show you from the scriptures how it's all going to happen (And don't take my word for it; I fully expect you to look up the scripture references for yourself.), I am going to show you many of the holes that there are in the pre-Tribulation Rapture theory, because this is the teaching that most of us have been hearing all of our lives; and many are branded as heretics if they hold any other position. It's not considered "cool" to believe anything else.

Big Problems with the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Teaching

The most popular Rapture teaching among God's people today is the pre-Tribulation Rapture doctrine. There's a reason for that. It removes all of our fear and makes us feel good. Who doesn't want that? I know I do!

Let's examine some of the arguments that are used as so-called "proof" of a pre-Tribulation Rapture:

Argument 1: "The Rapture has to take place before the [Great] Tribulation because the Bible says that the Holy Spirit, who is living inside believers, must be taken away from the earth along with the believers before the Tribulation starts.

Once the Holy Spirit is gone, along with the raptured believers, then the Tribulation can begin.”

The scripture used to justify this teaching is 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8:

“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**. 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 supposed “proof” that the Rapture must come before the Tribulation is found in the phrase “until He is taken out of the way.” They say that this means that the believers and the Holy Spirit (who indwells them) are going up in the Rapture, leaving everyone else on earth behind to experience the Tribulation. There’s a major problem here. The Holy Spirit will **never** leave the earth. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent and fills the universe. If He must leave earth in order for the Tribulation to come, then He is not omnipresent. As a matter of fact, the Holy Spirit’s omnipresence is so all-encompassing, that He is even present in hell:

“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed **in hell, behold, You are there.**” (Ps. 139:7-8)

There is another problem for those who insist that the Rapture must come before the Tribulation because supposedly the Holy Spirit (who is inside believers) will leave earth before the Tribulation: The book of Revelation makes it clear that there will be people getting saved throughout the Tribulation—even up until the end. If the Holy Spirit will already be gone in a pre-Tribulation rapture, then how would it be possible for more people to get saved throughout the Tribulation? It wouldn’t. The entire process of salvation, from beginning to end, requires the work of the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, salvation is impossible. Therefore, the Holy Spirit must be present throughout the entire Tribulation, so that more people can be saved.

So obviously, when the scripture says, “He who now restrains will do so **until He is taken out of the way**” is **not** referring to the Rapture (leaving earth), but something else—maybe the Holy Spirit being moved out of the way, like stepping aside, to let all hell break loose; but certainly not anything to indicate a pre-Tribulation Rapture.

Argument 2: “1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 talks about our blessed hope—the Rapture. It even ends by saying, ‘Therefore comfort one another with these words.’ So this means that we don’t have to worry about going through the Tribulation, because the Rapture comes first. So we are supposed to comfort each other over that.”

Nowhere in this scripture passage does it indicate that we are supposed to comfort each other over being raptured before the Tribulation. Let’s look at the **whole**

context to see what Paul wanted the Thessalonians to be comforted about. Let's start with verse 13, and continue through verse 18:

"13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, **concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.** 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, **even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.** 15 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.** 16 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.** 17 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. 18 **Therefore comfort one another with these words.**"

Verse 13 appears to indicate that the Thessalonians were worried that they would never again see their loved ones who had died in Christ. In verse 14 Paul assures them that these loved ones would indeed be raised from the dead (raptured). In verse 15 he explains that those "who are alive and remain" would **not** be raptured away before their dead loved ones. In verse 16 Paul indicates that the dead in Christ (e.g., their dead loved ones) would rise first. In verse 17 he assures the Thessalonians that those of them which are still alive when this Rapture event takes place would also be raised up to meet their loved ones in the air, thus putting an end to their worry that they would never see them again. And finally in verse 18 Paul says "Therefore comfort one another with these words."

The entire passage was written to the Thessalonians to comfort them over the fact that they would indeed see their dead loved ones in Christ again (body and all)—when they meet together in the clouds. This is why Paul said, "Therefore comfort one another with these words." Their comfort had absolutely nothing to do with a **pre-Tribulation** Rapture, but had everything to do with being guaranteed that they would again see their loved ones who had fallen asleep in Christ—**whenever** the Rapture comes to pass.

Argument 3: In chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation John is told by the Lord Jesus Christ to write a message to seven churches. These were literal churches located in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, and Thyatira (all in chapter 2), as well as Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (all found in chapter 3).

According to pre-Tribulation Bible scholars, each of these seven churches is also representative of seven church ages. Here's how they would be represented:

Ephesus- 1st church age
 Smyrna- 2nd church age
 Pergamum- 3rd church age
 Thyatira- 4th church age
 Sardis- 5th church age
 Philadelphia- 6th church age

Laodicea- 7th church age

After the 7th, the entire church age supposedly ends as believers are raptured away and the Tribulation begins. Not surprisingly, according to them, we are living in the 7th church age (Laodicea), which would appear logical, since that is the last one, and it is very clear that we are now at the end, right before the Tribulation. There is also the matter of the carnal state of the Laodicean church, also known as “the lukewarm church,” a perfect description of the body of Christ today. So there is a lot of logic in this...**to a certain degree.**

But...in order to come up with another so-called pre-Tribulation Rapture “promise” from all this, they end up contradicting their own seven-church age theory. Supposedly, we are in the 7th church age (“the lukewarm church”), but to make this work, so that they can get their “promise,” they take a scripture from the 6th “church age” (Philadelphia—“the faithful church”). So by their reckoning, even though they see us as being in “the lukewarm church age,” they are taking a promise that was given to “the faithful church age.” This just goes to show how far they are willing to go to support their pre-Tribulation rapture teaching.

