

The Resurrection-

(The dead in Christ will rise first)

Rapture

(Caught up together with them)

Eugene W. Emmerich III



Copyright © 2011 by Eugene W. Emmerich III

The Resurrection-Rapture

(The dead in Christ will rise first) (Caught up together with them)

by Eugene W. Emmerich III

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 9781612158136

All rights reserved solely by the author. The author guarantees all contents are original and do not infringe upon the legal rights of any other person or work. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without the permission of the author. The views expressed in this book are not necessarily those of the publisher.

Unless otherwise indicated, Bible quotations are taken from The New International Version (NIV). Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Zondervan; and The King James Version (KJV).

www.xulonpress.com

Table of Contents



1. Introduction.....	vii
2. The Foundation.....	13
3. Framing.....	21
4. Wiring.....	27
5. Mirrors.....	35
6. The Roof.....	45
7. Three Blind Mice.....	57
8. The Restrainer.....	75
9. The 70 th Week.....	87
10. Antiochus Epiphanes IV.....	95
11. Church History.....	103
12. Conclusion.....	127
Bibliography.....	135

Introduction



In 1989 I moved to a peaceful area outside of Placerville, California. It was a beautiful place to raise my son. Trees, deer, light snow at times, and plenty of places for kids to explore. We fellowshiped in a church from our denomination located three miles from our home. There was also a church across the pasture from us where I introduced myself. Even though it wasn't my home church, I enjoyed the people, made some friends, and helped out sometimes around the property. I got to know the pastor, Jerry, while spending time there. We used to debate different doctrines and things related to apologetics. At that time we both listened to Dr. Walter Martin, the original Bible Answer Man, on the radio.

One day the subject of the rapture came up. I informed Jerry that I held the popular view that the church gets rap-

tured before the Antichrist appears. He told me that he and Dr. Martin held a different view. The way he shared this with me was instrumental in my understanding of things today. He said, “I think there is a lot of misunderstanding about the rapture, because we are not looking at it for what it is. The rapture is only a part of the resurrection of the believers. If you study it as that, the resurrection of the believers, you will see it differently.” So I took him up on it and would like to share my observations in the next chapters .

Jesus was a carpenter, a builder. He used buildings many times in his parables. I want to present my observations in the manner of a builder, for I too am a carpenter. I hope that what I share in the next chapters will come together like a building. First, I will define through scripture the resurrection of the believers and show the function of the rapture in the resurrection. Second, I will identify the resurrection chronologically as it relates to future events. Third, I will show the witness of the church in the first three centuries, from the writings of the church fathers. I will use this to support what I see as the proper interpretation of scripture. The progression of thought is: what did Daniel prophesy? How did Jesus interpret that? How did Paul and John interpret Jesus? How did Justin and Barnabas interpret them? How did Tertullian, Irenaeus, Victorinus, Hippolytus, and the other church fathers interpret

them? Is there a consistent pattern? I will attempt to present this information as clearly as possible, and I pray that the Holy Spirit shows you what he has shown me.

The Foundation



Foundation



In this chapter I want to lay down the foundation for the rest of our building project. I will establish basic biblical truths concerning facts associated with the resurrection. These facts will be built upon in the subsequent chapters. If you're not absolutely clear about these facts, you may want to reread this chapter before moving on to the next one.

One of the absolute must have tenets of the Christian faith is the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead. John 2:19-22 tells us that Jesus said he would raise himself from the dead, bodily. After he had risen he gave his body as evidence of his resurrection to his disciples when he said, "handle me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have. Check out my hands and feet, it's me. " (Luke 24:36-46). Jesus was raised bodily, but his body was changed - a sort of meta-

morphosis. The first body was sown natural, or perishable, the raised body was changed - raised spiritual, supernatural, or nonperishable. I Corinthians 15 gives us pictures of this very clearly.

Because Jesus was able to defeat death like he did, he has given us the assurance through his resurrection that he will do the same for us who believe. "...we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body..." (Philippians 3:20, 21). The expectation of the believers is, if we have been united with him through baptism, unto the likeness of his death, we shall be raised also in the likeness of his resurrection (Romans 6:5).

While observing the church in the Book of Acts, I noticed that they continually witnessed to the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead and that he will come again to raise those who have put their trust in him from the dead.¹ This is the heart of the Gospel! My testimony to the rest of the world is this: Can you think of any other story as amazing as someone was able to bring himself back to life from the dead? This is the greatest story ever told. And if the story is so great, how much greater

¹ Here is the list of the witness in the Book of Acts 1:8,22/2:25-32/ 3:15/ 4:2,33/ 5:30-32/ 10:39-41/ 13:29-37/ 17:2-3,18,31-32/ 23:6/ 24:15,21/ 25:19/ 26:1-8,22-23

is the actual event? And how much greater is the person whom the event is about?

