

Chapter 22

The Rapture of the Church

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"
(Revelation 7:9-10)

We have already talked somewhat about this great event we have termed “The Rapture of the Church.” Since we have covered this before I won’t bore you by repeating myself except to review. Most Christians believe in an event we refer to as the Rapture. Some believe it to be at the beginning of the tribulation period while others believe it to be in the middle of that seven year period. There are a few who don’t believe in a rapture but that at some point the end will come and we will go through judgment and then on to Heaven. However both the pre-tribulation belief and the no tribulation or post-tribulation belief both require much spiritualization of the scriptures to support them.

The mid-tribulation belief which is supported in this book requires the least amount of spiritualization and I have come to believe it as the truth. I have said that if I am wrong and the pre-tribulation belief is correct

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that I will be happy to repent of my belief simply because the mid-tribulation belief could require severe physical persecution. I don't look forward to going through that so if I am wrong I will be happy to be so. However, looking at the Book of Revelation under the 3 witness system (which is what we are teaching in this book – The brief overview found in the horsemen, then the tribulation from the aspect of the Church and finally from the aspect of the Jewish Nation) requires no spiritualization except where the Bible specifically says it is a spiritual representation.

The purpose for the Rapture of the Church is to remove her from the Earth before God pours out His wrath upon it. We have also talked about this previously so I won't go into great detail again here. But in the middle of the tribulation period the persecution changes from the Jews and the Church as a retaliation against God to God punishing the anti-christ and the wicked on this planet.

I Thessalonians 5 speaks about the event we call the Rapture. Verse 9-10 says, *“For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.”* Plainly it is telling us that those who have been born again and have come into the kingdom (the children of light) are not appointed to the time when God pours out His wrath upon this world system. Just before He begins the events that mark the pouring out of His wrath He will remove the remnant of His Church.

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Before going any further I want to reiterate again that the word “Rapture” is not found in the scripture. It is a word that merely describes what takes place when God reaps His Church from the Earth. Until this event takes place tremendous and horrendous persecutions will be carried out by those who have chosen to follow the anti-christ. Because the Church is such a threat to his plans and his kingdom he will convince the rest of the world that the Christians and the Jews are enemies of the great plan of the New Order. His plans are to fulfill what all other dictators and emperors who have reigned from Nimrod down wanted to accomplish. It has always been the spirit of the anti-christ when a single man or nation decides it can rule the world and begins to fight. That should be the first sign to us that it is the spirit of anti-christ, when the mandate is given that in order to have world peace those who stand in the way must be eliminated.

It is the desire of Satan-inspired men to keep the Earth, her people and all creation under the curse. It happened in the early kingdoms of the East. It happened with the Egyptian Empire, the Babylonian Empire, the Persian Empire, the Greek Empire, the Roman Empire, and more recently with the German Empire under Hitler, the Communistic Empire of the now defunct USSR and currently with the plans of the Muslim world. The ultimate goal is world peace through elimination of all who don't concur with the beliefs and practices of their culture.

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The climax of this will be under the rule of the anti-christ. Though his plans are very similar to all the others his will be the most terrifying and severe because he will not just be influenced by Satan but will be completely possessed and controlled by him. It will be the Devil's last thrust to keep the world from redemption.

The scripture that supports this teaching can be found in Revelation 7:9-17; Revelation 14:14-16 and Revelation 15:2-4. Revelation 7:9-17 is the first testimony of the taking out of the Church while the passages in chapter 14 and 15 are the second testimony of this same event.

In Revelation 7:9-17 we see an innumerable group of people standing before the throne of God. They are from every nation found on the Earth and are standing before the Lamb clad in white robes carrying palm branches in their hands. It serves as a reminder of the incident just before the crucifixion of Christ when He entered Jerusalem and the people spread their garments before Him as he rode on a donkey (symbolic of a newly crowned king). They also tore down palm branches and spread them on the road before Him. Just so those before the throne carry their palm branches showing that the Lamb is the King of kings.

They sing the salvation song saying "*Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!*" When they say this the living creatures and elders also present in the throne room fall down in

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worship of God saying “*Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen.*” What a glorious scene it is!

A conversation begins between John and one of the elders who asked John if he know who this great multitude was. John answered him by saying, “*Sir, you know.*” Immediately the elder answered that these were those who came out of the great tribulation. They washed their robes and made them white – a very descriptive way of saying they came to Jesus and got saved. John is further told that they are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple. The best is that He who sits on the throne lives among them! Halleluiah! What a blessing to know that we get to live with God and the Lamb forever more! No more hunger; no more thirst; no more scorching sun to burn them. Instead they are shepherded by the Lamb (think of it – a lamb is the shepherd) and lead them to living fountains of waters – and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. I do want to be in that number.

Also in description of this event is found in the second testimony beginning with Revelation 14:14-16. It is a description of the harvesting of the earth. It begins with the harvest of the saints. It describes the Son of Man – Jesus Christ sitting on the clouds thrusting in His cycle to reap. He is calling His children home before the outpouring of the great wrath of God. Note beginning in verse 17 the second reaping begins and it is one of blood

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– showing the wrath of God upon the wicked of the earth.

Finally in Revelation 15:2-4 we see the sea of glass which stretches before the throne of God. We first see that sea of glass in Revelation 4 but it is empty. This time it is described as being mixed with fire and those who have gained the victory over the beast (anti-christ), over his image, over his mark, and over the number of his name. They are standing on that sea of glass having harps and singing the song of Moses. Remember that most of the second testimony is told from a Jewish standpoint and that explains the singing of the song of Moses.

So we see the two witnesses of the reaping of the saints – the Rapture of the Church in the middle of the tribulation period – it is God removing His people from the earth so that He can begin pouring out his wrath upon it. It will result in the total destruction of the Earth and a new Heaven and new Earth being formed.