Now let’s examine the promise given by the Lord to the church in Philadelphia, “the faithful church”:

“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.” (Rev. 3:10) This is **not** a promise given to all believers. It was given specifically to the church at Philadelphia—not a promise for merely being saved, but for their perseverance—their faithfulness to Christ. Most believers that I know today (including pastors) continually make excuses for refusing to follow many of the simple commandments of scripture, let alone being persevering. Many assume that this verse is talking about deliverance from the Tribulation through a pre-Tribulation Rapture, but **it’s not**. I honestly don’t know what it’s talking about. But if our Rapture is dependent upon the same blameless, persevering walk with Christ that is descriptive of the church in Philadelphia, rather than just our salvation, then most of us are in deep trouble!

Argument 4: Pre-Tribulation Rapture Bible scholars say, “Those of us who belong to Christ will not go through the Tribulation because it is God’s judgment, and God is not going to judge His people. Therefore, we will be raptured before the Tribulation begins.” Then they point out that when God destroyed the world with water, God’s judgment did not begin until Noah and his family were safely on the ark. They go on to say that when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, He did not do so until Lot and his daughters were safely removed.

The problem is, to say that the [Great] Tribulation is God’s judgment is not at all accurate. It’s simply a rationalization used by those who teach a pre-Tribulation Rapture. By calling it God’s judgment, they can easily lead everyone to conclude that God’s people must be raptured away **before** the Great Tribulation in order to avoid God’s judgment. However, even though the New Testament uses the word

“tribulation” 27 times, you will **never** find it used synonymously or interchangeably with God’s judgment, not even in Matthew 24:21, where it speaks about “great tribulation,” which theologians have turned into the common theological term “the [Great] Tribulation,” which I use often throughout this work, and which is also widely used by Bible scholars and believers today.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary online defines *tribulation* as: “distress or suffering resulting from oppression or persecution.” The Free dictionary online defines it as: 1) “Great affliction, trial, or distress; suffering.” 2) “An experience that tests one’s endurance, patience, or faith.” Do you see “divine judgment” in any of those definitions? I sure don’t. I see persecution, affliction, distress, suffering, endurance, faith, and the like. That’s what *tribulation* means. And that’s largely what the seven-year period which we call the Great Tribulation will be about—suffering, and God’s people being persecuted and tested. Will God’s judgment be there? Absolutely. But God’s judgment is **not** synonymous with the Great Tribulation. God’s judgment is only a **part** of the Great Tribulation, just as it has been a part of **all** of earth’s history; except it will be a lot **worse**. There will also be mankind destroying the earth with weapons of mass destruction (“those who destroy the earth.”—Rev. 11:18), demonic beings running loose, the antichrist ruling the world, and more. So the whole idea that we **cannot** go through the Tribulation “because it’s God’s judgment” is simply not true. The Great Tribulation is **not** God’s judgment. It merely **includes** God’s judgment, just as **all** of earth’s history has included God’s judgment.

When God brings judgment upon the wicked, sometimes the righteous are completely delivered from that judgment, as in the case of the flood in Noah’s day, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Lot’s day. However, there are times when even the righteous are overcome and suffer as a result of God’s judgment upon the wicked. For example, throughout history God has continually judged nations for their wickedness through war, famine, disease, and natural disasters. But even the righteous (those who belong to Christ) suffer and die as a result. This is the reality of life in a sinful world. We all suffer, and we all die—sometimes violently; and this is one of the reasons why unbelievers continually question and accuse God, despite the fact that we **all** deserve hell. But even in this type of scenario, when believers die as a result, we still go to heaven anyway, so we still win.

There are also other times when God brings judgment upon the wicked, and God allows His people to suffer—but **only up to a certain point**. After that, He puts His hand of protection over them so that their suffering is removed. A perfect example of this is when God brought judgment upon Egypt for refusing to let His people Israel go. Israel also experienced the effects of that judgment. Even though Israel was not the target of God’s judgment, they were **not** completely untouched by it. They also suffered to some degree. It wasn’t actually until the 4th plague (the plague of flies) that God completely separated Israel from the effects of His judgment upon Egypt and gave them complete protection from His judgment: “And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am the Lord in the

midst of the land. I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be." (Ex. 8:22-23) This is basically what is going to happen during the Tribulation. God's judgment will be present during that time (Remember, that the Tribulation is not God's judgment; it simply **includes** God's judgment.), and those who belong to Christ will also be affected by it. However, at the seventh trumpet, immediately before the Lord completely pours out His fierce wrath upon mankind through the seven bowl judgments, He will remove His people from this earth. That is when the Rapture will occur. Now before you start rolling your eyes, or walk away in anger because you like the popular, pre-Tribulation Rapture teaching that makes everyone feel good, I assure you that before I am done, you will be able to see (if you are willing to accept it) that a seventh trumpet Rapture fits perfectly into the Tribulation timeline, while the popular pre-Tribulation Rapture teaching is filled with holes and contradictions, as I believe I have already demonstrated.