Recorded in history, in both the Old and New Testament, people have been raised from the dead by God working through someone or something. All these people however eventually died. Hebrews 11:35 talks about looking forward to obtain to a “better resurrection”. This is also called the first resurrection. Jesus addressed this when speaking to Martha about Lazarus. “‘Lord,’ Martha said to Jesus, ‘if you had been here, my brother would not have died...’ Jesus said to her, ‘your brother will rise again.’ Martha answered, ‘I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies...’” (John 11:23-25) Jesus is speaking of the better resurrection at the last day. The unanimous position by the church throughout history has been that the resurrection of the believers happens at the last day (John 6:40). This will be dealt with in the chapter entitled Church History.

At this time I would like to establish and confirm a fact that will be important to keep with us through the rest of this building project. The bible teaches emphatically that there is one resurrection for the believers - the better resurrection, and one for the unbelievers. There are four proof texts that I will cite.

1. Acts 24:14,15

I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

The word “both” means one of each. The word “both” doesn’t allow for three or four, it means one of each. Also, the term “a resurrection” is singular. If there were more than one of either type it would have to read “resurrections”, in the plural. This text clearly teaches **one** resurrection for believers.

2. John 5:28, 29

Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out. Those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

The KJV uses the terms, ‘resurrection of life’ and ‘resurrection of damnation’ when describing the two. Again Jesus is teaching one resurrection for the believers. Also in Jesus’ conversation in the previously mentioned passage with Martha, we see the term being used, “The resurrection at the last day.”

“The” in this phrase, forces the idea of one of a kind or a unique event. A specific event at a specific time.

3. Daniel 12:1, 2

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. 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.

This text says the same thing - one for each.

4. Revelation 20:4-6

I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. 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 rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

Again this text says the same thing. It uses the terms “the first resurrection” and “the second death” – one of each. A very important fact not to be missed is: the first resurrection is not a series of events, it happens “in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye” which we see in I Corinthians 15:51, 52:

51 we will all be changed-52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised.

Here is a summary of the foundational biblical truths concerning facts associated with the resurrection covered in this chapter:

- 1) Jesus was raised from the dead
- 2) His resurrection was bodily
- 3) The body was changed
- 4) The believer’s resurrection will be the same
- 5) The resurrection of believers is at the last day
- 6) There is only one resurrection for believers
- 7) It happens in a moment, a flash, in the twinkling of an eye

Framing

I Thessalonians 4:13 – 18



Framing

I Thessalonians 4:13 – 18



If I were to ask anyone, “what is the one scripture passage you would use to show or teach the rapture of the believers?” the overwhelming consensus would be, I Thessalonians 4:13-18. In my opinion this would be the best place to start, to frame up on the foundation we have established, for the support of the rest of our building project. Here is our text:

13Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. 14We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 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. 18Therefore encourage each other with these words. (I Thes. 4:13-18)

As we start with verse 13 we see that the subject is “The resurrection of believers” who have fallen asleep. It seems there was misunderstanding with some over what happens to the dead believers. Paul tells them that they will partake in the hope that was always held by the Jews, which was they would be raised up from the dead. Verse 14 says that these believers have a hope, an assurance that if they believe that Jesus rose from the dead, they too will be raised from the dead. Peter calls it, “...a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God, through faith, ready to be revealed at the last day”(I Peter 1:3-5).

This is the hope that Paul was speaking of before King Agrippa in Acts 24:1-8. The hope of resurrection goes back to the beginning in Genesis and Job. Even though the resurrection was preached, some still didn't get it. In verse 16 Paul tells us that the Lord himself will return from heaven to raise the

dead. Paul says that “The dead in Christ will rise first”. This is the resurrection of believers. Then those that are still alive will be, “Caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air”. The phrase, “caught up together with them”, makes clear the raising of the dead believers and the alive believers, is one single event. There is no way around this fact. Paul said the same thing in I Corinthians 15:51-53:

51Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52in 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. 53For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

From this text we see that not all of us will be dead, but all of us will be changed. As we established in the previous chapter, Jesus will change our bodies to be like his. Another way to put this is, the rapture is the resurrection of the alive believers. Both dead and alive will be resurrected at the same time, in a blink of an eye. These are not separate events spread out over time. “Caught up together with them” and “In the twinkling of an eye” is one event, in a flash. This is, “The coming of the Lord and our gathering together to him”.

Wiring
II Thessalonians 2:1-12



Wiring

II Thessalonians 2:1-12



In this chapter I wire First and Second Thessalonians together. II Thessalonians 2 is a commentary on I Thessalonians 4. It continues to address the errors related to the resurrection of believers, and the lies taught by heretics. I will also start to establish the chronology of the events that are associated with the time of the resurrection of the believers. Here is our text: II Thessalonians 2:1-12:

1Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, 2not 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. 3Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for (that day 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.

5Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? 6And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. 7For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. 8And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. 9The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, 10and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

In verse 1, we see that the main point for Paul is to address "The coming of the Lord and our being gathered together to him." Paul introduces this subject, our resurrection at the Lord's coming in I Thessalonians 4, which we looked at in the previous chapter. Paul also told this to the Corinthians in I Corinthians 15:20-23. Our resurrection happens at the coming of our Lord.

In verse 2, Paul says, not to be upset by any supposed report, letter, or prophecy that claims to be from him or God

that they had missed the resurrection. Then he goes on to tell them the truth about this and refers to it as “the day of the Lord”. When he uses this shorter phrase he is **not** introducing a completely new subject, rather, he is using it as a synonym for the subject of “The Lord’s coming and resurrecting of the saints”. He does the same thing in I Thessalonians 5:1, 2. He uses the phrase “the day of the Lord” as a synonym for “The coming of our Lord and our being gathered together to him”, which is what Paul just discussed in I Thessalonians 4. The misunderstanding Paul is trying to clear up in the two Thessalonian letters is, when the resurrection will happen and who will be raised. The confusion is about the resurrection not all of the other things described as happening during “the day of the Lord”.

I’d like to point out something else about the two phrases: “the coming of our Lord and our being gathered together to him” and “the day of the Lord.” “The coming of our Lord and our being gathered together to him” is only a part of “the day of Lord.” “The day of the Lord” encompasses **all** of the “coming of our Lord and our being gathered together to him”. Just as the term fornication describes all of adultery, the term adultery only describes part of the meaning of fornication. Likewise with the phrase “The day of the Lord”, it is used as a

synonym to describe “The coming of our Lord and our being gathered together to him”.

The problem Paul is addressing in verse 2 is the heresy being taught that the resurrection had already happened, leaving people with a sense of no hope. Had they missed it? They thought they had missed the Lords return to raise the believers. In I and II Timothy a heretic named Hymenaeus, upset Paul so much that he put a sort of curse, if you will, on him (I Timothy 1:20). In II Tim 2:17, 18 we see Hymenaeus’ heresy. He said that the resurrection had already happened and over threw people’s faith. Paul addresses this heresy in II Thessalonians 2.

In verse 3 he says that the resurrection won’t take place until two things happen. One, the rebellion, or as most translations say, the falling away or apostasy. This could be civil but usually means religious apostasy. Two, the man of lawlessness, also known as the man of sin, son of perdition, or son of destruction is revealed – the one who is empowered or embodied by Satan, verse 9. People refer to him as Antichrist. In verse 4 Paul tells us how the man of sin will be revealed, “He will exalt himself as God”. If you look closely at II Thessalonians 2:4 you will see that it is a copy of Daniel 11:36, 37. Although the passage in Daniel is about Antiochus Epiphenes IV, it is applied by Paul to the futuristic antichrist. He says in verse 5

“remember I told you these things when I was with you?” I believe Paul taught them about these things from the book of Daniel.

The next thing Paul says is that there is something that keeps the man of sin from being revealed, so that he will only be revealed in the proper time. In verse 7 “the one who holds it back”, “the restrainer”, “he that letteth” are the titles for the one who prevents Antichrist from being revealed before the proper time. The one glaring reality about this text is that it does not give us the identity of this “restrainer.” Look and be sure of this fact. The identity of the “restrainer” has to be defined from other scripture by comparing scripture with scripture. Is this restraint against Satan the ministry of the Holy Spirit? Is it the ministry of angels? Is it the ministry of something else? I believe it is clear in scripture that this ministry is always done by the angels. I’ll cite a few texts to support this: Revelation 12:7-9 and 20:1-3, and Daniel 10:12,13. It seems to me that Paul taught these things that are laid out in II Thessalonians 2 from Daniel 11 & 12.

Dan 11:36, 37	Antichrist	II Thessalonians 2:4
Dan 12:2,	The Resurrection	II Thessalonians 2:1
Dan 12:1	The restraint/ divine protection	II Thessalonians 2:7

I go into more detail about the restrainer in the chapter entitled The Restrainer. II Thessalonians 2:9, 11 say that it will be a time of delusion, the working of counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders. Antichrist will appear as the savior of a troubled world. He will deceive many. The coming of the Lord and our being gathered together to him happens *after* Antichrist is revealed. This is the view the church always taught and defended for 1,800 years. I go over this in more detail in the chapter entitled Church History. We will see this chronological pattern repeated through all of scripture.

Chronology Review

- 1) Apostasy/Falling away
- 2) Angelic restraint is removed
- 3) Antichrist is revealed claiming deity.
- 4) Then comes the resurrection of the believers.

