

I. Introduction

Question:

- If the pre-tribulation rapture is a biblical doctrine, why did Jesus never speak of it?
- What was the source of Paul's teaching if he taught a pre-trib rapture?
- If the church is not "*subject to wrath*," then why would Tribulation saints be subject to it?
- What is "*the mystery of God*" in Revelation 10:7?

The "**rapture.**" Just saying that word among Christians strikes a deep emotional cord. I never really considered just how deep until I started my own search to clarify in my own mind apparent inconsistencies between what I had been taught, and what I was reading in the Scriptures. As I discovered what I believed the Scriptures really taught, those with whom I enjoyed deep Christian fellowship had a hard time with my conclusions. I quickly realized that the subject is either a subject of deep delight, or a subject of careful avoidance because of conflicts ignited on the issue between believers of like-faith.

Having been raised in the Baptist tradition I was always taught and believed that the rapture of the church would take place *prior to* the seven year period commonly known in the Bible as the Tribulation. The movie "**Thief in the Night**" had a powerful impact on me.

But until 1985, I never seriously studied the Scriptures for myself regarding the timing of the rapture, and I always wondered why this event was not mentioned in any of Jesus' descriptions of the end times as recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. It wasn't until I was involved in a small group Bible study on I Thessalonians that I decided to take a serious look at the issue. It was my turn to lead the study and "my turn" just happened to land on chapter four, the most popular description of the rapture event.

So desiring to understand what the Scriptures had to say, I began the search with what I considered to be an open mind, a "clean slate," attempting to put all previous ideas and teachings aside (i.e., that I Thessalonians 4 was definitely a pretrib rapture event, and Matthew 24 had nothing to do with the Church), and simply extract the raw teaching *from* the Scripture. The rule of study was for Scripture to be compared with the text of Scripture in order to allow the Bible to interpret itself. I believe I made an honest attempt to avoid *eisegesis*, a reading into the text what is not there. This is what I discovered.

Comparing Two Popular Passages

• 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17

I began this process with an examination of the popular rapture account in I Thessalonians 4:13-18. I sought to identify the basic elements contained in verses 16 & 17 which specifically describe the event:

16For 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. 17After 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. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

The individual elements of this event are:

- vs. 16
1. Christ comes down from heaven
 2. With a loud command
 3. With the voice of the Archangel
 4. With the trumpet call of God
 5. The dead in Christ are raised
- vs. 17
6. All living believers are caught up together into the clouds to join the resurrected believers
 7. They will be with Christ forever

Ironically, the description of the event stops there leaving no indication about what happens next. Will we go up into heaven? The text does not say. Will we go down to earth? The text does not say. It simply states that ***“we will be with the Lord forever,”*** wherever He is. This is the point at which one has to assume or interject one way or the other. And this assumption is usually based on one’s previously held view of the timing of the rapture.

So the point about this specific passage is that while it describes an actual event, it does not describe the actual timing of the event with reference to the Tribulation. And there seems to be a very good reason for this. Paul is not teaching about the timing of the event in this passage. He is specifically explaining to the Thessalonian church what will happen to believers who have died, and to those who are alive when Christ returns.

So to say that this passage teaches a pre-, mid, or post-trib teaching would require a reading into the text what is not there. That determination would have to come from another text. The issue of timing in relation to the Tribulation period is not included in this passage.

• **Matthew 24:30, 31**

I then examined the passage that raised my concerns about the pre-trib view, Matthew 24:30, 31. These are the words of Jesus. This passage seemed to have similar characteristics as I Thessalonians 4, but I have never heard it described as pre-trib the rapture of the church. That is what caught my attention. Why not? After all, Matthew 24 is the most comprehensive description of “tribulation” events which happen just before the return of Christ to the earth. One would think that an event as dramatic and significant as the rapture of the church might be mentioned by the founder of the church.

So I examined verses 30 and 31 which describe the actual event itself to check and see if this could be the same event described by Paul in I Thessalonians 4. So what follows is the actual description of the return of Christ. (Also included are the parallel passages found in Mark 13:26, 27, and Luke 21:27, 28):

30“At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. 31And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Mark 13:26, 27 *26"At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.*

Luke 21:27, 28 *27At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."*

The individual elements of this event according to Jesus looked like this:

- vs. 30
1. Christ comes down from heaven and appears in the sky ("clouds")
 2. With power and great glory
- vs. 31
3. He sends his angels
 4. With a loud trumpet call
 5. The elect are gathered from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other

Once again the description of this event stops there, just as it did in the 1 Thessalonians 4 passage. So I compared the two lists and noticed that in each list these four things happened:

- 1. Jesus appears in the sky, in the clouds**
- 2. There is a trumpet blast**
- 3. Angels are present with Him**
- 4. The elect are gathered and the dead in Christ are "caught up"**

Both passages included Jesus appearing in the sky, the presence of angels, a trumpet blast, and a worldwide gathering of God's elect saints. And in both scenarios the account stops at the same place. Neither scenario describes what happens next.

In any other type of comparative study, these two passages would be regarded as describing the same event. For example, we have no problem comparing the similarities and differences of the three versions of the parable of the Sower and the Seed in Matthew 13, Mark 4 and Luke 8. And yet we combine them to get the full story. In fact, we have not difficulty agreeing that the three Gospel accounts of this coming and gathering event and there is different wordings and descriptions. So why is it so hard to equate Paul's event in 1 Thessalonians 4 with this event in Matthew 24? Paul's description aligns more with this description as much as or even more than Mark and Luke's record of His words. While the terms may be somewhat different, the essential activities are remarkably similar:

- The "**gathering**" in the Gospel passage sounded like it could be describing the **rapture**, or being "**caught up**" in the Thessalonian passage.
- The "**dead in Christ**" and the "**we who are left**" in the Thessalonian passage could legitimately be the "**elect**" who are gathered in the Gospel passage.

It is also important to note that the differences are not contradictory, but rather complementary. They are merely explaining different facets of the same event like two reporters describing different perspectives of the same event. And to reiterate the point mentioned above, neither

passage explains what happens next, i.e. return to heaven (pre-trib) or come down to earth (post-trib).

This alarming comparison rattled me. It made me question my previous belief that Christ's second coming will happen in two parts: 1) The pre-trib rapture of the church, and 2) His triumphant return to the earth seven years later at the end of the tribulation.

So the questions screamed:

- Could these two passages possibly be describing the same event?!
- In *Matthew 24:30, 31*, is Jesus giving us a chronological order of the event later described by Paul in *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*?
- Is Paul simply explaining what is in store for believers at this second coming taught by Jesus?
- Could Scripture really be interpreting Scripture with regard to the actual timing of the rapture?

But then I noticed one salient difference in the two passages. Unlike Paul's description, Jesus' description includes a temporal element indicating **WHEN** in relation to the tribulation of the saints this event would happen. He says in verse 29, "***Immediately after the distress of those days...***"

I sat stunned. Such a startling "hypothesis" propelled me into a furious search. The possibility that the pre-trib rapture might occur "***immediately after the distress of those days***" ignited in me a passion to search the Scriptures to determine what the rest of the Bible had to say about such an idea. Does the rest of Scripture support this notion that Jesus and Paul are describing the same thing, and the idea of the rapture occurring **after** the distress of those days? I had to know.

So I examined the teachings of what I believed to be the key teachers on the subject (Jesus, Paul, John, and Daniel). Following is a summary of what I discovered. Since Paul has been called the Apostle of the pre-trib doctrine, I will begin with what I discovered in his letters.

II. Paul's Teachings

Paul writes much about the second coming of the Lord Jesus. So it would seem reasonable to conclude that he clearly understood what was going to happen in the future and that he would communicate this understanding to his readers. Following are examinations of the primary passages in which he described the rapture and second coming of Christ and how they may or may not answer the question of timing in relation to the Great Tribulation period.

A. The Description of the Rapture

- **1 Thessalonians 4:13–18**

Let's start at the heart of the matter. This is the primary passage in all of Paul's writings used to support a pre-trib rapture position. But even a cursory look at the passage reveals that while the event described is very real, nowhere in these six verses does it mention or make reference to the order in which this event occurs in relation to the tribulation. In fact he does not even mention the tribulation in this passage. That was not Paul's purpose for addressing the issue with the Thessalonian church. The purpose is stated in verse 13:

"Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep..."

Paul is answering the question that many of the Thessalonians were evidently asking, *"What is going to happen to our Christian brothers and sisters who have already died?"* Apparently the infant church was concerned about the future of their deceased brothers and sisters in Christ. Are the deceased going to miss out on anything when Christ returns? Will they ever see them again?

So Paul addresses this ignorance by describing WHAT will actually happen to those believers when Jesus returns...

"The dead in Christ will rise first. Then we will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

And he concludes with an exhortation to *"encourage each other with these words"* because these are certainly words packed with eternal encouragement!

So the important thing to notice here is that Paul is describing the **"WHAT"** of the return/rapture event." He does not say anything about the **"WHEN"** of this event...that is until the next verse which begins chapter 5.

Apparently the Thessalonians were also asking, *"WHEN will this miraculous event take place?"* It is the answer to this question that also helps us in our quest.

B. The Timing of the Rapture

- **1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**

As we approach this chapter we must first remember that the chapter divisions in the Bible were not original with the authors of the text. They were inserted many centuries later to help organize and locate individual verses. The unfortunate side of this literary help is that we can mistakenly assume that there is a major break in the thought of the text. That may be the tendency here. So to help with this here is the reading without the chapter break that includes the last verse of chapter 4 with the first verse of chapter 5:

Therefore, encourage each other with these words. Now, brothers, about the times and dates we do not need to write to you...

As you can see chapter 5 begins with the transitional term "*Now...*" (Greek, δε). I am not going to quibble about the strength of this transitional term. I do know that there are stronger transitional terms used in the Greek language. But the greater issue and weight of determination in all of the passages that use transitions is the context. What is the greater context of the passage describing? Paul has just finished describing the rapture. Now he begins describing the "*times and dates*" of something. What is that something? Does he introduce a new subject... a new and separate event?

A pre-trib view interprets this transitional word as changing the entire subject from the discussion of an assumed pre-trib rapture event in chapter 4, to an entirely different event in chapter 5, the actual second coming of Christ which is believed to occur seven years later. This interpretation hinges on Paul's use of the phrase "*the day of the Lord*" (vs. 2) that will come at the end of the tribulation. So according to a pre-trib interpretation, between verse 18 of chapter 4 and verse 1 of chapter 5, when chapter divisions were not used when he wrote the letter, Paul leaps over seven years of tribulation to describe the *times and dates* of the day of the Lord which is assumed to be a completely separate day.

I wonder if the Thessalonian church read all of that into the letter when they received it. Or did they just think that the *times and dates* Paul mentions refers to the event he just described in chapter 4?

Now it is obvious that the beginning of chapter 5 transitions to a new shift in thought with the transitional word "*Now.*" But does the transition have to be about a completely new subject altogether? Paul could just as well be making a simple transition to a different component of the same broader subject of what he just discussed in chapter 4—the actual event of the rapture; in chapter 5 he transitions to describe the timing of the rapture which he just explained. The description of the rapture in chapter 4 logically raised the question about *when* that event would happen. So Paul simply addresses that question. And there is plenty reason on which to base this assessment.

First, as he begins chapter 5, he assumes his readers understand the broader topic of what he is discussing as he brings up the issue of timing. He simply states, "**Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you...**" (vs. 1). The times and dates about what? He does not answer that "**what**" question. He has already done that in chapter 4. So we have to assume he is referring to the **times and dates** about the event just described, i.e. the rapture, because he does not introduce another event to discuss "**the times a dates**"!

Second, as he continues the discussion he gives even greater insight into the event by referring to it as "**the day of the Lord**" (vs. 2)! Could the rapture be called "**the day of the Lord?**" Absolutely! That is what he calls it in 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2 where he unites the two events into one event saying "**Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus and our being gathered to him...the day of the Lord...**"

Third, as chapter 5 unfolds we discover that Paul believes that the Thessalonian believers might be at that event should it happen sooner than later. He says things like "this day should not surprise YOU like a thief." Why would he even say such a thing indicating they would be here for that day if they are supposed to be raptured seven years before the event happens? We develop this "You Factor" more in the following pages.

Fourth, Paul ties the subject of the two chapters together when he reiterates the whole teaching of chapter 4 (what will happen to those who are asleep in Christ and those who are still alive) by stating in 5:10,

***"He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep,*
*we may live together with him."***

So in Paul's mind, these two passages are describing the same event. The first passage describes **WHAT** will happen; the second **transitions** to describe **WHEN** it will happen. And if we can conclude that chapter 5 is describing the timing of the event described in chapter 4, then does Paul say **WHEN** it will specifically happen? The answer to this is "Yes" and "No"... at least in this passage. Let's take a look and see what he says.

1. The Thessalonians Already Knew

The first thing we learn from Paul's opening line in chapter 5 is that the Thessalonian church already knew about the timing of the second coming as indicated by the first statement Paul makes:

"Now, brothers, about the times and dates we do not need to write to you,

Paul did not need to write it because apparently he must have shared this with them while he was personally with them on his missionary journeys. So while he affirms they knew, he leaves us in the dark about any specific time. But, as is indicated in II Thessalonians 2, they later thought that "**the day**" had already come. This forced Paul to be more specific in the second letter about the timing of the event. We will get to that when we deal with that passage. The point here is that he had already told them in a previous visit about the timing of that day.

2. "Like a Thief in the Night"

The second thing we learn is about the nature of the timing:

“for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.”

“Like a thief in the night?” This is a very unique expression used in other parts of scripture. And it gives us a hint about the timing of this event. Let’s look at two things about this expression.

First, what does this expression mean? Another word or phrase that could be used to describe the coming of a thief would be *“unexpected,”* or *“an unexpected surprise.”* If a thief announced his coming, he might not be a very successful thief. So Paul is teaching that *“the day of the Lord”* will not be expected, will be a surprise, just as a thief coming into a house to steal things is also not expected. So this is the nature of the timing of this event...it will be unexpected. But the interesting thing here is that since Paul affirms that they will know this, by virtue of this knowledge he dispels the “unexpectedness” of the event, at least for them as the church. We will look at this a little more later. But for now, notice that *“the day of the Lord”* is coming *“like a thief in the night”*...like an unexpected surprise.

Second, where else in the Scriptures is this expression used in similar context and how is it used? There are actually five other places in the Bible where this phrase is used. But we will only look at four of them because these are the ones that relate to future events.

First: 2 Peter 3:10

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

Here Peter uses this expression to describe a great and terrible day. It is a day that will include tremendous natural catastrophes like never before. It is a day that will include tremendous destruction. It is not a day that sounds like a simple and secret snatching away of the saints before these terrible things happen. None-the-less he calls it *“the day of the Lord”* that will come like a thief. This day will come unexpected.