Why the Intense Persecution of the Tribulation is Necessary Before the Church is Raptured Away

One of the chief reasons that God's people must go through the Tribulation is so that they will be purified for Christ **before** He takes them away in the Rapture, which directly precedes the pouring out of His final wrath upon mankind (the seven bowl judgments—recorded in Revelation 16). One of the main characteristics of the Tribulation will be worldwide persecution of those who belong to Christ; and **that** is the instrument that the Lord will use to purify His people. Remember that one of the definitions of *tribulation* is "distress or suffering resulting from oppression **or persecution.**"

Historically, persecution has been widely recognized by God's people as the main tool that God uses to bring about purification of the church. And the body of Christ is more in need of purification now than in any other time in history. Over the period of about 2000 years since the church began, God's people have been continually incorporating more and more ungodly practices from the world into their churches and into their lives. Every sin under the sun is systematically excused by the leaders of our churches through counterfeit liberty in Christ, and is freely incorporated into the lives of those who possess His free gift of eternal life. Men of God who object to this behavior are quickly put in their place and branded as judgmental by those who run our churches, making it impossible for our churches to return to the original godly absolute standards which they abandoned long ago with the rest of the culture.

The only significant difference between those who are born again ("saved") and the lost ("unsaved") at this point in time is that our born again churches are continually condemning the world over homosexuality and abortion (which is a chief demand of the feminists), which they reject. Other than that, the values and lifestyles of God's people and the world are virtually identical in every way. The world excuses their sin through "tolerance," and God's people excuse their sin through counterfeit liberty in Christ. And the ones that our churches constantly condemn—the feminists and the homosexuals—whom they complain against for promoting gender

ambiguity, are the very ones whose gender-ambiguous fashions (male clothing for females, and effeminate clothing for males) and gender-ambiguous feminist lifestyles God's people insist on imitating! God's people are freely imitating the filth of the ones that they so loudly condemn! Talk about hypocrisy!

Our churches are overflowing with the world's filth, **and we can't even see it**. Not only that, but instead of getting better, we are actually getting **worse**. Virtually every new abomination which is introduced by the world is continually being imported into the body of Christ and excused through counterfeit liberty in Christ. Yet we are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to come by at any moment to rapture us away to our heavenly home, in all the "glory" of our filth, and say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Think hard about that one.

We cannot continue on in our wretched, filthy condition, and expect Jesus to just drop by and take us to our heavenly home with a big smile on His face. No, indeed. He is coming for a **pure** bride—not a filthy one. And that, my friend, is why we **must** go through the Tribulation—because the worldwide persecution of God's people during those days is the **only** thing that's going to wake us up and show us our need for repentance. Once persecution hits every believer during the Tribulation, they are going to be forced to abandon their lukewarm, carnal attitude, and submit themselves to God **fully**. Then, and only then, will the bride of Christ stand out from the world, and be pure, before being raptured away into heaven at the seventh trumpet.

Biblical Evidence of a Seventh Trumpet/Pre-Wrath Rapture

Just to review, the Rapture is a single resurrection event in which all the dead in Christ will be raised up bodily, joined by those of us in Christ who are alive and remain. We will meet each other in the air along with the Lord, and be taken straight to heaven (1 Thes. 4:16-17). Next to the resurrection of Christ, this is the resurrection most talked about by believers today. This resurrection will be so huge, that it will include all believers since the beginning of creation.

Now I will present the biblical evidence that the Rapture will take place at the blowing of the seventh trumpet of the book of Revelation, immediately followed by the seven bowls of God's wrath. In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 the Rapture is described as taking place at the blowing of the trumpet of God: "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."

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 also describes the Rapture, and also links it together with the blowing of God's trumpet. But here it is more specific about which trumpet the Rapture will take place at: the **last** trumpet. "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, 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." The book of Revelation, which is the chief

guide for the Tribulation period, is mostly in chronological order, with the exception of some sections where the chronology is interrupted to go into detailed description of certain areas of interest. Other than that, the chronology of the Tribulation as recorded in the book of Revelation is determined chiefly by 21 acts of heavenly design: the opening of seven seals, **the blowing of seven trumpets**, and the pouring out of seven bowls of God's wrath. Since there are exactly seven trumpets blown, and the apostle Paul makes it clear that the Rapture will take place at the blowing of the last trumpet (See scripture above), therefore the Rapture must take place at the blowing of the seventh trumpet, since it is the last. This fact is not unimportant or to be taken lightly; and I will provide more evidence, as well as demonstrate to you how the seventh trumpet is **God's perfect choice** for the timing of the Rapture, fitting in with the events before and after with perfect harmony.