Mirrors

Comparing Matthew 24 to Revelation 6



Mirrors

Comparing Matthew 24 to Revelation 6



In this chapter I deal with the Olivet discourse from Matthew 24. I am going to look at this discourse in the light of the question asked of Jesus, “What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age”? Not the question, “When will the temple be destroyed”?, verse 3. The destruction of the temple was fulfilled in 70AD. At this time I am not going to address what was or wasn’t fulfilled in 70 AD. What I know for sure is that Matthew 24:30 has not happened, no question about it. We have not seen the return of the Lord Jesus.

What I’m going to share here isn’t new. I saw this many years ago and it gave me good visual understanding. Matthew 24 was compared side by side with Revelation 6. First I will

give you our text, then the comparison and then the commentary. Here is our text Matthew 24:3-31

3As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” 4Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. 5For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ, and will deceive many. 6You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8All these are the beginning of birth pains. 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. 10At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, 11and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. 12Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, 13but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. 14And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. 15’So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand— 16then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. 18Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. 19How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 20Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.

21For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. 22If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. 23At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. 24For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. 25See, I have told you ahead of time. 26”So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. 27For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather. 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.

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.

Comparison of Matthew 24 with Revelation 6

Mt 24:5..... False Christ..... Rev 6:1,2 1st seal
Mt 24:6..... War..... Rev 6:3,4 2nd seal
Mt 24:7..... Famines Rev 6:5,6 3rd seal
Mt 24:7..... Death/Disease Rev 6:7,8 4th seal

Mt 24:9.....	Martyrdom.....	Rev 6:9-11	5th seal
Mt 24:10.....	Apostasy.....	II Thes 2:3	
Mt 24:15.....	Abomination of	II Thes 2:4	
	desolation		
Mt 24:29.....	Joel's sign.....	Rev 6:12-14	6th seal
Mt 24:30,31...	Resurrection	Rev 11:15-18	7th trump
		Rev 14:14-16	harvest

Notice that both passages establish a chronological timeline of what events happen in relationship to one another. There are two important points I would like to make:

- First, because the seals are numbered 1 through 7 in Revelation 6, it establishes that there is a sequence of events. The thing that I found interesting, when I first saw this comparison, is that Jesus gives the events in the same order as Revelation 6.
- Second, the terms that establish chronology are “next,” “then,” “and then,” and especially, “immediately after.” The phrase “at that time” is translated “and then” in most other translations and definitely is a term that establishes chronology.

The table of comparison is self explanatory. The first four seals are referred to by Jesus in Matthew as “birth pains.” “*Then*,” he says there will start martyrdom. “*At that time*”

there will be a falling away, an apostasy, (II Thes 2:3). So when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel, it is the end (II Thes 2:4). Jesus said, “Let the reader understand.” Do you understand what the abomination of desolation is? I will go into this in much more detail in the chapter titled “Antiochous Epiphanes IV”. You can study it in Daniel chapters 7-12 and in 1st & 2nd Maccabees.

Jesus said, “For *then* there will be great distress (tribulation),” associated with the abomination of desolation. “*Immediately after*” the distress (tribulation) of those days comes the sign that was spoken of by Joel which is the 6th Seal.

Joel 2:31, 3:15,16

Sun will be
turned to
darkness

Moon turned to
blood
sun and moon
darkened

Stars no longer
shine

The heavens
will shake

Matt.24:29

sun will be
darkened

moon will not
give it's
light

stars will fall
from the skies

heavenly bodies
will be shaken

Revelation 6:12,13

sun turned black

moon turned
blood red

stars in the
skies fell

heavens like a
tree shaken

Jesus describes what Joel prophesied. Read Joel 2:28-32 and you will see that God says through Joel that this (6th Seal) will happen “before” The Day of the Lord. We know from our previous chapters that the resurrection of believers happens “in” the day of the Lord (II Thes 2:2). That is exactly consistent with Matthew 24:30, 31. Jesus comes with his angels, at the last trumpet, and raises the dead. This is what I Thes. 4 and II Thes. 2 call “the coming of our Lord and our gathering together to him.”

- There are two important points I want to make sure don't get missed here. First, Jesus said, “Then there shall be great tribulation”(KJV). This happens AFTER anti-christ is revealed, in conjunction with the abomination of desolation. Read it again be sure, Matthew 24:21.
- Second, Jesus said, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days”(KJV). The coming of the Lord and our gathering together to him verse 31 happens AFTER the tribulation of those days! AFTER! Not before!

Chronological review

- 1) first 4 seals
- 2) martyrdom
- 3) Falling away, Apostasy
- 4) Antichrist revealed
- 5) Great tribulation
- 6) 6th seal/Joel's prophecy
- 7) The coming of our Lord and our gathering together to him. The resurrection of believers.

The Roof

Where is the resurrection in Revelation?



The Roof

Where is the resurrection in Revelation?