Second: Revelation 3:3 in the letter to the church at Sardis:

Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. 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.

This is an interesting statement made by Jesus referring to His own return. It is interesting because he states that only if they (the church) do not repent, or *“do not wake up,”* His coming to them will be like the coming of a thief...an unexpected surprise...they will not know at what time he will come. Unlike the Thessalonians who knew that the day will come like a thief, this church that is sound asleep in their lethargy of sin will be surprised by the coming of Christ, like a thief in the night.

Third: Revelation 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."

Here again Jesus is talking about the nature of His return and that it will be like that of a thief, unexpected. But he explains it much like He explained it to the church of Sardis, that it will be "unexpected" only if you don't "stay awake." In essence he is saying that if one stays awake, stays alert, stays faithful to Him, then one will be blessed by His coming. Not shocked or surprised.

And the interesting thing about this statement is that Jesus says it between the sixth and seventh Bowl judgments! The wrath of God has been unleashed by the Trumpets and first six Bowls. And then Jesus says He will come like a thief. This is an interesting place to say that with regard to "timing."

Fourth: 1 Thessalonians 5:4, just two verses beyond our original verse,
But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.

Now this is very interesting. Paul says in verse 2 that the day of the Lord will come "***like a thief.***" And then just two verses later he says that "***this day should NOT surprise you*** (the Thessalonian church) ***like a thief.***" What is he saying? He is saying that if they would just pay attention to all the signs leading up to that event, then they will not be surprised, but will be expecting and be ready and waiting for the coming of the Lord.

In the following verses He reminds and exhorts them with similar phrases as in the other passages that refer to staying alert, or "***staying awake,***" or being "***sons of the day,***" and so on...

5You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 6So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. 7For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

So Paul is saying in 1 Thessalonians 5 that this day will come to them as a welcomed, anticipated, expected event! From the other passages we learn that this day is not a secret day of privately snatching away the church. It is a day in which there will be great natural and destructive catastrophe that will include the rapture of the church.

And for those who really believe that the rapture and the second coming of Christ ("***the day of the Lord***") are two separate events, why in the world does Paul even concern himself with exhorting them, the Thessalonian church, to "***stay awake***" so that this day will not surprise ***them***? If the church is supposed to be raptured seven years prior to the actual second coming of Christ, then this information would be of no concern to them whatsoever! They are presumable supposed to be gone!

So it seems, at least in Paul's mind, that it was important to educate the Thessalonian church on the times and the dates of the day of the Lord, because they were going to be directly affected by it, and he wanted them to be ready for it when it happened. (And also in Paul's mind it seems that the rapture happens on the same day that Christ returns to the earth... whenever that is. That is another significant point of this passage. The day of the Lord includes both the return of Christ to the earth and the rapture of Christians as He returns. But we will unpack this more when we discuss 2 Thessalonians chapter 2.)

For now, the main point is that Paul assumed that the Thessalonian believers, Christians, church would be present when this day arrived, whenever that day might be. This point then leads us to the next major issue with regard to Paul's teaching and understanding on the rapture, the **"You" Factor**.

C. The "You" Factor

The **"You" Factor** simply asserts that it is the recipients of Paul's letters, should they be alive on the day when these prophetic events take place, who will be the ones who will experience the events described. Paul does not refer to another group of people who will experience these events. He does not say that his readers will not be around when these events take place. He assumes these very people will be present on the earth should Christ gloriously return to the earth in their day. He affirms this with the simple pronoun **"you."** The question to ask then is, "Who are the **'you'** to whom Paul refers?" Who does he assume will be on the planet when the **"day of the Lord"** arrives? These passages come from letters he wrote to two Christian churches—the Thessalonians and the Corinthians.

1. 1 Thessalonians 5

Regardless of whether one believes that the **"day of the Lord"** mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 5:2 includes the rapture of the church described in chapter 4, or refers exclusively to the second coming at the end of the tribulation, Paul is instructing the church at Thessalonica about this coming day and showing them how to prepare for it. This begs the question, why would Paul even address this issue if the church is to be raptured seven years before this day?

He says, **"this day should not surprise YOU like a thief."**

How would they be even remotely surprised if they are not going to be there? Paul is assuming that they, or the future members of their church, are going to be on the earth whenever that day comes and is advising them and showing them how to be ready for it! And if this is Paul's assumption, then it clearly reveals Paul's belief that the church will be around on planet Earth when the **"day of the Lord"** happens.

2. 2 Thessalonians 1:5 - 10

In 2 Thessalonians 1, Paul again assumes that the Thessalonian church will be around at the second coming after having gone through a time of trouble. In verses 6 & 7 Paul describes the justice of God in light of a time of trouble for the believers at Thessalonica, and says that God's justice will bring **"relief"** from that trouble. He states:

"He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to YOU who are troubled, and to us as well.

The extent and nature of that trouble is not made clear in this passage. But, none-the-less, a time of relief from that trouble is promised. Now granted, this could very easily fit into a pre-trib interpretation. Christians have been persecuted throughout history and a pre-trib rapture would bring great relief to believers who have gone through this persecution. But the important thing to notice is **WHEN** that relief will be provided. Here the passage gets real specific where Paul reveals an answer to the **WHEN** question. He says in verse 7,

This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels."

This relief will come for Christians (members of the New Testament church) when Jesus is revealed **"in blazing fire with his powerful angels"**! (Compare with Mark 8:38) This does not sound like a quiet, secret snatching away that will happen in the twinkling of an eye where millions of Christians mysteriously and instantly vanish from the earth **prior to** the great tribulation as has been described in the pre-trib view. This sounds more like a dramatic rescue from the peril of ferocious persecution, like the dramatic power laden event that Jesus described in Matthew 24:30, 31! But the point to make here is that Paul clearly indicates that the time of **"relief"** for this **church** will happen when Christ is revealed **"in blazing fire with his powerful angels**, and it is the people of **this church** who will find relief then and not until then. There is no hint of a pre-tribulation or even a mid-trib rapture.

The dramatic nature of this **"relief"** is echoed in other passages describing the same type of dramatic salvation as opposed to a secret pre-trib snatching away:

- 1 Thessalonians 1:10 describes it as a **"rescue"**
- Matthew 24:13 says it is their **"salvation"**
- Luke 21:28 Jesus describes it as **"your redemption"**
- Daniel 12:1 refers to it as a **"deliverance"**
- And 1 Thessalonians 4:17 describes it as being **"caught up"** (raptured)

And Paul does not stop there. He gives more details about this day of **"relief"** when Jesus is revealed. He states in verses 8 and 9,

He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power

This sounds like judgment day for a lot of unbelievers! Not the judgment that is temporary, but a judgment that is eternal. That does not happen until Christ returns to the earth! Again, there is no hint of any time separation between the church's rescue and Christ's return. It continues to sound like two sides of the same event.

But Paul continues with more. He states in verse 10 that this is also the day on which Christ will be glorified:

"On that day He comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed."

This is not a day that will be secret and hidden from the rest of the world. This is not a day in which unbelievers will be left in the dark. This is a day in which He will be glorified. This is a day in which unbelievers will receive their judgment.

And then just to make his point crystal clear, Paul makes a direct statement describing who will be rescued and in whom Christ will be glorified: He says:

"This includes YOU, because you believed our testimony to you."

Here is the **"You factor."** This is the Thessalonian *church* who will not be relieved until Christ returns in blazing fire with His angels and judges the unfaithful and is glorified in His people! There is no hint of an event that happens at the beginning of the tribulation. This happens as a "rescue," a "deliverance" from some type of terrible persecution at the end of the tribulation, at the second return of Christ to the earth.

3. I Corinthians 1:7, 8

7Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. 8He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In this passage Paul is exhorting the Corinthian *church* to use their spiritual gifts in light of the assumed fact that they are waiting for the **"Lord Jesus to be revealed."** But when will this happen?

The answer is found in the next phrase as he reminds them that Jesus will keep them **"strong to the end."** So Jesus will be revealed to them at **"the end."** Now I concede that this could mean, **"the end of the church age."** But what preceded and what follows has to shed light on which **"end"** Paul is meaning.

What follows is that they might **"be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."** This seems to point to a particular day. Which one? When Jesus is **"revealed."** Now in all of the pre-trib teachings the rapture is portrayed as a secret snatching of the saints. And Jesus will not yet be **"revealed"** at the pre-trib rapture.

And someone may also say that the church will be waiting for this day to arrive while in heaven during the seven year tribulation out of which they supposedly have been snatched. But Paul charged them to use their spiritual gift until that day. How can they use their spiritual gift while they wait in heaven? Did Paul have in mind two separate days? That is difficult to accept.

“You” Factor Summary

So in at least three separate passages Paul directly addresses members of the Christian church assuming and implying that should they be alive at the time, they will be present on earth at the second coming of Christ which will happen at the end of the tribulation period.

But the most convincing passage of all of Paul’s writings that teach that the church will be on earth during the tribulation period and will not raptured until the time of Jesus’ complete return to earth is **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**. Let’s take a look.

D. The “Gathering” 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

What does Paul actually call this event we commonly refer to as the “*rapture*”? The word “*rapture*” never actually occurs in the Bible. We get this term from the Latin “*rapturo*” which translates to our English phrase “*caught up*” in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. So it is a legitimate word to use to describe the event. But it unfortunately has been used as a technical term to arbitrarily separate this event from the second coming of Christ. So I think it is important to understand the actual word that Paul uses to describe this great event. This word is found in **2 Thessalonians 2:1**. He writes:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him,

In this short phrase Paul combines these two great events—the coming of the Lord Jesus and our (the church) being gathered to him. It seems that in Paul’s mind these two great events happen at the same time! There is certainly no hint of a multi-year separation as mandated by a pre-trib or mid-trib rapture viewpoint. But let’s break down this phrase and notice some other details. There are five observations I want to point out about this statement:

First, Paul’s Greek word used to describe the rapture is “*being gathered*” (ἐπισυναγωγή). This is the noun form of the same word used by Jesus in Matthew 24:31 where He says the elect will be “*gathered*” (ἐπισυναξει). So in essence, both Paul and Jesus call this event a “*gathering*.” This comparison alone is significant enough to connect the two passages as the same event.

Second, notice the order in which these two events are written: The “*coming of our Lord...*” is mentioned first; and then “*our being gathered to Him*” is written second. It seems that if Paul had in mind a pre-trib or mid-trib sequence, then why would he write these two events in this order?

Third, notice that the little word “**our**” is used with the “gathering.” That is obviously inclusive of Paul himself and the Christians who make up the Christian church (both Jews and gentiles) to whom he is writing who will be gathered at the “**coming of our Lord Jesus.**”

Fourth, if Paul is not referring to the rapture that he has already described in 1 Thessalonians 4, what other event could he have in mind as he describes “**our being gathered to him**”? Or could this phrase just be another way to describe the detailed event in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18? The answer is more likely the latter.

Fifth, the “**coming of our Lord**” (Greek: παρουσία) is a special reference to the return of Christ to the earth. Someone may say that this is the pre-trib rapture and Jesus does in fact come first to get us. The problem with that is that in this verse there is no reference to the timing of the rapture in relation to the tribulation. That little thought must be inserted into the text (eisegesis) to make it mean that. And further, because there is no timing element, a post-tribber could just as well insert a post-trib timing into the text and it could be equally construed as happening at the end of the tribulation. But the fact remains, in this passage there is no timing element given...at least not yet. Let's continue with the passage.

Verse 2 provides an interesting commentary on the first verse. It says:

...we ask you, brothers not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.

In this verse Paul reveals the issue for writing this. Evidently the Thessalonians were “unsettled” from some news that they had missed the day of the Lord. So Paul seeks to convince them that they had not missed it. And in doing so he gets real specific about *when* that day would arrive. But notice first what Paul does here in referring back to “**the coming of our Lord Jesus and our being gathered to him.**” He renames both of those events with one phrase calling them “**the day of the Lord.**” This also reveals that in Paul's mind these two events, (Jesus' second coming and the “gathering” or “rapture”) happen simultaneously on the same day, “**the day of the Lord.**” If Paul was teaching a pre-trib doctrine, I think he would have taken a little more care in separating the actual order in which these two events occur. But the opposite seems to be true. He is very careful to tie these two events together as one event!

But what about the “timing” element? How is he going to “settle” the “unsettled” and “alarmed” Thessalonians? That is next. He states:

3Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day (the day of the Lord → the coming of our Lord Jesus and our being gathered to Him) will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

Eureka! We have found it! Paul has revealed a timing element meant to settle the Thessalonian believers. Paul gives a specific timeline for the day of the Lord. He says the day will not come **“UNTIL”** two things have happened:

1. A **“rebellion”** has to occur.
2. The **“man of lawlessness”** has to be revealed.

Now Paul does not say if **“the day”** will happen when he is revealed or after he is revealed. He simply affirms that the church will be on the earth when he is revealed and will be gathered when Jesus comes. So what is the **“rebellion”** and who is **“the man of lawlessness”**?

The **“rebellion”** is described in the book of Daniel and mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 24. (*Daniel 8:12, 13, 23; 11:14, Matthew 24:10, 11*) Apparently it is a time when the world gets so difficult for followers of Christ that many of them turn away from their faith. This is more commonly known as the great apostasy. So in the end times, there will be a time when many believers will turn away from the faith. The day will not happen until after that happens.

The **“the man of lawlessness”** is also very prominent in Scripture mentioned throughout the book of Daniel, the teachings of Jesus and the book of Revelation. In Daniel he is referred to as **“the king of the north”** in chapter 11. He is described as the beast out of the sea in Revelation 13. A phrase that is commonly used to describe him is **“The Antichrist,”** the world ruler who will persecute followers of Christ during the second half of Daniel’s seventieth week.

So Paul gives two rock solid signs to the Thessalonian church to settle their unsettledness, to give them clear benchmarks for recognizing that the day of the Lord will not come until after these things happen. And evidently this was a repetition of what Paul had already told them. He says in verse 5:

Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?

If Paul was describing a pre-trib rapture to the Thessalonian church, and if they were convinced that the rapture would happen before the tribulation, then why would he now be telling them to watch for events that will happen after they are supposed to be **“gathered”** pre-trib? That would be of no concern to them as members of the church. And that would make this passage make no sense.