In 1 Corinthians 15:51 the apostle Paul starts out by describing the Rapture as a **mystery**: "Behold, **I tell you a mystery**: We shall not all sleep, 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 Revelation 10:7 the blowing of the seventh trumpet is linked together with **the mystery of God** [the Rapture]: "but in the days of the sounding [of the trumpet] of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound [the trumpet], **the mystery of God** [the Rapture] would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets." It is easy to see here how the Rapture (the "mystery"—1 Cor. 15:51 and Rev. 10:7) is linked together with the timing of the seventh trumpet.

Once you accept that the Rapture will take place at the blowing of the seventh trumpet, you will be able to see how the events before and after the Rapture fit in perfectly with the timing: The resurrection of the two witnesses comes first (Rev. 11:11-12). Next, the seventh trumpet is blown (verse 15) as "the dead in Christ" and "we who are alive and remain" are raptured (resurrected) away to safety in heaven, **right before** the seven bowls of God's wrath are poured out upon mankind (Chapters 15 and 16). Chapters 12-14 interrupt the chronology to explain some details. If you keep that in mind, you can see that the bowls of God's wrath being poured out on mankind begin **right after** the Rapture, which takes place at the seventh trumpet. So you see, even though God's people must endure the horrific terrors of the Tribulation, in the end, God's people **will** escape God's wrath.

At the very end of the Tribulation, Christ will return to earth with all the host of heaven (Rev. 19:11-16), and He Himself (verses 15-16) will **personally** destroy the armies of the earth which will be gathered to fight against Him at the Battle of Armageddon. Then He will set up His kingdom on earth for 1000 years (the Millennium). The host of heaven returning with Him to earth will include the angels (Matt. 16:27, 25:31; Mk. 8:38) and all the saints [believers] (Zech. 14:5; Jude 1:14), who were raptured (resurrected) into heaven at the seventh trumpet.

The Second Coming and the Post-Tribulation Surprise

The term "Second Coming [of Christ]" has been a source of a lot of contention and theological debate. Please be aware that the term "Second Coming" is another one of those phrases that is not found in the Bible. It is a theological term which refers to the return of Christ. Over the years the term has become unintentionally misused. Today believers refer to the Second Coming as both the Rapture event (resurrection), when He descends from heaven to meet us in the clouds (1 Thes. 4:16-17), **and** the actual return of Christ to the earth to set up His millennial kingdom. I assume that originally, the Second Coming referred only to His actual return to set up His millennial kingdom, and that because of excitement over the prospect of being raptured away, the Rapture has also become referred to as the Second Coming. At any rate, using the term for both events is not only confusing, but also a source of a lot of arguments.

Many will complain, saying, "How can the Second Coming happen **twice**? That's self-contradictory!" They do have a legitimate complaint. (Sadly, many of these use this complaint as justification to totally dismiss the Rapture, in which the Lord descends from heaven to the clouds, while we get resurrected up into the clouds to meet Him, as recorded in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. They sarcastically call this a "secret Rapture.") The truth is, Jesus, the apostles, and the epistle writers **never** made **any** statement about Jesus' coming a second time, third time, fourth time, or any other number of times that He would come. They simply referred to His "coming"—nothing more. So hypothetically, He could come 1000 times more without contradicting His words or the words of the apostles. So the argument that "He can't come down to the clouds to resurrect believers into heaven **and** come to set up His kingdom at a different time because there are no two second comings" is totally irrelevant. The **only** problem is that the theological term *Second Coming* is regularly misused.

Okay, I hope you're ready for this. I sure am. As a matter of fact, I'm so excited about something that the Lord recently showed me after 40 years of being saved, that I like to think of it as a "post-Tribulation surprise."—because it sure surprised me!

Okay, here it is. While most believers believe in a pre-Tribulation resurrection/Rapture or seventh trumpet pre-wrath resurrection/Rapture (like myself), those who hold a post-Tribulation view believe in a resurrection at the **end** of the Tribulation. Here is the main passage of scripture that they use to support their position (Rev. 20:4-6):

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. **And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.**

5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Based on the above scripture, most of them say that they don't believe that there will be a "Rapture" into heaven at that time, because we will all be entering into the Millennium on earth with Christ, but they **do** believe that there will be a bodily resurrection at the end of the Tribulation right before we enter the Millennium here on earth. Guess what. They are absolutely right!

Right at this moment, you're probably saying to yourself, "What??? I'm completely confused. Didn't he just spend a lot of time trying to show me why he believes in a seventh trumpet pre-wrath Rapture???" That is correct. I sure did. God has made it clear to me through scripture that the resurrection which we call the Rapture will take place at the blowing of the seventh trumpet—right before God pours out His bowls of wrath upon mankind. But he has also revealed to me that the post-Tribulation position is also correct. How can this be? Surprise! They are **two different resurrections!**

The resurrection which we refer to as the Rapture, which we are all waiting for, will occur at the blowing of the seventh trumpet, sparing us from the seven bowls of God's wrath upon all of mankind. At this time, all the saints (believers) since the creation of the world will be resurrected. The dead saints will be given new immortal bodies, and those of us who are still alive will be made immortal as our bodies are instantly changed (1 Cor. 15:51-53). Jesus will come down ("descend") to the clouds, and we will go up, meeting Him there (1 Thes. 4:16-17), then fly away to heaven. This resurrection is quite different from the resurrection at the end of the Tribulation. I will get to that shortly.