Where is the resurrection in the Book of Revelation? We will review four texts: Revelation 4:1, Revelation 14:14-19, Revelation 11:15-18, and Revelation 20:4-6; in an effort to locate it.

Revelation 4:1

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.’

I will address this much more in the next chapter, but let’s look at a couple of observations first. The popular view is that this is the Rapture. Thus it would have to be the resurrection of believers too. If you look at the text, you don’t see any gathering together of believers, calling out of the graves, translation

of the dead, coming of the Lord, judging and rewarding of the saints, or any of the other things we have already established with “The coming of the Lord and our gathering together to him.” This is one person, John, being shown what will happen in the future. Again, this will be addressed in much more detail in the next chapter.

Now I’d like to look and see if we can find the things associated with the resurrection in other places in the book of Revelation. Here is our text followed by commentary from Matthew 13, which in my opinion, is the best commentary on Revelation 14.

Revelation 14:14-19

14I 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.

17Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. 18Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, “Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth’s vine, because its grapes are ripe.” 19The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gath-

ered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath.

Matthew 13:24-29, 36-42 24

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

27" The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

28" 'An enemy did this,' he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

29" 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. 30Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.

36His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

37He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. 38The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

40" As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. 41The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who

do evil. 42They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

As we saw in the last chapter, Matthew 24:31, Jesus is coming in the clouds with his angels and gathering the children of God. We have the same thing in Matthew 13. We will shine like the sun in the kingdom of our Father, verse 43 - Resurrection Glory. Verse 39 says, “The harvest is the end of the age”. Just as Jesus said four times in the Gospel of John², “I will raise him up in the resurrection at the last day.” The harvest looks just like the resurrection at the last day.

Revelation 14 puts chronological positioning of the harvest after the mark of the beast and the worship of his image (Revelation 13 where antichrist is revealed). It is also before the wrath of God is poured out from the seven golden vials of Revelation 16. I will go over in more detail Revelation 16 and the wrath of God in the next chapter.

Revelation 11:15-18

15The 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.” 16And the twenty-four elders,

² John 6:39,40,44 11:24

who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying:

“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
the One who is and who was,
because you have taken your great power
and have begun to reign.

18 The nations were angry; and your wrath has come.
The time has come for judging the dead,
and for rewarding your servants the prophets
and your saints and those who reverence your name,
both small
and great and for destroying those who destroy the
earth.”

In our chapter entitled “Framing”, we read in I Corinthians 15:51-53, that the believers are raised, and changed at the last trumpet, both dead and alive believers. The Seventh trumpet is the last trumpet in this sequence of seven, and is the last trumpet in the book of Revelation. Last is last. First is first. If Paul didn’t mean last he would have used a different word or said something different. The seventh trumpet is the last trumpet at the end of the age.

So are the things associated with the resurrection mentioned here? In verse 18 we have the judging and rewarding of the dead believers. How do we know that believers are judged and rewarded at the resurrection? Here are a few supporting texts:

Luke 14:13, 14

13”But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

John 5:25-29

25”I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. 26For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. 27And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

28Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.”

II Corinthians 5:10

10For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

The context of II Corinthians 5:1-10 is the resurrection of the body. Vine’s expository dictionary says (judgment seat – gk. bema). This judging and rewarding happens at the resurrection when Christ returns, and is not to be confused with the post millennial great white throne of Revelation 20:11-15.

Some people have asked me, “How could the resurrection be here in chapter 11 and in chapter 14 also?” My answer is,

John used a style in his writing of “backing up”. Case in point, when he introduced the Seventh trumpet in Revelation 10:7 and he said, “The mystery is finished”. He then backs up along the timeline a little so he can introduce more information about the events preceding the Seventh trumpet. In Revelation chapter 11 he introduces a different perspective, the measuring of the temple and the information about the two witnesses. Then in 11:15 John returns to the Seventh trumpet. In chapter 12 he backs up and brings in the dragon and the child, and the war between Michael and Satan. He then introduces in chapter 13, the beast, worshiping the image, the mark, and death to those who refuse participation. Then he returns again to the Seventh trumpet and refers to it as the harvest, in Revelation 14. It’s the resurrection shown with more details about the separation of believers and unbelievers.

Revelation 20:4-6

4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. 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. 5(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6Blessed and holy are those who have part in

the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

When I first started to understand that the rapture was in fact the resurrection of the believers, I would go into denial when I read this passage. I closed my eyes and put my fingers in my ears. I still held to the popular view and this text caused me problems if I wanted to continue to hold to that view as being correct and true. There are two definite things here that establish chronology.

- The people being described in verse 4, are people who were put to death during the campaign of Antichrist (Rev.13:15). They refused to worship the image or receive the mark. They were resurrected *after* the man of sin was revealed. This is consistent with II Thessalonians 2 and Matthew 24 with the resurrection happening *after* the abomination of desolation - revealing of Antichrist.
- This resurrection is called the “first” resurrection. To try to put any other meaning to “first” other than “first” is incorrect. There are two resurrections, the one that happens first is called “first”, and this is the “better resurrection”. The one that happens second is called

“the second death”. If any other meaning was intended other than first, it would have been stated that way.