But, if in fact Paul is thinking that the church will be raptured at the end of the tribulation, at the actual second coming of Christ to the Earth, then he is being very careful to give them a clear sequence of signs and events to watch for so that what Paul said to them in the previous book would be true of them: **“you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.”** (*1Thess 5:4*)

In summary, **“the coming of our Lord Jesus”** and **“our being gathered to Him”** are also referred to as **“the day of the Lord,”** and Paul clearly instructs the Thessalonian Christians to watch for **“the rebellion”** to occur and the revealing of **“the man of lawlessness,”** both of which are events that happen during the time of the Great Tribulation. It is extremely difficult to think that Paul had in mind a pre-trib rapture separated by seven years (or even a mid-trib/pre-wrath

rapture) from the post-trib coming of Christ. It seems that Paul sees both of these events happening at the same time.

The affirmation of these two signs happening before the rapture also brings into question another popular pre-trib teaching: the notion of “Imminence.” Let’s take a look at that.

E. The Issue of Imminence

"The certainty that He may come at any moment, the uncertainty of the time of that arrival, and the fact that no prophesied event stands between the believer and that hour."

The Doctrine of Imminence has been used for decades to warn people that the rapture could occur at any time. Since it has been taught that the rapture is an event that has no signs leading up to it, then it is an urgent matter to immediately accept Christ.

While the goal of persuading people to accept Christ is an extremely urgent matter because every person’s appointment with death and the consequent eternal separation from God is always imminent, it does not appear that Paul ever had the issue of imminence in mind as it relates to the rapture.

We have just examined in 2 Thessalonians 2 where Paul attempted to settle the “unsettled” Thessalonians by revealing the two signs that must occur before the Christian rapture and Christ’s return. And if this is starting to sound redundant, that’s because it is. Paul was redundant with the Thessalonians.

But what are we to do about the other “*imminence*” statement made by Jesus when He said, “*No one knows about that day or hour*” (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32)? Some would claim that this is a strong statement for supporting a “Doctrine of Imminence”.

The first thing to notice is that within the context of this statement Jesus has already urged His audience to watch for the **signs** of His coming. He made statements like “*take a lesson from the fig tree...*” (Matthew 24:32, 33). So while it is true that no one will know the exact day or hour, Jesus gives clear reference to noticeable signs that point to His coming.

But some may still object to this saying that Jesus is referring only to the Jews in the Gospels, and this has nothing to do with Christians and the church. Apart from the 2 Thessalonians 2 passage mentioned above, let’s see how Paul addresses the issue in 1 Thessalonians 5. Remember, Paul is writing to Christians in the Thessalonian **church**. Paul warns the church that the trials that will precede the second coming of Christ will come on suddenly like “*labor pains on a pregnant woman,*” (1 Thessalonians 5:3). This is a very interesting analogy. No one really knows the actual day or hour when a pregnant mother will go into labor. But there are certainly observable signs that indicate the imminent reality of it happening very soon. And why is he even instructing the church about these trials if the church is purported to be raptured before this event happens. I don’t think that thought was ever a part of Paul’s understanding of the rapture and return of Christ.

So let's apply this same analogy to Jesus' words "**No one knows about that day or hour.**" Everyone would agree that no one knows the exact day or hour that a pregnant woman will go into labor. At the same time there is always a very clear sign for all to see that labor is imminent. And that is the whole point. Both Jesus and Paul emphasize that there will be signs to look for that point to the return of Christ, and we would be wise to watch for those signs. Paul even adds, "**But YOU, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise YOU like a thief**" (1 Thessalonians 5:4). If believers are not present during this time, why should there be concern about being surprised?

So if there is any element of imminence to the coming of Christ, it might be fair to compare it to the imminence of labor pains coming on a pregnant mother, or even the baby's birth for that matter. No one knows exactly when it will happen. But everyone who is watching can easily see the signs that it will happen soon. That is as imminent as it all gets.

F. The Source of Paul's Teaching

There is one more issue that needs to be addressed with regard to Paul's teaching about the timing of the rapture. If Paul actually believed while writing about the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 that it would happen seven years prior to the full and complete return of Christ to the earth, then what was his source of information? It is clear that Jesus never taught a pre-trib rapture. From whom, then, did Paul claim to have received this teaching? On what authority is he basing this claim?

He answers this question right at the beginning of the rapture discussion in 1 Thessalonians 4. Paul received his teaching on the rapture from the Lord Himself. He stated in 4:15, "**according to the Lord's own word...**" He received his understanding of end time event, "**the gathering,**" from Christ Himself! And as we pointed out earlier, nowhere in any of the Gospels did the Lord Jesus reveal the notion of a pre-trib, or even mid-trib rapture event. The opposite is more clearly the case if we are to examine "**the Lord's own word**" when Jesus exhorts his followers to endure to the end through trials and tribulations in Matthew 24:13, "**but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.**"

G. Summary of Paul's Teachings

From Paul's letters we see that he never endorsed the notion of a rapture event separated from the actual and complete return of Christ to earth. Paul claimed to get this teaching directly from Jesus Himself, he used the same word (**gathering**) to describe the event, he warned the Christians in the Thessalonian church to watch for the events that lead up to the second coming of Christ, he gave two specific signs that they are to look for (which clearly happen during the Tribulation) that must happen before Christ's return, and he described both the return of Christ and the rapture as "**the day of the Lord**" that will not come until after these two signs.

So it seems pretty clear that Paul never saw the rapture as a separate event from the actual second coming of Christ, let alone an event that will happen before or in the middle of the Great Tribulation. But what about the rest of Scripture? The testimony of two witnesses must be established. Did anyone else support this notion that the rapture will happen on the day that Christ physically returns to the earth? Let's take a look.

III. Jesus' Teachings

If anyone knew the timing of the rapture in relation to the Tribulation and the second coming, certainly Jesus would have known. As was pointed out in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, Paul claims Jesus as the source of his teachings. After examining Jesus' teachings on the issue, three issues emerged which proved to be significant in understanding what He taught on the timing of the rapture, all three of which have been addressed in Paul's teachings:

1. Jesus and Paul used *Similar Terminology* in their description of the event.
2. Jesus' use of the *"You" Factor*.
3. There is an *Absence* of any pre-tribulation teaching about the rapture.

A. Similar Terminology

• The *"Gathering"*

Matthew 24:31 *And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.*

In this verse Jesus explains to His disciples that in the future there will be a *"gathering"* (επισυναξει) of God's elect. In Mark 13:26, 27 the event is also described as a *"gathering."* The parallel passage in Luke 21:28 describes this as *"your redemption."*

In 1 Thessalonians 4:17 Paul uses a different phrase describing the event saying that believers will be *"caught up together in the clouds"*. But this does not in any way negate the possibility that it could be the same *"gathering"* because in 2 Thessalonians 2:1 Paul does, in referring back to this event calls this event a *"gathering"* (επισυναγωγης).

"Concerning the coming of our Lord and our being gathered to him..."

Paul's usage of this word completely agrees with Jesus' word in Matthew 24:31. And the word order of this passage also indicates that this *"gathering"* takes place at least at the same time as, if not some point after the coming of Christ. There certainly does not appear to be any understanding in Paul's mind that the two events, *"coming of our Lord Jesus"* and *"our being gathered,"* are dramatically separated by a seven year time of tribulation. And the church being *"caught up together in the clouds"* is a legitimate way to describe a *"gathering."*

The difference between Jesus and Paul's I Thessalonians 4 passage is that Jesus includes a specific timing element. He said in verse 29 of Matthew 24, this *"gathering"* takes place *"immediately after the distress of those days."* But Paul includes this in the 2 Thessalonians 2 passage, *"for that day will not come until..."* as we discussed above.

So Paul and Jesus use the same word to describe this event.

- **The Place of “Gathering”**

The second usage of “Similar Terminology” is the description of the location of this “gathering.” Jesus says that the gathering will be *“from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”* Now if He would have said, *“from one end of the earth to the other”* it might not have the same comparison. But He uses the word *“heavens”* a reference to the sky wherein are *“the clouds”* the place that Paul describes this gathering. This can easily be understood as the same location of Paul's rapture event in I Thessalonians 4:17 *“caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”*

- **The Identity of the “Gathered”**

So Jesus and Paul both use the same Greek word to describe an event called a *“gathering,”* and they both describe this gathering as a meeting *“in the air”*. Could these be the same event? It seems to appear that way.

But some still raise objections to the identity of those who will be gathered in this event described by Jesus. The pre-trib view states that the *“elect”* who are gathered in the Matthew 24 are only Jewish believers who turn to Christ for salvation during the great tribulation, after the church has been raptured. They are saying that the term *“elect”* does not apply to Christians who accept Christ during the age of the church.

But Romans 11:7 clearly reveals that there is a sharp distinction between Israel and the elect:

What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did.

Paul clearly separates the elect from Israel just because they are of Israel. Something more has to be included. Peter, in writing to Christians simply addresses believers in Christ as the elect in 1 Peter 1:1. So election does not seem to be limited only to redeemed Jews. It seems to apply to those who simply have faith in Jesus Christ regardless of their ethnicity. So Paul and Jesus are either at odds with each other, or they agree with each other.

To further address this “Identity” issue I want to jump into the second major tenant of this section on Jesus’ teachings. As Paul assumed that the Christians in the Corinthian and Thessalonian churches would be around for the physical return of Christ to the earth after the Great Tribulation, so Christ addresses His hearers in the same way. This is Christ’s version of the **“You Factor”**, albeit the other side of it. For Christ addresses a Jewish audience and there is no disagreement that they will be there. But the question is, are these Jews, as elect followers of Christ, in any way related or connected to the elect of the church?

B. The “You” Factor

Let’s start our identification process in Matthew 23. Jesus is in the temple where he rebukes the Pharisees with the seven woes, and then concludes with His lament for Jerusalem with these words:

37"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. 38Look, your house is left to you desolate. 39For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

From this passage a pre-trib view concludes that the identity of the “*elect*” who are “*gathered*” in 24:31 only includes Jewish believers, and not to the church. This is derived from the address “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...*” That is a direct address to Jews. So the pre-trib views reaches back to the end of chapter 23 to identify the elect of 24:31.

But let’s take a careful look. The teaching about the end times in Matthew 24 does not take place until after Jesus and his disciples leave Jerusalem and go up to the Mount of Olives (24:1-3). There is a clear break in the discussion between the end of chapter 23 and the start of chapter 24. Chapter 24 begins a private discussion that Jesus has only with His disciples. In this discussion He describes the signs of His coming and the end of the age. And He certainly has their attention as He describes the dramatic and cataclysmic events that will happen that will include the Great Tribulation.

But let’s focus on the identity of His audience. He is giving specific instruction to them indicating that they will be included in these events using the pronoun “*you*”.

He says:

vs. 4 - "Watch out that no one deceives YOU"

vs. 6 - "YOU will hear of wars and rumors of wars..."

vs. 9 - "Then YOU will be handed over to be persecuted..."

vs. 15 - "So when YOU see standing in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation..."

vs. 20 - "Pray that YOUR flight will not take place in winter..."

vs. 23 - "At that time if anyone says to YOU..."

Question: Who are the “*you*”?

It is obvious that He was talking to His disciples. So let’s take a look at who these men were and what they came to be.

These men, Jesus’ disciples, were Christ's closest earthly companions, later to be called His apostles. And with Christ as the Cornerstone, it is these very men who would eventually make up the foundation upon which Christ's church would be built: **Eph. 2:19, 20 ...God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.**

These very men would start and establish the first century church. And along with the rest of the believers, they would soon be labeled “*Christian*” (Acts 11:26) due to their personal identification with the person of Jesus Christ. Subsequently, every person throughout history

who would personally identify with the person and teachings of Jesus Christ would also be called a Christian and is a part of that very same church.

It is to these disciples who would make up the foundation of the Christian church that Jesus speaks. And He repeatedly involves them in the terrible events of Matthew 24 by using the personal pronoun "*you*."

But in our hind sight we see that these catastrophic, worldwide events have not yet occurred and did not occur in their lifetime. So they did not experience them. So to whom, then, would Jesus' words actually apply? Who, then, must be included in the "*you*" in this discourse?

Since He was not referring to his disciples immediately sitting in front of Him, then He had to be referring to those they represent... subsequent believers who would identify their lives with the same person and teachings as they did, who would actually be alive when these catastrophic events actually took place on the earth. He was not referring to Peter and James and John, and so on. He was referring to the collective whole of those who would make up his church, the foundation of which sat immediately before Him, believers in and followers of Christ who would be alive when these events took place. The church!

Also, Jesus makes no distinction here between Israel and the Church. Yes, it is clear He is talking to His own Jewish disciples who would later be the first overseers of his Church. But to say that this chapter does not apply to the Church arbitrarily and eisegetically separates the disciples from His Church.

But here is the kicker. When we take a careful look at the very reason for the persecution of the Great Tribulation which these elect will experience, we discover that it is persecution as a result of identification with Jesus, not ethnicity. He states in verse 9,

*"Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death,
and you will be hated by all nations because of me."*

If there is any indication about the identity of those who will be persecuted, it would be directed at Christians for their identification with Christ, not national Israel, or only Christian Jews!

Question: How could Peter think that this teaching of tribulation and persecution was for him as an Israelite, but not for him as a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ? He followed Christ, and all he knew was that this persecution would come to those who would follow Christ.

So who are the "*you*" to whom Jesus refers in Matthew 24? It isn't just the first twelve disciples. It is those who followed in their footsteps by believing their message. It is those who will be following Christ when these events actually occur...the church!
So while the teaching was given to those who started the church, it is easily concluded that it applies to the church that is alive when the events take place.

C. The Absence of 'Pre-Trib' Teaching

After all is said and done a pre-trib proponent can say that Jesus never really taught a pre-trib rapture because He only taught Jews. So we cannot really argue the point from Jesus' words. It is also believed that Paul is the great proponent of a pre-tribulation rapture. But a look at his writings reveals another story. What was Paul's source of authority for his teaching? Is it possible to know this? Does he tell us? The answer is a simple, 'yes.'

Paul actually states in *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18* that the source of his information about the rapture was Jesus. He writes in verse 15,

"According to the Lord's own word we tell you..."

Now if Paul is supposedly teaching a pre-trib rapture event, and Jesus is teaching a post-trib Jewish-only deliverance in Matthew 24, then what is this "**word**" which Paul received from the Lord Jesus? Was there a secret teaching given to Paul at his conversion on the road to Damascus which Jesus never told anyone else?

It is remarkable that there is no hint in any of Jesus' eschatological teachings about a pre-tribulation rapture event. You would think that the founder of His church would know this and let his followers in on the secret. The silence is deafening. And that is the point.

But let's just say that Paul is the teacher of a pre-trib rapture and Jesus is the proponent of the post-trib gathering. What we then have is two resurrections, two gatherings in the air/heaven of the church and then the elect. I am not ready to accept that notion.