After we go up to heaven in the Rapture, God's angels will pour out the seven bowls of His wrath, bringing fierce judgment upon the remainder of mankind. During these "bowl judgments", more people on earth will be getting saved, and giving their lives for Christ through beheading (Rev. 20:4). At the very end of the Tribulation, we (those raptured into heaven) will return from heaven to earth with Jesus (Rev. 19:14-15), as He destroys the armies of the earth and prepares to set up His millennial kingdom. It is at this time that the post-Tribulation resurrection will take place.

The participants of this resurrection will be those who are saved and beheaded for Christ during the bowl judgments. This resurrection is different from the Rapture in that they will not be resurrected into heaven. There would be no point. Those of us who are raptured to heaven at the seventh trumpet will already be back on earth with Jesus at this time, getting ready to enter the Millennium. Those who are martyred for Christ during the bowl judgments will simply have their bodies resurrected (immortal like ours) and they will join us as we all enter the 1000-year Millennium together here on earth. The words "And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4) actually means that they **came to life** and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. This is easily understood by contrasting

them with those in verse 5: "But the **rest** of the dead **did not live again** until the thousand years were finished." In addition, there are other Bible versions (I'm using the NKJV) in which the words "they lived" (verse 4) are actually translated as "They came to life." So then, there is a resurrection at the seventh trumpet (the Rapture), and there is also a post-Tribulation resurrection (**the First Resurrection**).

At this point, those who hold the post-Tribulation view would complain, "There cannot be a so-called 'Rapture resurrection' before the post-Tribulation resurrection, which is clearly called 'the first resurrection' in the scriptures. That is contradictory." That actually puzzled me all my life—until recently. I will now explain to you what God recently showed me.

At the beginning of this work, I pointed out through the scriptures that there have already been at least 11 resurrections, and there are at least four more to come (two of these resurrections—the two witnesses and the Rapture—will occur before the post-Tribulation "First Resurrection."). So how can the post-Tribulation resurrection be the First Resurrection if there are at least 13 resurrections that come before it? Easy. The First Resurrection is on a different list, so to speak. It is not the first of **all** resurrections, obviously. So it is not being compared to **those** resurrections. It is being compared to the **other** resurrection—the **Second Resurrection**, which is implied. These two resurrections are both mentioned in Revelation 20:4-6. Let me go ahead and quote this again, and then I'll give you the details. I have added parentheses at the beginning of verse 5, as this seems to help clarify the meaning:

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

5 (But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.) This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Most of this passage deals with those who get saved and martyred during the bowl judgments. The second sentence of verse 4 explains that they were beheaded. It also states that the apostle John saw **their souls**. By the time the Tribulation is over and the thousand-year Millennium is about to begin, these martyrs are no longer just souls in heaven, but their bodies are resurrected along with their souls here on earth. They "live" or "come to life." (last sentence in verse 4) This is the **First Resurrection** (verse 5b). It takes place at the end of the Tribulation, at the beginning of the thousand-year Millennium (See the end of verse 4). The **Second Resurrection** (not named, but implied) will not take place until **the end** of the Millennium: "But the rest of the dead did not live again **until the thousand years were finished.**" (verse 5a)

I hope you can see by now that the First Resurrection, named as such in verses 5 and 6, was **not** given that name because there are no resurrections that precede it (including the Rapture), but because it is being contrasted with the **Second Resurrection**, which takes place after the 1000 years are up. So, yes, all of this makes room for the resurrection of the two witnesses and the resurrection called the Rapture to take place **before** the First Resurrection, which is simply named as such in contrast with the **Second** Resurrection, which takes place after the 1000 year reign of Christ upon earth.

The Unnamed SECOND Resurrection

At this point you are probably wondering what the Second Resurrection (after the Millennium) is all about. Okay. First let me back up a little. When the Rapture takes place at the seventh trumpet, the bodies of all the saints (believers) who died since the creation of the world will be raised from the dead, immortalized, and reunited with their souls in heaven. The believers who are still alive at this time will be immortalized and taken straight to heaven—body and all. **All** of the believers on earth will be gone.

Immediately afterward, God's bowls of wrath—His bowl judgments—will be unleashed upon earth. At this time, **more** people will be getting saved and martyred by having their heads cut off. At the end of the Tribulation, their souls, which will be in heaven, will be reunited with their bodies on earth, which will be resurrected (Okay, I know I just discussed most of this, but I want to make sure you are following every detail **very carefully**). At this point, all believers on earth have been resurrected. Now in verse 5 above it says, "But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished." This is the Second Resurrection; not named, but understood/implicit. If all the believers have been resurrected up until this point, then who are "the rest of the dead" who "did not live again until the thousand years were finished"? Who are these people mentioned that are going to participate in the Second Resurrection? You're going to be shocked by the answer; but here it comes. The answer is: **the unbelievers of all time**. I'm sure you will find that very hard to believe; however, I will provide you with **plenty of scripture** to back this up, so hold on to your seat. Let's look at the scripture passage above yet again. Let's look at verses 5b-6a: "This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power..." It is made clear here that those who participate in the First Resurrection will not experience the Second Death, which is the lake of fire, a.k.a. hell (Rev. 20:14, 21:8). However, the implication is that "the rest of the dead," (in verse 5) who will participate in the **Second** Resurrection, will **also** experience the Second Death. Yes, these are all the unbelievers—those damned to hell—who will also have a resurrected body, which will experience pain throughout eternity.