As we established in the very first chapter there are only two resurrections, one for the believers and one for the unbelievers. Just as II Thessalonians 2 says, the resurrection won't happen till *after* Antichrist is revealed. Revelation 20 says the same thing and, confirms the correct interpretation of II Thessalonians 2. In summary, we located the resurrection and rapture in the Book of Revelation. We have also confirmed that the correct interpretation of II Thessalonians 2 is that the resurrection happens after antichrist is revealed.

Three Blind Mice

Assumption, Creativity, and Eisegesis



Three Blind Mice

Assumption, Creativity, and Eisegesis



“Revelation 4:1” and “The tribulation saints”

In this chapter and the next I will develop argumentation against the proof texts commonly cited to support the popular view. In this chapter I want to focus on, “taking meaning or information out of Scripture” as opposed to “putting meaning or information into Scripture.” In other words; do our proof texts actually give us meaning, definition, identity, or interpretation, or are the positions we take being read “into” the texts? Is there a pattern of assuming, then creating something that doesn’t exist, and then reading that meaning into our proof texts? This process is called eisegesis. I’ve been examining a handful of texts associated with our subject of the Resurrection-Rapture and have passed over some of them

briefly in earlier chapters. Here are three examples of eisegesis I will cover. First from Revelation 4:1:

- 1) The Resurrection-Rapture in Revelation 4:1
- 2) There is no mention of “The Church” after Revelation 4:1
- 3) The saints mentioned after Revelation 4:1, are saved after the resurrection and Rapture of the church. They have been coined “The Tribulation Saints”.

The Resurrection-Rapture in Revelation 4:1

Here’s our text again:

Revelation 4:1 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.’

Again, the popular view is that this is the Rapture. Thus it would have to be the resurrection of believers too. If you look at the text, you don’t see any gathering together of believers, calling out of the graves, translation of the dead, coming of the Lord, judging or rewarding of the saints, or any of the other things we have already established with “The coming of the Lord and our gathering together to him.” The only thing

we have in this text that even slightly resembles a rapture or resurrection is the phrase, “come up here.” Or maybe “a voice that sounded like a trumpet.”

First the phrase, “...He said, come up here and I will show you...” is used three times in Revelation, 4:1, 17:1, 21:9. Each time John, one man, is caught up in the spirit (Revelation 4:2, 17:3, 21:10). Each time he is shown something different: A) what will happen in the future? B) what will be the judgment against the great prostitute? and C) the bride, the wife of the Lamb. None of these even hint at all of rapture. To go even further with this language, it is a common occurrence with the prophets of the Old Testament to be in the spirit and be shown a revelation by an angel. For example, Zechariah 1:9, Ezekiel 40:2-4, Daniel 9:21, 22/10:13, 14.

Second, look at the context of John and the voice in 4:1. In Rev 1:11, 19, John is told to write what he sees in a book (verse 11), both present and future (verse 19). So the questions are: A) Is John being shown the things which are to come so he can write it in the book? Or B) is the church being raptured? The “A” interpretation is taking meaning out of the text and context, and the “B” interpretation is putting meaning into the text, which is eisegesis.

Third, the trumpet is definitely not “the last trump.” It is a voice, a voice that sounded like a trumpet.

**There is no mention of “The Church”
after Revelation 4:1**

This is a claim by the popular view that they use to try to support the idea of the rapture in Revelation 4:1. The statement would be more accurate if they were to say, “There is no usage of the WORD church after Revelation 4:1”. Wherever there are two or three believers gathered together there is the church. Yes, then the church is mentioned after Revelation 4:1 many times. Revelation 6:10,11/ 7:3-9,14/ 11:3-12/ 13:7-10,15/ 14:12,13/ 20:4. So these so called “tribulation saints” are said to be people who get saved after the Rapture, according to the popular view. The problem with this statement is that they are not taking into consideration the parable that Jesus taught about the Ten Virgins. Here is Matthew 25:1-13:

1 At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. 4 The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. 5 The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

6 “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

7”Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

9” ‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

10”But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

11”Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’

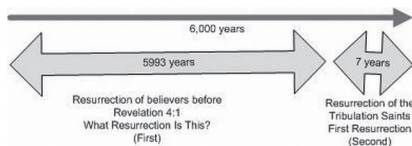
12”But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’

13”Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

This parable was taught in the context of, “What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?” The coming of the Lord is mentioned 16 times in the two chapters, Matthew 24 and 25. The parable of the Ten Virgins describes the coming of the Lord and our gathering together to him. This is an illustration of Jesus coming for his bride. Once this happens the door is shut, verse 10! Anyone who comes along after the door is shut, verse 11-12, is turned away. This shows that once the rapture happens there is no second chance. Also, look at the same idea in Luke 17:26-29. Just as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the son of man... the day Noah entered the ark, the flood came and destroyed

them (unsaved) all...The same day Lot went out of Sodom, fire came down and destroyed them (unsaved) all. The same day the door was closed, judgment came and destroyed them ALL. No second chance after they entered the ark and closed the door. This makes the idea of people getting saved after the rapture, “tribulation saints”, not possible. Another way to say it is, the doctrine of the tribulation saints is fiction.