But Jesus and Paul do agree. Neither one proposes a "double gathering". They both say that the gathering will happen after tribulation events. And both assume that those gathered are the elect who include redeemed Jews and Gentiles, members together of the same church.

But let's continue again into the rest of Scripture. What do both the prophet Daniel and the apostle John reveal about this event? Do they support a pre- or mid- trib view, or do they support the view that the rapture/gathering will take place at the complete second coming of Christ that will include only one resurrection of saints?

IV. Daniel's Record

Daniel records some pretty remarkable statements about the end times. The word “records” is used because just like the apostle John, he is simply writing down what he is being told by various angels and even Jesus Himself. I believe it is Jesus revealing chapters 10-12 to him because His description is almost exactly like the Jesus of Revelation 1. These sections can be closely paralleled with the Revelation Jesus gave to the apostle John.

As we look at Daniel 10-12, we have to remember that neither Daniel, nor any other Old Testament prophet understood the concept of the Christian church. From their perspective the **“people of God”** included only the people of Israel. But even then it did not include the whole nation. There were godless members of the Jewish race/nation whom God had rejected. It was the faithful of Israel who were considered “God’s people”, much like Paul who described as, **“not all Israel are Israel.”**

So let’s take a look at what was revealed to Daniel by Christ Himself about the end times as they pertain to the timing of the rapture. Chapter 11 can easily be described as the time of Great Tribulation because of the reference to the King of the North setting up **“the abomination that causes desolation”** mentioned in verse 31. Then chapter 12 continues chronologically after the events of chapter 11. (*For a summary of Daniel’s 70th week by the numbers, see Appendix D*)

We are going to look at two terms recorded in chapter 12 that describe an event that could possibly be the rapture, and a people who could include the church. The first term is the mention of a **“deliverance”** that will take place, and the second is a reference to **“the people”** who are going to be delivered. Let’s start with verse 1 of chapter 12.

A. The **“Deliverance”** in Daniel 12:2

As just mentioned, Daniel 12 comes on the heels of a long narration in chapter 11 about political folly and fighting. Verse 1 begins by saying:

"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.

Notice first that Jesus reveals there will be a time of **“distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.”** This unparalleled time of distress is unquestionably the Great Tribulation to which Jesus referred in Mathew 24:21 and Revelation 7:14.

Then immediately following this statement in verse 2 he says something very peculiar:

"But at that time your people- everyone whose name is found written in the book- will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt."

Here is a prophecy describing a great *deliverance* of Daniel's people... ***"your people."*** What will happen at this deliverance? He says, ***"Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake."*** This is a resurrection! Some will awake/resurrect to eternal life and others to eternal shame and contempt. Remember Paul's description of the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4 includes a resurrection of those who ***"sleep"*** in Christ. It does not include all the elements that Paul and Jesus foretold in the New Testament. But it does include resurrection. No small event.

But let's get to the issue of timing. When will these people be delivered? It just says ***"at that time"*** leaving the interpretation of the timing uncertain. But in light of the abomination of desolation in chapter 11, we can compare that with Jesus' reference to it in Matthew 24. So it is after the abomination of desolation, and it is during the time of great distress, Great Tribulation, certainly not before. But if we let Jesus words weigh in on the scenario, the balance tips toward ***"immediately after the distress of those days"*** (Matthew 24:29). What is a ***"deliverance"*** if it is not from the midst of great peril?

But some may argue that this is the time of Israel's deliverance. This is the time when Christ rescues national Israel at the battle of Armageddon and consequently has nothing to do with the rapture of the church. But that leads us to the second issue that is in this passage. Who is delivered? Who is resurrected? Who are the ***"your people"*** of Daniel 12:2?

B. The People of *"the Book"*

Jesus says to Daniel in verse 2,

"But at that time your people- everyone whose name is found written in the book- will be delivered."

The obvious inclusion of people to be delivered is the nation of Israel. Daniel was a Jew and it was his people who were in the Babylonian captivity when this was revealed to him. But as was mentioned above, not all Jews are Godly Jews (i.e. Ahab, Manassas, etc...). So the ***"your people"*** is restricted in this verse by the phrase ***"everyone whose name is found written in the book."*** What book?

Scripture does speak of a book in which names are written down. It is called the ***Lambs Book of Life***. (See Exodus 32:32, 33; Psalm 69:28; Philippians 4:3; Luke 10:20; Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15, 21:27). And this is not only an Old Covenant book. This book includes names of Christians, members of the church of Jesus Christ as affirmed by the letter to one of the seven churches in Revelation 3:5. So the phrase ***"your people,"*** if we are going to include everyone whose name is written in ***"the book,"*** would also include members of the Christian church. So Daniel goes way beyond Jewish history without even realizing it.

But how could Daniel's people, obviously Israel, include Gentile believers of the Christian church? Remember, not all of national Israel is classified as faithful Israel. There were some pretty bad Israelites who refused to worship their Creator. Even the apostle Paul says in Romans 9:6, 7:

For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called."

So Paul is distilling the "*seed of Abraham*" saying "*In Isaac your seed shall be called.*" This specifically excludes the people of Ishmael. But even all those who descended from Isaac were not true Israel. Who then are the seed of Abraham, descended through Isaac who are considered the Israel who will be delivered?

Paul answers this in Galatians 3:26-29 when he writes to the Christian church at Galatia. He states:

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Paul is talking to the church at Galatia. He clearly proclaims that those who belong to Jesus Christ are the true seed of Abraham, the one's whose names are written in the Lambs Book of Life. Does this mean that "*your people*" could include others who may not be national Israelites? It sure seems that way.

Another distinction that supports this is John's record in Revelation 12:17 where there is a description of national Israel having "*offspring*" who are not Israel. It says:

Then the dragon was enraged at the woman (Israel) and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Notice that the rest of Israel's offspring, distinguished from national Israel, are considered so because of their loyalty to Jesus Christ, not to national Israel. That sounds like the church distinguished from national Israel, but still included as "descendants" of Israel right there in the midst of the Great Tribulation of Revelation.

So does this mean that "*your people*" could include others who may not be national Israelites? It certainly seems that way! The "*your people*" of Daniel 12:2 could very easily include the offspring of Israel. These are the ones who will be delivered.

This is not a national or ethnic deliverance. This is a deliverance of the faithful, those who remained faithful to God before the time of Christ, and those who are faithful to Christ since His resurrection. And don't forget, this deliverance/resurrection will happen at the same time as the time of distress that will come upon the whole world.

But here is a question: If Daniel records that there is going to be a deliverance, a resurrection, in from the midst of great distress, then a pre-trib, and even mid-trib rapture view must embrace the belief that there are two resurrections for God's faithful followers: one before the tribulation and one at the end of it. Nowhere in Scripture do we see any indication whatsoever that there will be two resurrections other than a resurrection of the saints, and a resurrection of the damned.

So in these two verses Daniel recorded the future reality of deliverance, a resurrection of his people, who are identified as all those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. This includes faithful Israel and members of the church, the worldwide body of Jesus Christ.

V. John's Record

When we talked about Jesus and Paul, we were talking about what they personally taught. But as we turn to look at what John the Apostle wrote, we are looking, at not what he taught, but what He recorded...what he wrote down about what Jesus said. So the title of this section is "John's Record," not his own teaching per se. So what did John record in the Revelation about the rapture that was communicated to him by Jesus himself?

First we will look at a phrase in Revelation 3:10 that many use to support a pre-trib argument and see if there is an alternative meaning that is better supported by the rest of Scripture. **Second**, I want to ask and answer the hard question: If the rapture is to happen at the second coming, then where is it mentioned in the Revelation record?

The answer to this question will take us deep into the chronology of the Revelation record. Is the record of the tribulation, and events that lead up to Christ's return organized as one linear timeline from chapter 6 to 19, or is there some other way to see it that would help all the dramatic and scattered events make more sense?

A. "Keep You From" in Revelation 3:10

In His letter to the church of Philadelphia, Jesus says that since they have endured 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."

First notice that the hour of trial is very unique. It will come upon the whole world. That is a reference to the Great Tribulation which will be levied on followers of Christ worldwide. That is the only trial/persecution that will ever be worldwide. So that is the easy part of this verse.

The contention and disagreement comes from the three word phrase "**keep you from**" (Greek "σε τηρωσω εκ" → τηρωσω—"keep," εκ—"from"). This verse is used to support a pre-trib view because the phrase is interpreted to mean that Jesus is going to **physically remove** them (the Philadelphian church, and consequently, the entire church) from the earth when the hour of trial comes upon the whole earth.

But this Greek phrase can be legitimately interpreted in one of two ways. This first pre-trib interpretation sees it as a "**spatial**" concept. It would be thought of as "**keeping outside of**" (spatially) "**outside of the realm of**" the hour of trial, i.e. away from the earth in a different place. This would neatly support a pre-trib argument since the pre-trib rapture would keep this church in heaven away from the hour of trial exempting them from any of the sufferings that will happen on earth.

The second interpretation sees this phrase as a "**preserving**" or "**protecting**" concept. It would be thought of as preserving and protecting this church from the hour of trial that will come upon

the whole earth. This would neatly support the post-trib position since the church is said to still be on the earth during this hour of trial.

So then how do we decide the correct interpretation? Both seem possible. As was done in other passages, the first area to look at is the context to see if there is anything in the surrounding verses that would point in one way or another. Unfortunately this does not exist here.

Then the second place to look is in other comparative texts that might shed light on the immediate text. Without any contextual help or comparative textual help, then the choice for the interpretation would be based purely arbitrary based on one's previously held position. Is there any other way to decide this? In this we are fortunate. We are not stuck.

We find help for this interpretation in the only other NT usage of this Greek phrase. And this verse just happens to have been penned by the same scribe who penned Revelation 3:10, the apostle John. And John just happens to be quoting the same person that spoke it in both passages, Jesus Christ. So we can safely assume that John and Jesus knew what was meant when this phrase was used the second time. The passage is John 17:15.

• John 17:15

In this passage we find Jesus praying to the Father for His disciples and He makes a unique request on their behalf. He asks the Father to not take them out of the world while they do their ministry. And while they are doing their ministry, He asks the Father to "**protect them from** (τηρησῃς αὐτοῦ ἐκ) **the evil one.**"

So we see here in John 17:15, the only other NT usage of the phrase **tereo ek**, spoken by the only other person who was recorded using that phrase, Jesus Christ, written by the same author that wrote Revelation 3:10, asking the Father to **protect** his disciples from the evil one while they go about their ministry.

So let's run this through the grid of our two possible interpretations: Is Jesus asking God to keep them **outside of** the world ("**spatial**" interpretation) while they do their ministry to others on earth; or, is He asking the Father to protect them **as they live within** the world ("**preserving**" interpretation) and minister to others on earth?

The answer seems very obvious: He is asking God to protect them while they go about doing their ministry. It would seem rather absurd to take them out of the world and then ask them to minister in the world. John's record of Jesus' use of this phrase in John 17:15 is not in any way spatial (*keeping outside of*), but protective (*preserving/protecting from within*).

So if this same interpretation is applied to John's record in Revelation 3:10, then here is strong support for the interpretation that this church will be divinely preserved and protected on the earth during the "**hour of trial that will come upon the whole world.**"

How are they protected? There are several examples that indicate that the wrath of God will affect only the ungodly (Bowl judgments 2, 4, and 5 in chapter 16) and one example of a special protection from the fifth Trumpet on those who have the seal of God on their forehead

(Revelation 9:4) affecting only the ungodly. And the example from the protection the Israelites received in Egypt from the ten plagues is a confirmation that God can specifically protect His people.

Regardless of how He protects, the Scriptures say that He will. And in no sense does Revelation 3:10 imply a spatial removal prior to the hour of trial that will come on the whole world.

B. The “Rapture” in the Revelation

1. The Problems with Revelation 4:1

One of the things that always bothered me about the pre-trib position was amidst the plethora of eschatological material in the Revelation, why was the rapture never mentioned? Chapter 4:1 was always presented as the rapture by pre-trib proponents. I was never fully convinced that it was a legitimate description. In it John says:

After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

The pre-trib view sees this as the only point in John’s record where the rapture of the church occurs. This is based on three ideas.

- First, a “trumpet” is mentioned just as it is mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:16.
- Second, there is an upward calling to John himself in the phrase “come up here.” This is similar to the action of being “caught up” in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.
- And third, the word “church” does not occur in Revelation beyond chapter three. This is used to argue that the church is absent from the earth during the tribulation and wrath activities of chapters 4-19.
- And fourth, there needs to be some place in Revelation where the rapture is mentioned and this is a perfect place since it is right after the letters to the seven churches and the word church is absent after this.

My response to this is simple.

First, the trumpet is not a trumpet at all. It is a voice that sounded like a trumpet. John is saying that he heard the same voice speak to him that sounded like a trumpet which he heard in chapter one. The description of the rapture includes an actual trumpet, not a metaphor, and following it is the voice of the arch angel. It may be a similar word, but it has a totally different meaning.

Second, when John is referring to the voice that said, “Come up here,” that is all that is happening. A voice is telling him to “come up here.” It is only John that is brought up into heaven so he can see what Jesus is about to show him. This has no reference to the church as a whole. It only refers to John himself.

Third, with regard to the absence of the word “*church*” in chapters 4-19, there are those present on earth during the tribulation days of Revelation who “*hold to the testimony of Jesus*” and are martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ. While a pre-trib position must relegate that group to “tribulation saints,” (those who trusted Christ after the pre-trib rapture of the church), that phrase could still legitimately describe those who belong to the church whose very creed is to hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Fourth, this need for a place in Revelation indicating the rapture is no basis for manufacturing a place for it to fit. But since there is a need for it, we will see several references to the rapture throughout John’s record.

So to make Revelation 4:1 the only reference to the rapture of the church in the entire book seems somewhat forced due to a lack of any other support, and rather weak due to what John was actually describing in the verse.

So where is there a reference to the rapture in the Revelation? I would like to suggest that there is not one, but four, and possibly five references to the rapture. (The cryptic language makes it difficult to be certain about the fifth one.) And these references have also helped to provide a chronological order for the events described in the book.

2. A Chronology of Parallel Scenarios

But one may ask, “How can there be four raptures?” Excellent question! The answer is: there can’t! So how can we even suggest that there are at least four references to the rapture? The answer to this is: there are five independent but parallel chronologies recorded in the collection of the visions John saw. And even though they are recorded in linear fashion, they are actually parallel scenarios, happening somewhat simultaneously overlapping themselves. It can be compared to watching a TV that has multiple screens and four separate news channels are on reporting on different aspects of the same incident. Each one has a different angle and possible a different subject in the report. That is how the prophetic section of Revelation is arranged: multiple subjects and yet simultaneously occurring scenarios.