Every person who has ever lived was created with not only a soul, but a body as well. That is the way that God designed us, and that is how we will be in the end—believer and unbeliever alike. We all die, as our souls are separated from our bodies

and go to heaven (believers) or Hades/hell (unbelievers), but when it's all over and we stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ (believers) or the Great White Throne Judgment (unbelievers), we will all stand before God with both a resurrected body and a soul. Both our souls **and** our bodies will last for all eternity—either to experience the joys of heaven (believers) or the torments of hell (unbelievers).

That there will be not only a bodily resurrection for those who are going to heaven, but also for those who are going to hell (a.k.a. the lake of fire) is clear throughout the scriptures. Yes, it is very clear that those who are cast into the lake of fire on Judgment Day will **also** have resurrected bodies. They will stand before God to determine the degree of punishment that they will suffer in hell, based on their works during their lifetime.

- In Matthew 10:28 Jesus said, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul **and body in hell.**"
- When presenting himself before Felix, Paul said, "I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be **a resurrection of the dead**, both of the just **and the unjust.**" (Acts 24:15)
- In John 5:28-29 Jesus said, "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, **and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.**" When unbelievers die, their soul goes to Hades/hell. How can they hear His voice in the grave if their soul is not there?—It will only be possible to hear His voice from the grave when their soul returns from Hades/hell to be reunited with their body in the grave and be resurrected to stand before God on Judgment Day.
- Daniel 12:2- "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth **shall awake**, some to everlasting life, **some to shame and everlasting contempt.**" **Bodies** "sleep in the dust of the earth;" not souls. Once again, souls go to either heaven or Hades/hell. This verse is talking about a **bodily** resurrection—not only for the righteous, but also for the unrighteous. So on Judgment Day their souls will be reunited with their bodies, and they will be raised to stand before God to give an account of their life.
- Revelation 20:
Verse 5a- "But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished." The Second Resurrection will take place immediately after the 1000-year Millennium is completed.
Verse 13- "The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works."
- Revelation 19:20- "Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were **cast alive** into the lake of fire burning with brimstone [hell]." This event, which happens at the end of the Tribulation, is further proof that hell will be not only a place of torment for the soul, **but also the body**, as well. That the beast (a

demon in human flesh) and false prophet are “cast alive” into the lake of fire means that they are cast into hell **body and all**.

Those who belong to Christ, “the saved,” who have completely committed their lives to God, will also stand before Christ to give an account of their life (1 Cor. 3:13-15; 2 Cor. 5:10). This is **not** to determine whether they will go to heaven or not, but to determine the degree of joy that they will experience in heaven, based on their works throughout their lifetime (beginning with the day of their salvation).

Chronology of End Times Events

Okay; it’s about time for me to wrap this up. To help you get an idea of the order in which the main events that I have discussed will take place, I will list and summarize them below **in chronological order**. Since it would be too time-consuming for me to go into every detail of the book of Revelation, I will simply list only the events that I have covered in this work. Afterwards, I will put these events on two timelines to give you an idea of **the approximate timing** of the events:

- **Beginning of the Tribulation.** It lasts for seven years. The chronology of the [Great] Tribulation revolves around the heavenly opening of seven seals, the blowing of seven trumpets, and the pouring out of seven bowls of God’s wrath. The Tribulation is characterized by the widespread use of weapons of mass destruction, demonic activity, persecution of God’s people, worldwide rule by a demon in human flesh known as the beast or antichrist, and God’s judgment.
- **The ministry of the two witnesses.** Their ministry will last approximately 3 ½ years. These two men will prophesy, and cry out for the world to repent and turn to Christ. They will have God’s authority to bring about various plagues upon sinful mankind. They will also have the power to protect themselves from their enemies by fire coming from their mouths.
- **The death and resurrection of the two witnesses.** After they have finished all that God sent them to do, they will be murdered by the antichrist. The entire world will see this through satellite and internet TV. Everyone will celebrate and leave their dead bodies on the streets of Jerusalem to rot, refusing them burial. After 3 ½ days God will raise them from the dead, and they will go up to heaven in a cloud.
- **The seventh trumpet and the Rapture.** Shortly after the resurrection of the two witnesses into heaven, the seventh trumpet will be blown, and all the saints (believers) since the creation of the world will be resurrected into heaven. The dead will be raised with immortal bodies, and those who are still alive will be made immortal.
- **The seven bowls of God’s wrath.** Immediately after God’s people are safely raptured into heaven, He will unleash His furious wrath upon mankind with plagues through His seven bowl judgments. During this time, more people will turn to Christ and get saved. Since there will be no believers left on earth at this time to give them the gospel, it’s probable that they get saved through gospel tracts that were left behind, gospel messages that they remembered, and gospel messages that were previously recorded. The antichrist and his minions have these believers executed by beheading.