The next observation I’d like to make, is that Revelation 20:4-6 has the so called “tribulation saints” who were put to death for refusing the mark of the beast or his worship, as being resurrected in the “first” resurrection. To play games with the meaning of “first” in first resurrection is dishonest. What is being attempted by advocates of the popular view is to put the resurrection and rapture of 99% of all believers before the resurrection of 1% of believers (so called tribulation saints), even though the resurrection of “the tribulation saints” is called the “first” resurrection. This chart illustrates the false premise of the popular view:



So if the resurrection of the so called tribulation saints is called first, then what is the resurrection of the 99% called,

pre-first resurrection? Also, the one that the Bible calls the first resurrection would then have to be changed to the second, third, or some other creative name. Is something that is called “first” usually first? If this is the “first” resurrection, doesn’t that demand that there is not another resurrection before it?

Also, there is another violation of a foundational fact we have already established in our discussion on the resurrection. There are two resurrections. One for all believers called first, and one for unbelievers called the second death. There is only one resurrection-rapture for believers and it is addressed in Revelation 20:4-6, the first resurrection. There is no such thing as “tribulation saints”.

Another way of looking at this point is, if the resurrection and rapture of the church happens at Revelation 4:1, then the “tribulation saints” missed the resurrection because there is only one resurrection for the believers. Missing out on the hope and assurance of resurrection is the same sort of heresy that was taught by Hymenaeus and Philitus in II Timothy 2:17, 18. It also violates Revelation 20 where it says the saints that refused the mark and were killed are resurrected. The resurrection and rapture can not happen at Revelation 4:1. It is impossible. The church never taught the resurrection or rapture at Revelation 4:1.

Exemption from Divine Wrath

Another thing that is cited by the advocates of the popular view in an effort to support a rapture at Revelation 4:1, is the fact that believers are not appointed to suffer God's wrath. The texts cited are:

I Thes.1:10

...and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

I Thes.5:9

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

Revelation3:10.

To the angel of the church of Philadelphia write... Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

There are assumptions about these texts that are made by those who set forth the popular view that we should examine before we go any further.

- 1) The word tribulation is a synonym for the word wrath.
- 2) The 7 years described by Daniel 9:27 are a 7 year period of tribulation.
- 3) Protection from God's wrath can only be accomplished by rapture.
- 4) The hour of testing in Revelation 3:10 is describing a final 7 years of tribulation.
- 5) The promise of Revelation 3:10 is to a future church.

I'd like to look at the verses from I Thessalonians. The first assumption on the list is used in the interpretation of the I Thessalonians passages. It is assumed that the word "wrath" is a synonym for the word "tribulation". The passages here clearly teach that we are exempt from divine wrath. But the rest of the Bible clearly teaches that we are not exempt from tribulation. Actually it teaches the exact opposite. "In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world"(Jn.16:33) KJV. In context with nearly being stoned to death Paul tells the other disciples that were with him, "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."(Acts 14:19-22) KJV. Peter says that it is trial and tribulation that refine our faith. "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of

greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed” (I Peter 1:6,7).

The word tribulation is used as a substitute for the word wrath in assumption one. Then it is assumed that the Bible calls the seven year period of time described in Daniel 9:27, “The 7 year period of tribulation”, it doesn’t, assumption two. Then it’s assumed that the only way God can deliver us from his wrath is by rapture, assumption three. In other words, the assumptions are put together like this: 1) we are exempt from tribulation; 2) the last 7 years are “The Tribulation”; then, the only logical conclusion is that we must be raptured “*pre-tribulationally*”. Strike three you’re out! Can you see how ALL of this reasoning has to be read into the text? It doesn’t exist in the texts, this is eisegesis.

The same eisegesis happens in the interpretation of Revelation 3:10 by the advocates of the popular view. The meaning has to be imported to get the idea that this is being spoken of a futuristic church. Let’s look at the context of Revelation 3:10. John has been told to write in a book the things that are present, and things that will happen after that, in the future. The things that were written about that would be present for John around the time of 90AD were written in Revelation 2 and 3. In 3:7 we read, “To the angel of the church

of Philadelphia write...” It is to the church of 90AD that he is writing. The idea that it’s a futuristic church has to be read into the text. See, it’s not there. If you look at the two chapters you will see Jesus addressing specific issues that were going on at the time of 90AD.³ He clearly says that Revelation 2 and 3 are not futuristic. They are “the things that are”, not “the things that are to come.”