- **One Continuous Scenario is Impossible**

One thing is certain. It is impossible for Revelation’s chronology to be one continuous scenario. The events of chapter 14 alone support this. At the beginning of chapter 14 we see Jesus standing on Mt Zion. But half way through the chapter John sees Him coming in the clouds. This contradicts the order of events that both Jesus and Paul describe for Jesus’ return.

- **Repeated Phrases and Events**

I also noticed some phrases and expressions that repeated themselves in chapter 11 and chapter 14. The phrases were of a culminating nature that would be used at the end of a story or a final scene. It seemed odd that these statements were used so soon since it was still the middle of the book. Statements like:

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever." Revelation 11:15

In this verse when the seventh angel sounded his trumpet, he also announced that world is now under the kingship of Christ. That sounds like the result of the second coming where everything is already brought under one head – even Christ. And then I noticed that nothing else results from the seventh trumpet. It is almost as if the seventh trumpet, the last trumpet, is a decree that Christ has taken over. But that was not supposed to happen until chapter 19!

And then chapter 11:19 concluded:

Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

This is almost like a fireworks celebration. Heaven is opened, the Ark of the Covenant is seen, and there are ***“flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.”***

I thought that very odd. That seemed like a final scene. And when I got to chapter 16 verses 17 and 18 after the seven Bowls are poured out, it seemed 11:19 was repeated.

The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, "It is done!" 18 Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake.

More lightning...more rumblings...more thunder...another earthquake? And then again, at the end of chapter 16 we find that there is language describing a final scene, a finality to the conflict, a conquering of the battle. When the seventh angel pours out his bowl there is a simple proclamation, ***“It is done.”*** This expression of finality could include the proclamation of the angel after the seventh Trumpet in 11:15, ***“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.”*** And verse 18 is almost the exact recitation of 11:19 ***“flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder, an earthquake.”***

So with both the seventh Trumpet and the seventh Bowl ending with language depicting a final scene, either Jesus takes over the world twice, or they are two parallel scenarios

There is also a repetition in the effects of the sixth Seal and the seventh Bowl. In the sixth Seal something in addition to the sun being darkened, and the moon turning blood red, and stars falling from the sky, something catastrophic happens to the islands and mountains:

6:14 The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

Then the rulers of the earth themselves proclaim that the day of God’s wrath has come. But then after the seventh Bowl something similar happens:

16:20 *Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found*

Did it all happen a second time? Or is this a report the same event with the additional Bowls described? Again, either this is all the same thing, or these events happen twice.

And then there is the striking similarity between the sixth Trumpet and the sixth Bowl: both of them have to do with the Euphrates River and a great battle.

13The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God. 14It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." 15And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. 16The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number.

16:12The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East.

Now it is clear the Trumpets and the Bowls are separate entities even though they are very similar. The Trumpet judgments are partial, the Bowl judgments are complete (15:1). But at the sixth Trumpet and sixth Bowl, the Euphrates River comes into play. So this either happens twice, or they are simultaneous working together at the same time. (For a comparison of the similarities of the Trumpets and Bowls, see Appendix A)

- **Multiple References to the Rapture**

But the issue that confirmed this idea of parallel scenarios is the inclusion of several references to the rapture. The book either consists of multiple parallel chronologies, or there are several raptures. It's the only rationale that makes sense with the inclusion of multiple rapture references, repeated scenarios, and the reversed order of events in chapter 14.

So how is the book organized? The prophetic sections are a collection of independent visions, much like the visions of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Isaiah. And John is simply recording all that he saw in the order he saw them unconcerned about how they all fit together in the big picture of the whole collection of visions. (For an overview of the entire book's chronological order, see Appendix B).

So where are the raptures in Revelation? Here is a quick overview and then we will go into each section one at a time. And the references indicate the complete scenario in which they occur.

Scenario #1 – ***"The Gathering"*** after the Sixth Seal (chapters 6-8:1)

Scenario #2 – ***"The Mystery of God"*** after the Sixth Trumpet (chapters 8:2-11)

Scenario #3 – The ***"Harvest of the Earth"*** in chapter 14 (chapters 12-14)

Scenario #4 – The **“Coming Thief”** after the Sixth Bowl. (chapters 15, 16)

Scenario #5 – The Invitation to **“Come Out”** at the fall of Babylon (chapters 17, 18)

As we look at each passage, we will build a grid of parallel scenarios to get a loose idea of how the prophetic section of the book is laid out and organized. Many of the visions are still in random order. But the one constant that hinges all the sections together is the rapture.

3. “The Gathering” after the Sixth Seal

Revelation 6:12-16 reveals the activities of the sixth Seal. At first read it appears obvious that there is no reference to the rapture. But the inference to the rapture comes when using a comparative scripture that is describing the same event. The reading of the passage reveals catastrophic events in the skies affecting the sun, the moon and the stars.

12I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, 13and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. 14The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

This is the fulfillment of the ancient Joel 2:31 prophecy **“The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.”** So where is the connection to the rapture? This is also the exact passage which Jesus quotes in Matthew 24:29 happening immediately after the tribulation, and immediately before his return and gathering of the elect!

29“Immediately after the distress of those days” ‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’

So we have three passages talking about the same celestial catastrophes, only each has a different description of what happens next:

- The Joel 2:31 account ends the discourse with **“before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.”**
- The Revelation 6:12-17 account ends with **“15Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. 16They 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! 17For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?’”**

- And Jesus’ account in Matthew 24 describes the Revelation account with one word (“**mourn**”), and then the event that follows... THE GATHERING!
30"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. 31And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."

Jesus actually describes the events of the “**day of the LORD**” mentioned in Joel, and why the rulers of the earth “hide” at the sixth Seal! That is when He comes! And as was pointed out earlier, the time of His coming is also when He gathers His elect! Rapture!

A additional note to all of this is verses 16 and 17 of Revelation 6 where the rulers of the earth cry, "*Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"*

This indicates that the “day of wrath” does not come until Jesus himself comes. This may come into play when we discuss the timing of the Trumpets and Bowls, the actual detailed descriptions of God’s wrath. But for now, let’s just highlight the point that the first reference to the rapture in the Revelation is right after the sixth Seal is opened. It looks like this:

Sequence of Events...	→	→	→	→	Description of the Wrath	Christ Returns and Christians Raptured	After the Return and Rapture
Rev 6:1, 2 1st Seal White Horse with Rider Bent on Conquest	Rev 6:3, 4 2nd Seal Red Horse with Rider Takes Peace from the Earth	Rev 6:5, 6 3rd Seal Black Horse Rider Holding Scales. International Inflation	Rev 6:7, 8 4th Seal Pale Horse Rider named Death Kills 1/4 th of Mankind	Rev 6:9-11 5th Seal Martyred Souls in heaven cry " <i>How Long until we are avenged?"</i> "	Rev 6:12-20 6th Seal Day of Wrath Celestial Catastrophes Is 13:9-11; Joel 2:31; Matt 24:29 Mk. 13:24	Matt 24:30, 31 " <i>...the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky... gather His elect..."</i> " Mk 13:25	Rev 8:1 7th Seal " <i>Silence in heaven for about half an hour.</i> "

4. “The Mystery of God” in Revelation 10:7

The second reference to the rapture is tucked away in the phrase “*the mystery of God*” found in Revelation 10:7.

It says,

7But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets."

There are three issues we need to address here. First, we need to figure out from Scripture what the “*mystery of God*” is. And second, since it is commonly believed that the seven Trumpets proceed out of the seventh Seal, how can there be a second rapture? This leads us to our third

issue: the order of Revelations chronology. To address these three issues we will begin with the second issue first.

- **Seals, Trumpets, and “*kai eidon*”**

Because the seventh Seal is opened at chapter 8 verse 1, and the Trumpets begin in 8 verse 2, it is commonly concluded that the seven Trumpets flow out of the seventh Seal, and are thereby successive in their timing. It says,

1When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

2And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

But I propose that the seven Trumpets are a completely separate “vision” from the seven Seals, and consequently an unrelated, independent series of events. This proposal is based on a phrase that John used apparently as a technical term indicating the beginning of a new vision throughout the entire book. The phrase in the Greek is *kai eidon*, translated in the English, “*And I saw...*”

“*kai eidon*” = Major Transition to New Visions

The first thing I want to do is remind us that the chapter and verse divisions were not inserted into the text until many years after the NT Canon was complete. So the chapter divisions cannot divinely dictate the beginning and endings of a thought or vision.

Here is the breakdown of the book. The Revelation was divided into 404 verses (405 if you separate the first part of 13:1 and make it 12:18). Of the 404 verses, 275 (67.9%) begin with the simple conjunction “*kai*” which in its simplest form means “*and.*” Depending on your translation, “*kai*” is not translated every time, apparently because it would seem redundant. But it is used 275 times by John probably because he was in a constant, almost hurried state of wanting to communicate what happened next.

But here is the interesting thing: Of those 275 verses that begin with “*kai*,” 30 times it is combined with the aorist verb “*eidon*” creating the phrase “*kai eidon*” which is translated, “*and I saw,*” or, “*then I watched,*” or, “*I looked*” which all essentially mean the same thing. (See Appendix C for a complete list of its uses.)

And of those 30 times that “*kai eidon*” is used, 21 of those usages clearly indicate the beginning of a completely new vision in the book. The other 9 usages are clearly part of and further descriptions of the 21 visions. So having used this phrase 2 out of 3 times to introduce completely new visions, John apparently used it as a technical term for major transitions to highlight the beginning of a completely new vision unrelated to the vision he just described.

This brings us to our issue of the Seals and the Trumpets. As was mentioned above chapter 8 verse 1 is the conclusion of the seven Seals, and chapter 8 verse 2 is the beginning of the vision of the seven Trumpets. And verse 2 begins with “*kai eidon.*” Ironically, is the only usage that was either not used to start a new chapter, or is not clearly divided by modern translators to indicate the start of a completely separate vision. So I suggest, based on John’s usage of “*kai*

eidon” throughout the entire book, that this is a new vision completely detached from the previous vision of the Seals. And if the two visions are separate, and not consecutive, then a second reference to the rapture is possible.

The Mystery of God?

This brings us to the first issue of this section: What is “*the mystery of God*” that will be accomplished “*in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet*”?

- **The Mystery was Knowable**

A reading of several commentaries revealed that no modern commentator really knows or would admit to what this mystery might be. Apparently it is truly a mystery. But Jesus says to John that this mystery was and is knowable. John records that this mystery was “*announced to his servants the prophets.*” So someone knew. So what was it?

- **A Mystery Revealed to Paul**

A simple word search on “*mystery*” revealed something very interesting. In the New Testament there are several passages where a “*mystery*” of some type is mentioned. One of those passages is **Ephesians 3:2-5**. Paul writes:

2Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. 4In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.

Paul is claiming that he was one of those prophets to whom a mystery was revealed. This seems to clearly match the criteria that John recorded about this mystery in Revelation 7:10. But here he calls it “*the mystery of Christ.*” Could this be the same as “*the mystery of God*” that we are seeking to understand? Let’s dig deeper into what was revealed to Paul which he communicated to the churches.

- **The Mystery of God is Christ**

Our next stop is **Colossians 2:3**. Look what he says:

“...in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”...

Here Paul uses the exact phrase used in Revelation 10:7, “*the mystery of God.*” And he further describes what this mystery is, “*namely, Christ.*” So if we are going to compare Scripture with Scripture, then there is a good chance that “*the mystery of God*” in Revelation 10:7 might have something to do with Christ himself. But Paul does not say that the mystery is the gathering

event. He simply says that the mystery is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. But let's continue.

- **The Mystery of Christ as the Head**

What is it about Christ that completes the contents of this mystery? **Ephesians 1:9, 10** reveals a little more about this mystery as it pertains to Christ. It says:

"And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ."

Here we see that not only does the mystery have something to do with Christ, but it also has something to do with heaven and earth being brought **"together under one head,"** under the rule of Jesus Christ. That sounds like a definite moment in history. When will all things be brought together under Christ? When will Christ establish his kingdom in heaven AND earth? It says it will happen when **"the times have reached their fulfillment."** What times? It does not yet say so let's continue.

- **The Mystery of Jews and Gentiles as Joint Heirs Under Christ**

In **Ephesians 3:6** Paul gets more specific about this mystery. He says:

"This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus."

Here Paul clearly teaches that this mystery is about bringing Jews and Gentiles together through the good news of the Gospel and they become joint heirs with Christ. Now when does this time of inheritance happen? It still does not say. So let's continue.

- **The Mystery of the Rapture**

In **1 Corinthians 15:51, 52** Paul gets really close to the language in Revelation 10:7 where he clearly describes an event as a mystery. Take a look:

"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."

This verse is one of the strongest and most popular verses used to support the pre-trib rapture. It describes how quickly the rapture will happen. It describes the rapture as a "mystery." But then it also includes something really interesting. Paul mentions that this event will happen **"at the last trumpet."** To be honest, I have always believed that this reference to a trumpet was kind of metaphorical. But when compared to the trumpet in Matthew 24:31, and 1 Thessalonians 4:16, I

had to consider that this could be referring to the same event. That got my attention. I had to entertain the thought that Paul's trumpet in 1 Corinthians 15:52 was the same trumpet in Matthew 24:31 and 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

So Paul says that this event it is a **"mystery"**, and describes the trumpet as the **"last trumpet"**, he comes strikingly close to describing **"the mystery of God"** that will be accomplished when the seventh angel is about to sound the seventh (and last) trumpet in Revelation 10:7.

• **Conclusion**

So because these verses revealed...

- that a mystery was revealed to Paul, (*Ephesians 3:2-5*)
- and that this mystery had to do with Jesus, (*Colossians 3:2*)
- and it was specifically about all things in heaven and earth being brought under Jesus' rule, (*Ephesians 1:9, 10*)
- and that both Jews and Gentiles are brought together as joint heirs with Christ, (*Ephesians 3:6*)
- and that this mystery will happen in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, (*1 Corinthians 15:52, 52*)

...I concluded that Paul's mystery revealed to him is the same **"mystery of God"** that Jesus spoke about to John in Revelation 10:7 could be. The **"mystery of God"** is another reference in the Revelation to the gathering, the rapture, the second coming of Christ. Question, if it is not the rapture, then what is it? All the other Scriptures about a **"mystery"** revealed to his servants the prophets support this.

Now let's add this section to our previous timeline we established with the Seals. Only here I am going to propose something heretofore unknown. Since all of the Trumpet judgments have to do with celestial events, I think that they, along with the seven Bowls of wrath are a detailed description of the sixth Seal which simply quotes Isaiah and Joel about the celestial catastrophes. And since it seems that the day of wrath happens in one day, I examined each of the Trumpet and Bowl Judgments and asked if it could all happen in one day. For the most part the answer was yes, with the exception of the fifth Trumpet whose effect is said to last five months. But that does prevent it from happening in one day.