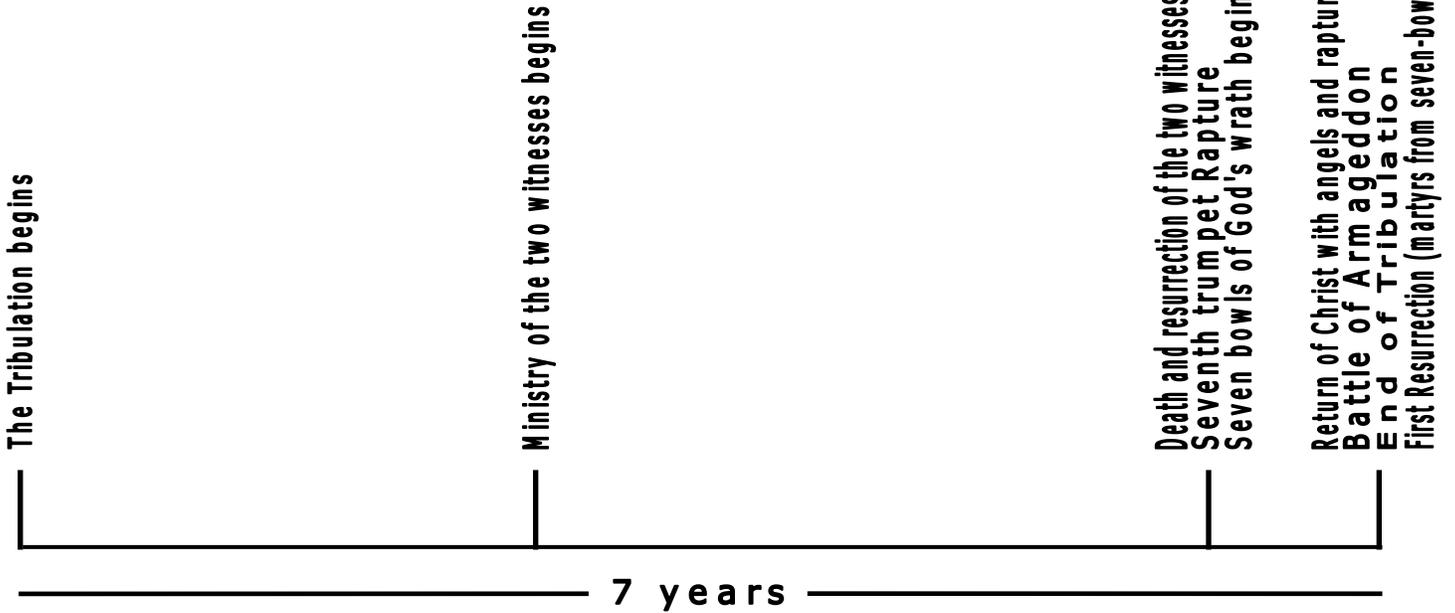
- **The return of Christ, the Battle of Armageddon, and the end of the Tribulation.** Christ will return to earth from heaven with all the raptured believers, and the angels. He will fight against the armies of earth and destroy them with the sword of His mouth. All Israel turns to Christ and gets saved.
- **The First Resurrection and the beginning of Christ's 1000-year reign upon earth.** Those who are saved and beheaded during the time of the seven bowls of God's wrath will be raised from the dead in immortal bodies right before the Millennium begins. They will join those of us who were previously raptured into heaven and returned with Christ to earth. We will enter the 1000-year reign of Christ together, along with the angels and the remaining mortal humans who survive the Tribulation. Satan and his demons will be imprisoned during this time and will no longer be able to tempt and influence mortal mankind.
- **The end of the Millennium.** Satan and his demons are released and lead the unbelieving mortals of mankind into a final rebellion against God, which He immediately crushes. Satan and his demons are cast into the lake of fire (hell).
- **The Second Resurrection and the Great White Throne Judgment.** All the unbelievers since the creation of the world are raised from the dead and taken to the Great White Throne Judgment, where they will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and give account for their sins, to determine the degree of torment that they will experience in hell for all of eternity.
- **New heaven and a new earth.** God recreates the entire universe, including a new earth, which are completely untainted by sin. The saints (believers) spend eternity together in heaven with God, the angels, and their loved ones while the unbelievers spend eternity in hell, away from the presence of God.

