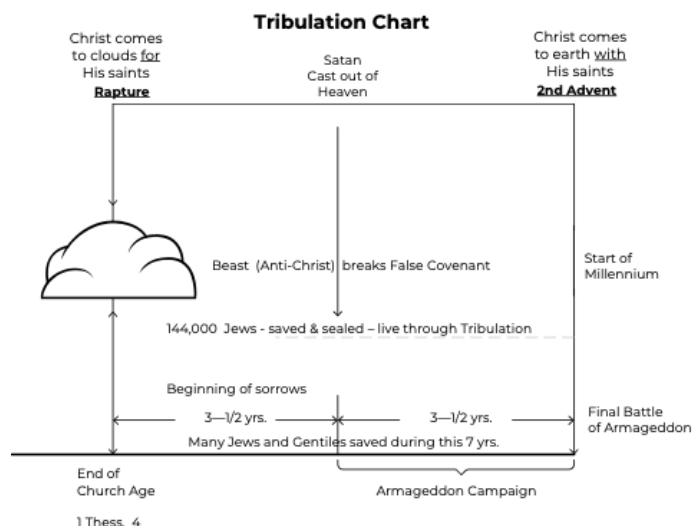




Pre-Tribulation or Post-Tribulation Rapture?

The purpose of the Tribulation will be to prepare the nation of Israel for the Messiah and to pour judgment on unbelieving man and nations.



In every dispensation, believers have had tribulation in their lives. In fact, tribulation is very intense for believers during the Church Age because of the Angelic Conflict. Every believer is a target of Satan and his demons. However, the Tribulation is a time of preparation for Israel's restoration, not the Church for glory. None of the Old Testament passages on the Tribulation mention the Church. Deut. 4:29-30; Jer. 30:4-11; Dan 9:24-27; Dan 12:1-2.

"But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice." (Deuteronomy 4:29-30, NASB)

"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." (Daniel 9:24-27, NASB)

"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and



everlasting contempt.” (Daniel 12:1-2, NASB)

None of the New Testament passages on the Tribulation mention the Church. The Rapture of the Church is never mentioned in any passage dealing with the Second Advent of Christ after the Tribulation. Matt. 24; 1 Thess. 1:9-10; 1 Thess. 5:4-9; Rev. 4 - 19.

“For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.” (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, NASB)

“But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,” (1 Thessalonians 5:4-9, NASB)

The leading exponent of the Post-Tribulational view George Ladd in his book, “The Blessed Hope,” page 165 says, “With the exception of one passage, the author will grant that the Scripture nowhere explicitly states that the Church will go through the Great Tribulation. God’s people are seen in the Tribulation, but they are not called the Church but the elect or the saints. Nor does the Word explicitly place the Rapture at the end of the Tribulation. Most of the references to these final events lack chronological indications. However, in one passage, Rev 20, the Resurrection is placed at the return of Christ in glory. This is more than an inference.”

If the Word of God is our final authority, shouldn’t there be more Scriptural documentation for a Post-Tribulational view than this stated above? The fact that Revelation 20 states there is a resurrection after the Tribulation is true. However, it is not referring to the Rapture of the Church, but the resurrection of Old Testament saints.

A proper literal interpretation of Daniel’s 70 weeks, Daniel 9:24-27, finds that 69 of them are historically fulfilled, but the last week (“week” means seven years) is yet future. Daniel’s prophecy refers to Israel. The Age of Israel stops at the Cross, seven years short, and is picked up again after the Rapture of the Church. The Tribulation is Jewish in flavor, not the Church.

“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”” (Daniel 9:24-27, NASB)

The Church is not appointed to the wrath to be poured out on Israel and unsaved Gentiles. Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:9-10; 1 Thess. 5:9.

“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God



through Him.” (Romans 5:9, NASB)

“For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.” (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, NASB)

“For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,” (1 Thessalonians 5:9, NASB)

The Church therefore cannot enter “the great day of their wrath.” Rev. 6:17.

“for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” (Revelation 6:17, NASB)

The Church will not be overtaken by the Day of the Lord, which includes the Tribulation. 1 Thess. 5:1-9.

“For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.” (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3, NASB)

“But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief;” (1 Thessalonians 5:4, NASB)

“For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,” (1 Thessalonians 5:9, NASB)

The believers in the time of Paul’s writing had been under such severe persecution that they thought they were in the Tribulation. Paul tells them that before the Tribulation can begin, the Rapture of the Church will take place and only then will the Man of Sin be revealed. The church of Philadelphia was promised deliverance from the “hour of testing.” Rev. 3:10.

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

It is characteristic of God’s faithfulness to deliver believers before a divine judgment is inflicted upon the world as illustrated in the deliverance of Noah, Lot, Rahab, etc. 2 Peter 2:6-9.

“and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,” (2 Peter 2:6-9, NASB)

At the time of the Rapture of the Church, all believers go to the Father’s house in heaven and do not immediately return to the earth after meeting Christ in the air as the Post-Tribulationists teach. John 14:3.

“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:3, NASB)

The godly remnant of the Tribulation, the “elect,” are pictured as Israelites not members of the Church. Matt. 24:22; Matt. 24:31; Matt 25:1-13.



“Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.” (Matthew 24:22, NASB)

“And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.” (Matthew 24:31, NASB)

Pre-Tribulationism, as opposed to the Post-Tribulationism, does not confuse general terms like “elect” and “saints” which apply to the saved of all ages with specific terms like Church and those in Christ, which refer to believers of the Church Age only. The Church is uniformly exhorted to look for the coming of the Lord while believers in the Tribulation are directed to look for signs. Matthew 24.

The Holy Spirit is omnipresent whether the Church is absent or present. However, when the Holy Spirit is removed as the Indweller of the Church, the restraint of evil is removed. This is a specific type of evil that He restrains, referring to ecumenical religion (the mystery of iniquity). When the true Church is raptured, the false apostate church is left behind under the Man of Sin. 2 Thess. 2.

“And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.” (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7, NASB)

If the expression, “unless the apostasy comes first” was translated literally, “unless the departure comes first,” it would plainly show the necessity of the Rapture taking place before the beginning of the Tribulation. 2 Thess. 2:3.

“Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,” (2 Thessalonians 2:3, NASB)