So here is the addition of the Trumpet judgments which includes the "mystery of God" as the second reference to the rapture.

Sequence of Events...	→	→	→	→	Description of the Wrath	Christ Returns and Christians Raptured	After the Return and Rapture
Rev 6:1, 2 1st Seal White Horse with Rider Bent on Conquest	Rev 6:3, 4 2nd Seal Red Horse with Rider Takes Peace from the Earth	Rev 6:5, 6 3rd Seal Black Horse Rider Holding Scales. International Inflation	Rev 6:7, 8 4th Seal Pale Horse Rider named Death Kills 1/4 th of Mankind	Rev 6:9-11 5th Seal Martyred Souls in heaven cry "How Long until we are avenged?"	Rev 6:12-20 6th Seal Day of Wrath Celestial Catastrophes Is 13:9-11; Joel 2:31; Matt 24:29 Mk. 13:24	Matt 24:30, 31 "...the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky... gather His elect..." Mk 13:25	Rev 8:1 7th Seal "Silence in heaven for about half an hour."
					Rev 8:2-9:21 "kai eidon" Trumpets 1-6 1/3 rd Destruction	Rev 10:1-7 Just before the 7 th Seal, The mystery of God is accomplished.	Rev 11:15-19 7th Trumpet "The Kingdom of the world is now the kingdom of Christ..."

5. The Dual "Harvest of the Earth" in 14:14-20

In chapter 14:14-16 it says,

I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one "like a son of man" with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. 15Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." 16So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.

This is almost verbatim to the words Daniel used when he saw the son of man coming with the clouds in Daniel 7:13,

"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven.

And when compared to Jesus' description of his return in Matthew 24:30, 31 we see striking similarities as well as Paul's description in 1 Thessalonians 4 where both he and Jesus also include the rapture. But how do we know his harvest is a harvest of Christians? Verses 17 -20 describe a second harvest. And those harvested are thrown "**into the great winepress of God's wrath**" (vs. 19). So there is a distinction between the two harvests. In the first it does not say who is harvested or what happens to them. But the second group harvested is clearly the recipients of God's wrath.

Who then might be those harvested first if Christians are not appointed to suffer wrath? Christians! This is similar to Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats. He first collects the sheep and rewards them. Then he collects that goats and sends them away into eternal punishment.

So the next scenario, chapters 12 – 14 includes three visions. The first is the story of the Woman and the Dragon, Israel and Satan, which results in the saints being persecuted (chapter 12). Next is the vision of the Beast of the Sea and the Beast of the earth (chapter 13), and then we see the Lamb standing on Mt. Zion ,and then the dual harvest (chapter 14). So we can arrange it like this. It is difficult to be accurate about the timing of the first two visions so we are going to place them at the beginning of the grid. But keep in mind their occurrences reach back into history and do not correlate entirely with the first two Seals.

Sequence of Events...	→	→	→	→	Description of the Wrath	Christ Returns and Christians Raptured	After the Return and Rapture
Rev 6:1, 2 1st Seal White Horse with Rider Bent on Conquest	Rev 6:3, 4 2nd Seal Red Horse with Rider Takes Peace from the Earth	Rev 6:5, 6 3rd Seal Black Horse Rider Holding Scales. International Inflation	Rev 6:7, 8 4th Seal Pale Horse Rider named Death Kills 1/4 th of Mankind	Rev 6:9-11 5th Seal Martyred Souls in heaven cry “How Long until we are avenged?”	Rev 6:12-20 6th Seal Day of Wrath Celestial Catastrophes Is 13:9-11; Joel 2:31; Matt 24:29 Mk. 13:24	Matt 24:30, 31 “...the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky... gather His elect...” Mk 13:25	Rev 8:1 7th Seal “Silence in heaven for about half an hour.”
					Rev 8:2-9:21 “kai eidon” Trumpets 1-6 1/3 rd Destruction	Rev 10:1-7 Just before the 7 th Seal, The mystery of God accomplished.	Rev 11:15-19 7th Trumpet “The Kingdom of the world is now the kingdom of Christ...”
			Rev 12 The Woman and the Dragon	Rev 13 Two Beasts		Rev 14:14-20 Dual Harvest of the Earth	Rev 14:1-13 Lamb Standing on Mt. Zion

6. “Behold I Come like a Thief” in 16:15

The fourth reference to the rapture is recorded in 16:15 right before the seventh Bowl is poured out. Jesus states,

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."

The first thing to point out here is the peculiarity of its inclusion in the midst of the scenario of the seven Bowls. There is no reason for its inclusion if Jesus has already come at the sixth Seal and in chapter 14:14, or if He is yet to come in chapter 19. Why would Jesus insert this reference to His coming right in between the sixth and seventh Bowls? Maybe it is because He is signaling that that is when He will come?

The second thing to point out is the phrase that he uses to describe His coming... ***“like a thief.”*** This is the same phrase Paul used when describing the arrival of the Day of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 5:4 where he is preparing the Thessalonian church for the second coming of Christ. And in that passage the Day of the Lord refers back to the day when the Thessalonian church would be ***“caught up... in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”*** And as we observed

earlier, this phrase is also used in Revelation 3:3 and 2 Peter 3:10 to describe the actual return of Christ.

The third thing to point out in this statement is the identity of those to whom He is addressing and describing as “Blessed.” He says they will be blessed if they “stay awake” and keep their clothes with them. This clearly is a reference to people who are waiting on His return. He is saying that people will be blessed if they live in expectation of and preparation for His coming, the very message he encouraged in Matthew 24 and the same message that Paul wrote to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 5 encouraging them to “stay awake, or stay ready. Rapture!

It is ironic that the 1972 movie about the rapture, *“A Thief in the Night”*, which presents a pre-tribulation rapture, takes its title from these words spoken by Jesus who clearly states His coming as a thief will not happen until after the Great Tribulation.

So now we add to our grid the Bowl judgments and the reference to Christ’s coming.

Sequence of Events...	→	→	→	→	Description of the Wrath	Christ Returns and Christians Raptured	After the Return and Rapture
Rev 6:1, 2 1st Seal White Horse with Rider Bent on Conquest	Rev 6:3, 4 2nd Seal Red Horse with Rider Takes Peace from the Earth	Rev 6:5, 6 3rd Seal Black Horse Rider Holding Scales. International Inflation	Rev 6:7, 8 4th Seal Pale Horse Rider named Death Kills 1/4 th of Mankind	Rev 6:9-11 5th Seal Martyred Souls in heaven cry “How Long until we are avenged?”	Rev 6:12-20 6th Seal Day of Wrath Celestial Catastrophes Is 13:9-11; Joel 2:31; Matt 24:29 Mk. 13:24	Matt 24:30, 31 “...the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky... gather His elect...” Mk 13:25	Rev 8:1 7th Seal “Silence in heaven for about half an hour.”
					Rev 8:2-9:21 “kai eidon” Trumpets 1-6 1/3 rd Destruction	Rev 10:1-7 Just before the 7 th Seal, The mystery of God accomplished.	Rev 11:15-19 7th Trumpet “The Kingdom of the world is now the kingdom of Christ...”
			Rev 12 The Woman and the Dragon	Rev 13 Two Beasts		Rev 14:14-20 Dual Harvest of the Earth	Rev 14:1-13 Lamb Standing on Mt. Zion
					Rev 15:1- 16:14 Bowls 1-6 With these God’s wrath is complete	Rev 16:15 “Behold I come like a thief...”	Rev 16:17-20 Bowl 7 “It is done” Babylon has fallen.

7. “Come Out of Her My People” in 18:4

The fifth possible reference to the rapture could be in chapter 18:4:

4Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues;

To understand this statement we need to understand the context. Chapters 17 and 18 are a description of the Fall of Babylon. According to 16:19, the Fall of Babylon happens as a result

of the seventh Bowl. So chapters 17 and 18 are a further description, or exploded view of the reference to her fall. Chapter 17 describes her history. Chapter 18 describes her demise. But in the midst of her demise this phrase seems to come out of nowhere. It does not fit in the scenario unless there is a significant event that happens in the midst of Babylon's fall.

A look at the phrase indicates first that the one speaking is not identified. It has been assumed that this is an angel speaking. But that is an assumption. The only hint that is given is the person calls a group of people, "my people." And those people are called out so that they will not share in the sins of Babylon. So the identity of those people are those who should not sin because they belong to someone who is against sin. Sounds like Christians. And if the addressees are Christians, then the owner of the voice who called them "*me people*" would be Christ. The second point about these people is they are being called out so that they will not receive any of Babylon's "*plagues*". From the context of 16:19, the plagues are easily understood as the Bowl judgments with which the wrath of God is complete.

Now this could be a simple charge to followers who live within the boundaries of Babylon to get away from her on their own. But in light of the context of the book, and the other four references to the rapture, it could very easily be understood as a cryptic call to God's people to come out by being "caught up" to meet the coming Lord in the air. This is conjecture since there is not a lot to go on in this immediate passage. But this is also a definite possibility for being a fifth reference to the rapture. If it is not the rapture, then what is it? The rapture fits.

(We could possibly suggest a sixth reference to the rapture in Revelation 19:9 when an Angel proclaims, '*Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!*' According to the pre-trib view this wedding supper is to occur during the seven years of the Tribulation. But its very first mention is not made until Revelation 19 when Christ returns in all His glory.)

Sequence of Events...	→	→	→	→	Description of the Wrath	Christ Returns and Christians Raptured	After the Return and Rapture
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					Rev 8:2-9:21 "kai eidon" Trumpets 1-6 1/3 rd Destruction	Rev 10:1-7 Just before the 7 th Seal, The mystery of God accomplished.	Rev 11:15-19 7th Trumpet "The Kingdom of the world is now the kingdom of Christ..."
			Rev 12 The Woman and the Dragon	Rev 13 Two Beasts →		Rev 14:14-20 Dual Harvest of the Earth	Rev 14:1-13 Lamb Standing on Mt. Zion
					Rev 15:1- 16:14 Bowls 1-6 "...with them God's wrath is completed."	Rev 16:15 "Behold I come like a thief..."	Rev 16:17-20 Bowl 7 "It is done" Babylon has fallen.
				Rev 17 The History of the Mystery of Babylon	Rev 18 The Fall of Babylon "...her plagues"	Rev 18:4 "Come out of her my people."	
						Rev 19:1-16 Blessed are those invited to the Wedding Feast White Horse with Faithful and True Rider comes with the armies of heaven.	Rev 19:17-21 Birds gorge on world rulers dead bodies. Beast and False Prophet thrown into hell.

C. Summary of John's Record

So since the phrase, "keep you from" in Revelation 3:10 is interpreted as describing a "protection from" the hour of trial, not "removal out of", and since we have discovered the inclusion of several references to the rapture occurring after the Great Tribulation around the time of wrath, and with the idea that there are multiple scenarios running chronologically parallel, we can clearly see that there is no hint of a pre-trib rapture in all of John's record.

VI. The Issue of “Wrath”

Now let’s turn to the “juiciest” issue of them all...the issue of wrath. This seems to be the main argument for a pre-trib rapture of the church. In this section we will address five aspects about this idea of believers not being subject to wrath.

First, we will examine the context of 1 Thessalonians 5:9 and look at what Paul is actually saying when he says that believers are not appointed to suffer wrath.

Second, we will attempt to define the wrath of God.

Third, we will distinguish the difference between the tribulation proper and God’s wrath. The mistake that the pre-trib argument makes with regard to this verse is equating the tribulation with the wrath of God. The two could not be more different.

Fourth, we will show that if the tribulation is a time of God’s wrath, then why are the “saints” mentioned in the book of Revelation not enjoying the same benefit of *“not appointed to wrath.”*

Fifth, we will point to the promise made to the church at Philadelphia about being protected from within.

A. The Context of 1 Thessalonians 5:9

1 Thessalonians 5:9 is almost always referenced when one defends a pre-trib view. So let’s take a look at it and examine its context and meaning. It states:

*"For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath
but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Paul is writing to the church at Thessalonica instructing them about *“the times and dates”* of *“the day of the Lord”* (vss. 1, 2) which, as stated earlier, directly refers back to the event he described in chapter 4:13-18. He says in verse 3 that this day will include *“destruction”* that *“will come on them [people] suddenly.”* He is describing a scary time.

Paul then continues in verse 4-6 by reminding the Thessalonian church that they should not be surprised when this day comes in contrast with those who will not be expecting this day to come.

But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 6So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep,

He then instructs how to prepare for this painful day in verses 6b - 8,

but let us be alert and self-controlled. 7For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

It is clear that Paul assumed that this church, or the subsequent members of this church, would be present during the coming of **“the day of the Lord”**. He is instructing them how to prepare for this day! He tells them to **“be sober,”** to **“put on the breastplate of faith,”** i.e....be faithful keeping their eyes on the object of their faith, and to put on **“as a helmet the hope of salvation,”** i.e....never forget that salvation awaits them no matter how difficult it will get for them because they are believers. He is contrasting their life as Christians with the lives of unbelievers, the **“others, who are asleep”** and **“those who sleep”** of verses 6 and 7. He is also not saying that they will be removed or gone. He is assuming that they will be present should that day arrive in their lifetime!

Then he says,

***“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath
but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

Let’s unpack this verse. First, Paul begins this verse with the little word **“for.”** With it he gives the whole reason/motivation for maintaining a sober life, for keeping the faith, continuing to love, and for not giving up on the hope of salvation. He reminds them that it will be worth it to remain faithful in the midst of terrible times because no matter what happens to their life in their earthly body, they know that they will one day obtain God’s salvation and be delivered from the terrible ordeal that is going to come upon the whole earth. And they will never experience the wrath of God!

So what is the point? Is he saying that they will receive salvation? Yes! And is he saying that they are not appointed to suffer wrath, implying God’s wrath? Yes! That is one of the results of salvation. But he is also saying by preparing them for that day that they will be there on that day when it arrives, not raptured seven years prior to that day. It has nothing to do with being exempt from the tribulation period.

B. Distinguishing “Tribulation” from “Wrath”

The period that we are discussing is called the “Great Tribulation” or the time of **“great distress.”** The word **“tribulation”** is not called tribulation because of what God is doing. Tribulation for Christians is tribulation because of what man is doing to them. We have confused the terms tribulation and wrath to mean the same thing. Tribulation is a time of persecution of God's people by ungodly people. Wrath is a punishment by God, a quick jettison into eternal separation from God, levied upon those who rebel against Him.