TIMELINES FOR THE GREAT TRIBULATION AND MILLENNIUM

Below are two timelines—one for the Tribulation, and one for the Millennium. There is a little overlap, since the Millennium starts right at the end of The Tribulation (Illustrated passage of time as it appears is approximate):

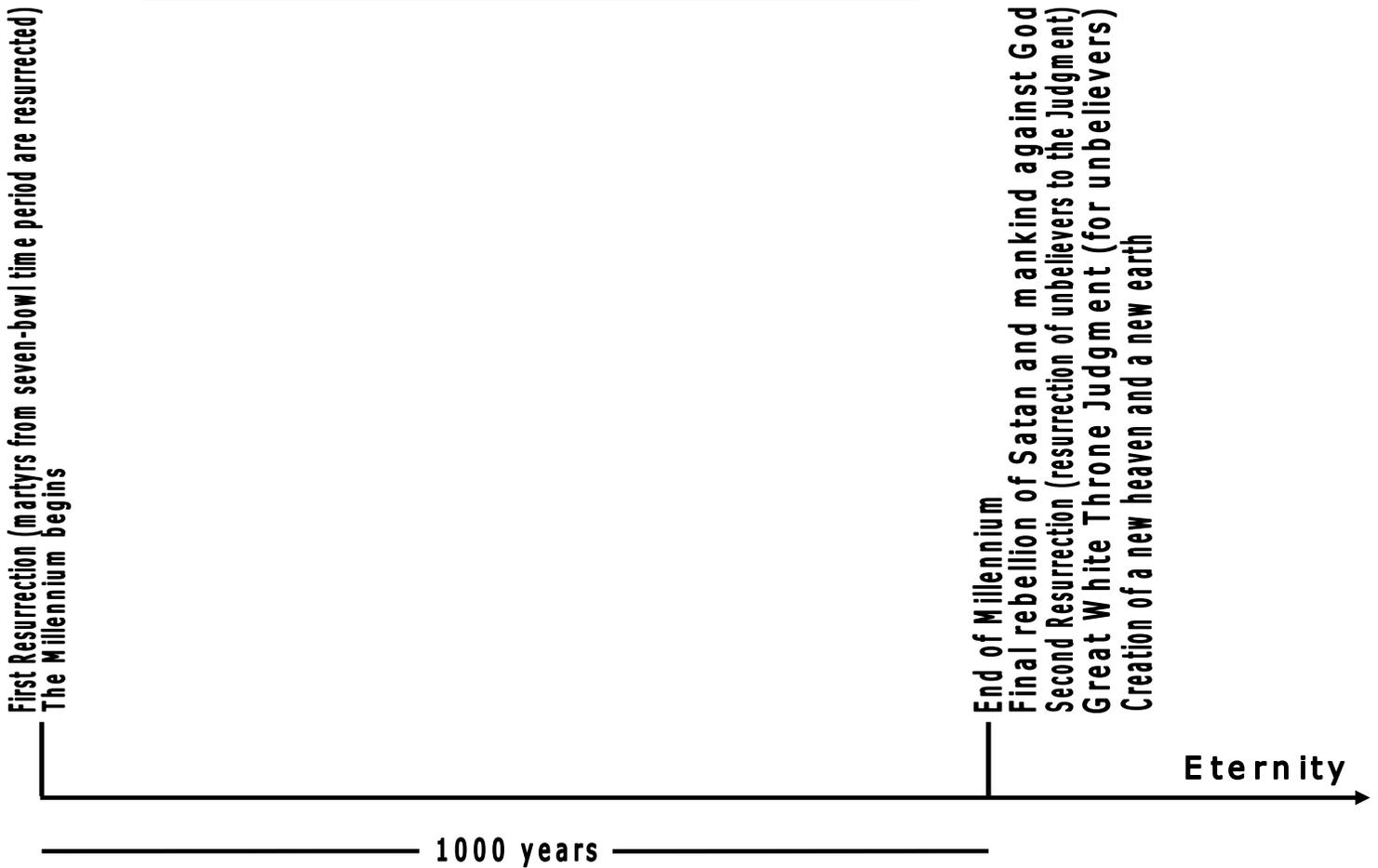
**TIMELINE ONE:
THE GREAT TRIBULATION
(7 YEARS)**

The chronology of the [Great] Tribulation revolves around the heavenly opening of seven seals, the blowing of seven trumpets, and the pouring out of seven bowls of God's wrath. The Tribulation is characterized by the widespread use of weapons of mass destruction, demonic activity, persecution of God's people, worldwide rule by a demon in human flesh (known as the beast or the antichrist), and God's judgment.



**TIMELINE TWO:
THE MILLENNIUM
(1000 YEARS)**

Those who are saved and beheaded during the time of the seven bowls of God's wrath will be raised from the dead (This is the First Resurrection) in immortal bodies right before the Millennium begins. They will join those of us who were previously raptured into heaven and returned with Christ to earth. We will enter the 1000-year reign of Christ together, along with the angels and the remaining mortal humans who survived the Tribulation. Satan and his demons will be imprisoned during this time and will be unable to tempt and influence mortal mankind.



I would like to remind you that one of the main purposes of the Tribulation in regards to believers is to purify the body of Christ from its current carnal state.

Sure, we would all love to go up to heaven right now before all hell breaks loose on earth; but then how will Jesus Christ have a pure bride to look forward to? We must accept the fact that in order to be ready to meet Him, we must be purified by going through the Tribulation. So instead of burying your head in the sand, like so many of God's people are doing today, waiting for Christ to carry them off to heaven in their current filthy condition, determine that you will follow Christ at all costs. Ask God to show you all of the filthy traditions that the body of Christ has adopted from the world and blessed in Jesus' name over the last 2000 years. Then purify them all from your life and ask Him to prepare you for the terrifying days that are just ahead—because you are going to need as much of His help as you can possibly get.

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