So to assume that the meaning of **“not appointed to wrath”** means that the church will not be exempt from great tribulation is a wrong assumption. Tribulation and wrath are two separate events.

C. The Definition of “Wrath”

Christians are not in any way appointed to suffer God's wrath. That is a given. No one disagrees with that. The problem comes in our understanding of God's wrath.

The reason for God's wrath is to judge those who rebel against Him. What does that look like? Let's consider some options.

- **Is "tribulation" or a Christian suffering persecution God's wrath?** No! We will look at this distinction in the next section.
- **Is physical death God's wrath?** Yes and no. Sometimes God causes those who rebel against him to immediately die from a specific act of God. But death has come upon all of us...we are all "*destined to die once*" (Hebrews 9:27). So Christians die. Paul says to the Thessalonians "*whether we are awake (alive) or asleep (dead)...*" and includes death as normal for the Christian. So physical death itself cannot be considered God's wrath.
- **Are natural catastrophes God's wrath?** (as are found in most of the trumpet and bowl judgments) Yes and no. Sometimes God brings natural catastrophes upon people who rebel against Him. The earthquake at Messina, Italy, in 1908 has been considered the wrath of God upon this town that shook its fist in the face of God during that Christmas season. And certainly Noah's flood was an example of God's wrath upon the earth, as was the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. But to say that death through all natural catastrophes is God's wrath would require God to apologize to millions of believers who have died throughout the centuries as a result of thousands of natural catastrophes.

What then is God's wrath?

First we will start with the context of this passage. In verse 3 Paul uses the word "*destruction.*"
3While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

Whatever God's wrath is, it involves destruction. This could simply refer to death. And if we combine it with the destruction of the sixth Seal, this death is caused by the natural catastrophes that will cause it.

But there is another dimension to God's wrath that must be included in the definition. It is this part that Christians will never experience: "*eternal torment.*" This is described in Revelation 4:9-11 when describing the cup of God's wrath:

9A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, 10he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. 11And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever.

So the biblical definition of the wrath of God includes both death AND eternal torment! And Paul tells the believers in 1 Thessalonians 5 that no matter what they will go through if they are alive during this time of great distress, they can look forward to the eternal deliverance of *salvation*. Some may die during this time. But in the end, all believers will receive salvation. We are not doomed to the wrath of God that will damn the rebellious soul away from God for eternity. That is the wrath of God that will come on the earth.

Now some may still want to say for this statement (*“not appointed to suffer wrath”*) to be true, no believer will be harmed in any way during this time, so he must be removed through a pre-trib rapture. But what about the believers, the *“saints”* who are on the earth at that time as stated in Revelation? Are they subject to wrath? This is our next point.

D. The Presence of Christians

In Revelation there are several references to followers of Christ present on earth during these terrible events. They are described as those who *“hold to the testimony of Jesus”* (6:9; 12:17; 17:6), and *“saints who...remain faithful to Jesus”* (14:12). These people are present during this time of tribulation, and during the times in which God pours out his wrath on the earth. A pre-trib view states that these are tribulation saints. No argument there.

But here are my questions:

- If we as followers of Christ are *“not appointed”* to God’s wrath (and this is perceived as a time of wrath), then why are these tribulation saints appointed to God’s wrath?
- And if they too are not “appointed”, then how are they escaping God’s wrath?
- And if they are there, and they escape or are protected from God’s wrath, could it not also be possible that the Christian church also escape God’s wrath in the same way?

The sixth Seal is the first mention of God’s wrath being unleashed. But as we mentioned about, sometime after the Seal is opened, the elect will be gathered. This may happen immediately prior to the beginning of wrath. The specific timing is not clear. But what is clear is there are Christians, *“saints”*, still on the earth during this time. And they are called “saints”, not because they are Jewish believers, but because they are the *“offspring”* of Israel who *“hold to the testimony of Jesus”*...just like members of the Christian church. Why then would they be subject to God’s wrath and treated different from the church?

E. The Promise of *“Protection From Within”*

The final thought I would like to point out is the reminder of God’s promise to the church at Philadelphia in Revelation 3:10. He said that somehow, some way, he would *“keep them from”...(protect them from within) the hour of trial that will come upon the whole world.”* He will do this in the same way that He prayed for the Father to protect His disciples while they are in the world serving Christ.

How is this going to happen? That I do not know. I throw up the white flag on that one. But in life who is to always know how God is going to protect us and provide for us. That is His promise.

But there are examples. One way is described in the fifth Trumpet, a special protection on those who had the seal of God on their forehead. It could also be just like the supernatural protection provided to the Israelites in the land of Goshen, in Egypt when God unleashed the ten plagues on Egypt. God can protect his people in supernatural ways. And in the same way that God protected Noah through the flood, God can also protect His people in ways we cannot imagine.

There are also special references to the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls being specifically poured out upon ***“the inhabitants of the earth,”*** a special reference to those who rebel against God (*Revelation 8:13; 12:12; 17:2*). This may also be another protection from God.

But this I do know, ***“the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment...”*** 2 Peter 2:9. And I will trust Him to do so, even if it means I will be one of those who will perish before or during this terrible time in human history.

VII. Populating the Millennium

Given, at the rapture all believers will be transformed and given spiritual, eternal bodies. With these bodies they will not be able to propagate since we will not marry. And if we take the parable of the Sheep and the Goats at face value, then all unbelievers will be cast into eternal hell. So the question remains, who will populate the millennium if Christians are transformed and all unbelievers are sent to eternal hell?

This is a good question that requires a good answer. And all good answers about Scripture are good if they come from Scripture. In this case we can find a good answer that sheds light not only on the issue of populating the millennium, but also the interpretation of the parable of the Sheep and the Goats.

Zechariah 14 is a prophetic chapter that clearly teaches what will happen when Christ returns. Verse 3 says:

Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. 4 On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,

So this is a chapter that clearly describes in detail what Christ will do when he returns. After His return and He establishes the millennial kingdom, an interesting note is made in verse 16 about worshipping Him and who will be worshipping Him throughout the millennium. It says:

Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

Evidently not all unbelievers will be sent immediately to hell at Christ's return. There will be "*survivors*" from all of those nations from around the world who attacked Jerusalem, most likely from the battle of Armageddon. And those survivors will still dwell in their mortal bodies! So maybe the story of the Sheep and the Goats was meant to be understood with the idea of the goats being sent away at the Great White Throne Judgment scheduled to happen at the end of the Millennium. That is not sure. But it could fit. Like the Old Testament prophets could not see the space of time for the church when expecting their Messiah to be a political King, maybe the Sheep and the Goats parable has a space of time between the time of reward for Christians and the time of punishment for the ungodly.

Regardless, during the Millennium there will be survivors from all the nations that attacked Jerusalem who go up year after year to worship the king.

VIII. Dispensationalism

Dispensationalism has been a popular way to look at human history and the different ways God has dealt with man. It has been the template with which many look at the Scriptures to conclude that there must be a pre-trib rapture. The unfortunate thing is that many of the Scriptures pointed out in this study directly contradict the tenants of Dispensationalism's conclusions. And when there is a clear contradiction between a passage of Scripture and the conclusions of Dispensationalism, some make the mistake of leaning toward the latter at the expense of a simple understanding of the former.

How to interpret the Scriptures has been argued throughout the centuries. This study has sought to have a simple approach to its interpretations. The first rule is to interpret the **immediate passage** in its most literal interpretation. This interpretation would include the immediate context of the passage that would include the basic questions, "Why was the author writing this?" and "What did the author intend his reader to understand?" These are tenants of **exegesis**, being faithful to extract only what the Scripture itself says.

The immediate literal interpretation also looks at the genre, or style of the writing. If it is allegorical genre, then the literal interpretation is allegorical. Not everything is rock solid literal and not everything is always allegorical. The genre of the writing is always a part of the literal interpretation.

Once an understanding is obtained from the immediate passage and context, then broader interpretations can be made by comparing the passage with other passages that speak to the same issues. These are **comparative passages** that must pass the scrutiny of similar topics. But we must always keep the immediate context of the passage the priority over the comparative passages.

Once a passage has been interpreted in its immediate context, and then a deeper understanding obtained with a comparative passage, then one can go to a third realm of interpretation which I call **speculation**. "Speculations" are guesses as to what the meaning could be beyond what is written. This is okay, but we have to remember that our speculations do not have the same authority and validity as immediate and comparative passages of Scripture. We must be careful to observe Paul's rule in 1 Corinthians 4:6 "***Do not go beyond what is written.***"

Dispensationalism seems to reverse these rules. Dispensationalism tends to impose a meaning on a passage that the writer did not intend the passage to have. For example, it is assumed by a Dispensational interpretation that 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is without a doubt a pre-trib event only because that's what Dispensationalism teaches. But nowhere in the passage does Paul indicate *WHEN* that even will happen. To insert a timing element into it is an arbitrary insertion or "**eisegesis**." This has also served to ignore the timing element that Paul discusses in the very next verse (5:1). But again, a Dispensationalist separates chapter 5 from chapter 4, because his whole system falls apart if it doesn't.

It is a case where man's speculation nullifies and eclipses Scripture.

- It eclipses the truth of Paul's testimony of his source on the Rapture... Jesus himself.
- It eclipses a legitimate comparison of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 with Matthew 24:30, 31.
- It eclipses the impact of "*our being gathered to him*" in 2 Thessalonians 2:1.
- It eclipses the sound hermeneutics of *tereos ek* in Revelation 3:10 when compared to John 17:15.
- It eclipses sound hermeneutics by interpreting Revelation 4:1 as the rapture.
- It eclipses the legitimate references to the rapture throughout the rest of Revelation.
- It eclipses the truth and its application that those who are in Christ are the true seed of Abraham and the offspring of Israel.
- It eclipses and reverses the hermeneutic principle that the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.

Where did Dispensationalism originate? Its biblical foundation has been based on Ephesians 1:21 where Paul makes a passing reference to two ages,

"...not only in the present age but also in the one to come."

It is clear in the immediate context of this verse that there are two eras or ages. In this context this seems to refer first to the age of the church in which Paul is writing, (redemption through faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ); and second seems to point to the age of Christ's millennial reign. It reveals nothing more about the past, and certainly teaches nothing about dividing up this present age before Christ's return.

Unfortunately, from this one verse a lot of speculation has been used to develop at least seven ages, or "dispensations," to describe seven different ways God has dealt with and will deal with man in human history. That is not all bad in itself. But when this speculation dictates the way a "Dispensationalist" will look at and interpret the Scriptures, primarily in the areas of ecclesiology (the study of the church) and eschatology (the study of the end times), it violates the laws of "Don't go beyond what is written" for the immediate passage of Scripture.

The two unfortunate interpretations that have evolved out of Dispensationalism are,

- 1) The complete separation of the church from Israel as the people of God;
- 2) Based on this separation, regardless of what Scripture has said, the church must be taken out of the world prior to the seventieth week of Daniel, (or the seven years of Great Tribulation), because that week is solely reserved and defined as the time of "*Jacob's (Israel's) trouble*" (Jeremiah 30:7).

And this is all supported because of a quasi-biblical speculation derived from a phrase which Paul used to affirm that there are simply two ages. To reach the conclusions based on this premise, one has to ignore many of the passages of Scripture we have walked through in this study. The king has no clothes.

It also stems from Daniel 9:27 that speaks of the seventieth week decreed for Israel. But as we see throughout Revelation, saints are present, and they are described the offspring of Israel, and there are direct references to the rapture. If the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed, this is a clear interpretation for the application of Daniel's seventieth week.

IX. Concluding Remarks

1 Timothy 4:1 Paul writes, ***“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.”***

This seems to echo what he wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 when he says that there will be a rebellion, an apostasy, a falling away from the faith.

And Jesus describes this turning away in Matthew 24:10-12 as a result of persecution:

10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, 11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. 12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,

It is important to have a clear understanding of what to expect during this time. Someday, worldwide, it is going to be dangerous to be a Christian. This is sobering and needs to be made very clear. For many will become disillusioned and turn away from the faith. So Jesus says in verse 13, ***“but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.”***

The reason for clarifying the issue of the rapture’s timing is to clarify expectations as Christians and prepare for persecution. The pre-trib rapture has been used as great motivation for people to accept Christ. Accepting Christ in itself is the most important thing. A pre-trib view does create great urgency since there are no signs that precede the pre-trib rapture. But the damage is done with regard to expectation and resolve to follow Christ when tested by persecution. If people are convinced that they are going to escape the tribulation, what kind of disillusionment will they experience when it does come?

It is very sobering to learn that persecution will come to you if you accept Christ. Preparing people to go through tribulation is a much better way to present the message of salvation. This would cause many to pause and calculate the cost before deciding to follow Christ.

Daniel 11:35 describes believers as ***“those of understanding”*** and with it we leave a word of encouragement. In the midst of end times persecution this verse describes a blessed outcome for those who genuinely and perseveringly follow Jesus Christ. It says,

And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.

Cheers to those who ***“remain faithful to Jesus”*** (Revelation 14:12) and ***“stand firm to the end”*** (Matthew 24:13) and ***“stay awake,”*** (Revelation 16:15) so that they will not be ***“surprised”*** (1 Thessalonians 5:4) when Christ comes ***“like a thief!”*** (Revelation 16:15) May this study be one more “tent peg” firmly driven into the ground to help you remain firm in your faith.

X. Appendices

Appendix A - The Similarities of the Trumpets and Bowls

The Seven Trumpets	<i>Comments</i>	The Seven Bowls
First Trumpet - hail and fire mixed with blood, burned one third of earth, trees, and grass <i>Revelation 8:7</i>	Two completely <i>separate</i> descriptions, but not contradictory.	First Bowl – Poured on the land, sores on the <u>people with the mark of the beast</u> <i>Revelation 16:2</i>
Second Trumpet - Blazing Mountain into the <u>SEA</u> turning one third of it to <u>BLOOD</u> , killing third of sea life, destroying third of ships <i>Revelation 8:8</i>	Both affect <i>the sea and it turns to blood</i>	Second Bowl – Poured out on the <u>SEA</u> , The Sea turns to <u>BLOOD</u> <i>Revelation 16:3</i>
Third Trumpet - Torch-like star falls in <u>RIVERS</u> and <u>STREAMS</u> and poisons one third of river waters, people die <i>Revelation 8:10</i>	Both affect the <i>ivers and streams</i>	Third Bowl – Poured out on the <u>RIVERS</u> and <u>STREAMS</u> , rivers become blood <i>Revelation 16:4</i>
Fourth Trumpet - One third of <u>SUN</u> , moon and stars struck, third of daylight turned dark <i>Revelation 8:12</i>	Both affect the <i>sun</i>	Fourth Bowl – Poured out on the <u>SUN</u> , Sun scorches <u>people who curse God</u> <i>Revelation 16:8</i>
Fifth Trumpet - Star falls from the sky, key to the pit, Locust like scorpions torture those without God's seal on them for five months <i>Revelation 9:1</i>	Seemingly separate events, unless this star is the dragon that fell in 12:9	Fifth Bowl – Poured out on the <u>throne of the Beast</u> , Beast's kingdom plunged into darkness <i>Revelation 16:10</i>
Sixth Trumpet - Four angels released who bound the <u>EUPHRATES</u> , third of mankind killed by army of 200 million <i>Revelation 9:13</i>	Both affect the <i>Euphrates River</i>	Sixth Bowl – Poured on the <u>EUPHRATES</u> and it dries up, Kings brought to battle <i>Revelation 16:12</i>
"The Mystery of God" <i>Revelation 10:7</i>	Possible references to the <i>Rapture</i>	"Behold I come like a thief" <i>Revelation 16:15</i>
Seventh Trumpet - Kingdom time with <u>HAILSTONES</u> <i>Revelation 11:15</i>	Both are final statements that include " <u>Hailstones</u> ".	Seventh Bowl – Poured into the air, "It is Done!" Huge <u>HAILSTONES</u> fall, men curse God. <i>Revelation 16:17</i>

Appendix B – Overview of the Entire Book of Revelation

The Return of Christ and Thereafter
<p>Chapter 19 The Return of Christ vss. 1-10 <i>Events in Heaven</i> vss. 11-21 <i>Events on Earth</i></p> <p>Chapter 20 The Millennium and Great White Throne Judgment</p> <p>Chapter 21, 22 The New Jerusalem and the River of Life</p>



Five Simultaneous Scenarios of the Revelation <i>(Tied together by five separate references to the Rapture)</i>
<p>Chapter 6 – 8:1 <i>First Scenario Culminating in the Day of Wrath and then “Silence”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Six Seals <p><i>Between sixth and seventh seal...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sixth Seal 6:12-17 combined with Matthew 24:29-31 which culminates with the Gathering (Rapture) • 144,000 Sealed • Martyrs from the Great Tribulation • Seventh Seal – “Silence in heaven for half an hour ...” <p>Chapter 8:2-11 <i>Second Scenario Culminating in the Seventh Trumpet</i> <i>Between sixth and seventh trumpets...10:7 The Mystery of God will be accomplished (Rapture)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Two Witnesses • The Kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, Judgment and Reward <p>Chapters 12-14 <i>Third Scenario Culminating in the Dual Harvest of the Earth</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Woman and the Dragon • The Beast out of the Sea – Rules for 42 months • The Beast out of the Earth – Sets Up Image of First Beast • The Lamb and the 144,000 in Mount Olivet (Zech 14) • The Angel and the Gospel • 14:14-20 <i>The Earth Harvested (Rapture)</i> <p>Chapters 15-16 <i>Fourth Scenario Culminating in Seventh Bowl and Lord’s Return</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Seven Bowls that complete the wrath of God <p><i>Between the sixth and seventh bowl...16:15 Behold I come like a thief. Blessed is he who stays awake. (Rapture)</i></p> <p>Chapters 17, 18 <i>Fifth Scenario further describing of the fall of Babylon mentioned in 16:19</i> Possible reference to the Rapture! 18:4 “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues;</p>

Introductions
<p>Chapter 1 John’s Introduction to Jesus</p> <p>Chapters 2, 3 John Records Letters to the Seven Churches Each letter has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Recipient</i> • <i>Redeemer</i> • <i>Revelation</i> • <i>Rebuke</i> • <i>Remedy</i> • <i>Retribution</i> • <i>Reward</i> <p>Chapters 4, 5 John’s Glimpse of Throne Room Activity</p>

Outline of the Book of Revelation

Appendix C – The Uses of “*kai eidon*” → “and I saw”

kai eidon

- **405 total verses in Revelation** (*Dividing 12:18 from 13:1*)
- **275 verses begin with “*kai*” (67.9% of all verses)**
- **“*kai eidon*” is used 30 times throughout the whole book**
 - 7.4% of all verses
 - 10.9% of all verses **beginning** with “*kai*”
- **21 of 30 times “*kai eidon*” indicates a completely different/new “vision”**
- **Only nine (9) times it is not used to start a new vision:**
 - Three times (3) in the beginning vision of the throne room *Ch. 5:2, 6, 11*
 - Three (3) times with the Seals *Ch. 6:2, 8, 12*
 - One (1) time with the Trumpets *Ch. 9:1*
 - One (1) time in the vision of the Woman on the Scarlett Beast *Ch 17:6*
 - One (1) time with the vision of the Martyrs *Ch. 20:4b*

Chapter 5

The Scroll and the Lamb

1. **¹Then I saw** in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals.
2. **²And I saw** a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?"
3. **⁶Then I saw** a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.
4. **¹¹Then I looked** and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.

Chapter 6

The Seals

5. **¹I watched** as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!"
6. **²I looked**, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.
7. **⁸I looked**, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.
8. **¹²I watched** as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red,

Chapter 7

144,000 Sealed

9. **²Then I saw** another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea:

Chapter 8

Seven Angels with Seven Trumpets

10. **²And I saw** the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

Chapter 9

11. ¹The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, **and I saw** a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss.

Chapter 10

The Angel and the Little Scroll

12. ¹**Then I saw** another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars.

Chapter 13

The Beast out of the Sea

13. ¹**And I saw** a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.

The Beast out of the Earth

14. ¹¹**Then I saw** another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon.

Chapter 14

The Lamb and the 144,000

15. ¹**Then I looked**, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.

The Three Angels

16. ⁶**Then I saw** another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people.

The Harvest of the Earth

17. ¹⁴**I looked**, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one "like a son of man" with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.

Chapter 15

Seven Angels with Seven Plagues

18. ¹**I saw** in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God's wrath is completed.

The Sea of Glass

19. ²**And I saw** what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name.

Chapter 16

Three Evil Spirits

20. ¹³**Then I saw** three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

Chapter 17

The Woman and the Beast

21. ³Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. **There I saw** a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns.
22. ⁶**I saw** that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus.

Chapter 19

The Rider on the White Horse

23. **I saw** heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war.

The Angel Standing in the Sun

24. **And I saw** an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God,

Armies Gather to Make War

25. **Then I saw** the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army.

Chapter 20

The Thousand Years

26. **And I saw** an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain.

Thrones and Martyrs

27. **I saw** thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge.
28. **And I saw** the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

The Dead Are Judged

29. **Then I saw** a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.

Chapter 21

The New Jerusalem

30. **Then I saw** a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

"meta tauta eidon" → "after this I saw"

- **Used 5 times, each time begins a new vision**

Chapter 4

The Throne in Heaven

1. **After this I looked**, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven.

Chapter 7

144,000 Sealed

2. **After this I saw** four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.

The Great Multitude in White Robes

3. **After this I looked** and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

Chapter 15

The Tabernacle of the Testimony

4. **After this I looked** and in heaven the temple, that is, the tabernacle of the Testimony, was opened.

Chapter 18

Another Angel

5. **After this I saw** another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor.

Conclusion! Twenty-six (26) of thirty-five (35) times “(21 of 30 w/ “kai”, 5 of 5 w/ “meta tauta”) eidon” is used as a transition to start a new vision. This supports the proposition that Revelation 8:2 begins a new vision completely separating the Trumpets from the Seals and their chronological sequence.

Appendix D – the Seventieth Week of Daniel by the Numbers

These are all the Scripture references to specific times pertaining to Daniel’s 70th week.

- **The Decree of “Seventy Sevens”** *Daniel 9:24-27*
- **2300 Evenings and Mornings** *Daniel 8:1-26*
- **1290 - 1335 Days** *Daniel 12:11*
- **“time, times and half a time”** *Daniel 7:24-26; Daniel 12:6-8; Rev 12:14*
- **1,260 Days** *Revelation 11:3; Revelation 12:5, 6*
- **Forty-Two Months** *Revelation 11:1, 2; Revelation 13:5*

Original meaning of “month”

MEN (μην) – connected with **mene**, “the moon,” akin to a Sanskrit root ma, “to measure” (the Sanskrit **masa** denotes both “moon” and “month”, like the Latin **mensis**, or the English “moon” and “month”, the moon being in early times the measure of the month).

- The interval between the 17th day of the second month (**Gen 7:11** Noah’s time) and the 17th day of the seventh month, is said to be **150 days (8:3, 4)**, i.e., **five months of 30 days each**; hence **the year would be 360 days**. (cp. Dan. 7:25; 9:27; 12:7; with Rev. 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5; whence we conclude that 3½ years, or 42 months = 1260 days, i.e., one year = 360 days);
- This was the length of the old Egyptian year; later, five days were added to correspond to the solar year.
- The Hebrew year was as nearly solar as was compatible with its commencement, coinciding with the new moon, or first day of the month. This was a regular feast day, Num. 10:10; 28:11-14; the Passover coincided with the full moon (the 14th of the month Abib).
- The word is found in Gal 4:10; James 5:17; Rev 9:5, 10, 15; 11:2; 13:5; 22:2 as well as Luke’s writings in Luke and Acts.

Conclusions

1. The Abomination of Desolation will be set up in the middle of the seventieth week.

Daniel 9:27 *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 on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."*

- We have to assume that one "seven" equals one week of seven years, or 84 months.

2. The Saints will be persecuted for a time, times, and half a time.

Daniel 7:25 *He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.*

3. From the Abomination of Desolation until the sanctuary is reconsecrated there are 2300 "evenings and mornings."

Daniel 8:13, 14 *"How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?" 14 He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated."*

4. The events from Daniel 11:31 to 12:4 will be completed in a time, times, and half a time.

Daniel 12:7 *The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, "It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed."*

5. From the Abomination of Desolation and the time of blessing there will 1335 days.

Daniel 12:11 *"From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. 12 Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.*

6. The holy city will be trampled on by the Gentiles for 42 months.

(a 28 day "month" equals 1176 days; a 30 day "month" equals 1260 days))

Revelation 11:2 *But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.*

7. Two witnesses will prophesy for 1,260 days.

Revelation 11:3 *And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."*

8. The Jews will be "cared for" for 1,260 days, and a time, times, and half a time

Revelation 12:6 *And the woman fled into the wilderness, where God had prepared a place to care for her for 1,260 days.*

12:14 *The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.*

9. The Beast out of the Sea is given authority for 42 months.

Revelation 13:5 *The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months.*

The 70th Week of Daniel

(by the numbers)

First half of the 70 th week		Second half of the 70 th week		"the end that is decreed"
A ruler makes a one week covenant <i>Daniel 9:27</i>	Abomination set up in the middle of the "seven" <i>Daniel 9:27</i>	Beast out of the sea rules for 42 months <i>Revelation 13:5</i> vs. 7 wages war against saints...		"until the end that is decreed is poured out on him." <i>Daniel 9:27</i>
	The Abomination of Desolation <i>Daniel 11:31;</i> <i>Matthew 24:15</i>	Saints persecuted for a time, times, and half a time <i>Daniel 7:25</i>		"Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him." <i>Daniel 11:45</i>
	Beast out of the Earth sets up an Image of the first beast. <i>Revelation 13:14</i>	The events of Daniel 11:31-12:4 will be completed in a time, times and half a time. <i>Daniel 12:7</i>		
	"sets Himself up in God's temple..." <i>2 Thess 2:4</i>	Gentiles trample the holy city for 42 months <i>Revelation 11: 2</i>		
		Two witnesses prophesy for 1,260 days <i>Revelation 11:3</i>		
		Jews "cared for" in the desert for 1,260 days, or a time, times, and half a time. <i>Revelation 12:6, 14</i>		
		Blessing comes after 1335 days <i>Daniel 12:11</i>	→	
		Sanctuary reconsecrated after 2300 Days <i>Daniel 8:13:14</i>	→	

Appendix E – My Guess at the Chronology of the 70th Week

← Prior to the 70th week :: 70th Week → [A of D] [-----Last 3.5 years -----] [One Day of Wrath, Return, Resurrection, Rapture]

← 1 st Seal White Horse Conqueror Bent on Conquest (Jihad?) Rev 6:2	2 nd Seal Red Horse Menslay each other Rev 6:3, 4	3 rd Seal Black Horse Worldwide Inflation Rev 6:5, 6	4 th Seal Pale Horse Death kills ¼ of earth's population Rev 6:7, 8	Covenant Confirmed for One Seven Daniel 9:27 ("Covenant" implies peace)	"In the middle of the seven..." Abomination of Desolation (Aod) Daniel 9:27 Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14		5 th Seal Tribulation Martyrs Cry "How Long" Rev 6:9-11	6 th Seal Celestial Catastrophes. Mountains and Islands Disappear God's Wrath! Rev 6:12-20; Mt 24:29; Mk 13:24; Lk 21:25	Return/Rapture /Resurrection Mt 24:31, 31; Mk 13:25; 1 Thess 4:13-18; 2 Thess 2:1	7 th Seal "Silence" Rev 8:1
				1290 days from the AoD plus 45 days (1335) Daniel 12:11		Multitudes from Great Tribulation Rev 7:9	Trumpets 1-6 Rev 8:2 -ch. 9	The Mystery of God is accomplished Rev 10	7 th Trumpet Christ's Kingdom Rev 11	
				Earth Beast (False Prophet) Sets Up AoD Rev 13:11-18		Martyrs Victorious over the Beast Rev 15	Bowls 1-6 Rev 15, 16	"I come like a thief" Rev 16:15	7 th Bowl "It is Done!" Rev 16	
				Man of Lawlessness sets himself up 2 Thess 2:4		Two Witnesses 42 months Rev 11		Dual Harvest of the Earth Rev 14:14-20	Lamb on Mt Zion with 144,000 Rev 14:1-13	
				King of the North sets up the AoD Dan 11:31		The Woman and the Dragon Saints persecuted 3.5 "times" Rev 12	Babylon Falls in One day... from her plagues Rev 18:8	"Come out of her my people" Rev 18:4	The Lamb overcomes with His saints Rev 17:14	
						One king out of the ten – Oppresses Saints for 3.5 times Tries to change times Dan 7:24		Son of Man on the clouds Dan 7:13, 14 Daniel's People Delivered Dan 12:1, 2	"Great Supper of God" Birds gorge Rev 19:17-21 1290 th day?	

After all this...

- Zechariah 14 – Jesus' feet step on Mount of Olives and He conquers the nations at Armageddon
- Revelation 20 – The Millennial kingdom is established