So, the question I need to ask is, why? Why should I go against the context, and interpret Revelation 2 and 3 as different futuristic church dispensations? It seems that this method of esoteric interpretation is akin to a Gnostic method. This method of interpretation is how people changed the bodily resurrection of Christ to a spiritual one (heresy). The Bible tells us if what we are reading is a parable, a letter, a speech, an illustration, a prophecy, history, or current event. That then dictates the method we use for interpretation. I don’t see any other reason implied or inferred, to interpret Revelation 2 & 3 as anything other than what was present for John in 90 AD. The idea that Revelation 3:10 is talking about a rapture of a futuristic church, can only be arrived at by eisegesis.

³ Revelation 2:2,6,9,10,13,14,15,20,24 Revelation 3:9

“Through” versus “Out Of”

The popular view has held to the idea that the Greek word “ek”, translated “from” in Revelation 3:10, really means “out of”. After this is accomplished then it becomes easier to mold in the idea of rapturing. So how do we know what was originally intended? Vine’s expository dictionary says the proper interpretation of these texts is not “out of” but “from”. But what does the rest of the Bible say about God removing us from, or causing us to go through trials and tribulation? As we saw in I Peter 1:6, 7, the trial is to refine our faith, it causes us to trust Jesus more. Here are some biblical examples of going through tribulation.

- 1) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, went THROUGH the fiery furnace with Jesus. Dan. 3:2

- 2) Daniel went THROUGH the lions den. The Lord sent his angel to be with him. Dan.6:22

- 3) David said, “though I walk THROUGH the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me”. Ps.23:4

- 4) Noah went THROUGH the flood. Gen.7:7

- 5) God said to Isaiah that he would bring him THROUGH, waters and rivers unharmed and THROUGH fire unburnt. Isa.43:1, 2

6) God brought the Israelites **THROUGH** the Red Sea and delivered them from their enemies. Ex.14:22

7) God brought the Israelites **THROUGH** the plagues of Egypt, and the angel of death passed over them and they were delivered. Ex.12:13

God accomplished all of this by divine intervention. Not delivering “out of”, but **THROUGH** the trial. Something interesting to me is the discourse about the plagues that came upon Pharaoh and Egypt. They are similar looking to the plagues of the 7 trumpets in Revelation 8 and 9. Look how God delivered his people in Exodus chapters 7 through 12.

The Plague

The Provision

Ex. 8:21....Swarms of flies.....Ex.8:22

Ex. 9:3.....Grievous sores.....Ex.9:4

Ex. 9:23....Hail with fire.....Ex.9:26

Ex.10:22....Darkness 3 days.....Ex.10:23

Ex.11:5.....Death of man/beast..Ex.11:7, 13

My conclusion is that God brings us **THROUGH** the tribulation of the world so that we learn to trust him.

The Wrath of God

We have seen that God has not appointed us to suffer his wrath, but has brought us through trial and tribulation and in some cases death. The question now is, does the Bible tell us what the wrath of God is, or when it will be executed? The answer is, yes it does. Revelation 15 and 16:

1And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.... 7And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.....

..... 1And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. 2And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast and upon them which worshipped his image.....(KJV)

I see that the wrath of God is contained in the seven golden vials or bowls. These are the seven last plagues. It looks as though the ones described in these last plagues are not believers (Revelation chapter 16). They all blasphemed God and refused to repent. I see also that the resurrection-rapture happens before this (Revelation 14:14-20). My conclusion is that believers go through the scroll judgments, the breaking of

the seven seals and the sounding of the seven trumpets. But I also conclude that the resurrection-rapture happens before the seven golden vials full of the wrath of God are poured out. Here is a summary of teachings and assumptions created and exegetically advanced in an attempt to support the popular view:

- 7 year period of tribulation
- The tribulation saints
- A third resurrection-rapture before the first
- More than one resurrection for believers
- Many trumpets after the last trumpet
- Tribulation as a synonym for wrath
- Philadelphia of 90AD as a futuristic church
- Pre-tribulation rapture

The Restrainer
II Thessalonians 2:7



The Restrainer

II Thessalonians 2:7



...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.

5Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? 6And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. 7For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. 8And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. 9The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders... II Thessalonians 2:3-9.

The subject of this chapter is identifying the one referred to as "The one who now holds it back". Some transla-

tions use “He who now letteth”, or “He who now restrains”, or “He who restrains”. I think in all fairness we can use the term “the restrainer”. This term has been commonly accepted and gives an accurate meaning of the words. Now we will go about the task of trying to identify “the restrainer”. The problem is there is no context or terminology that directly identifies this person. The identification of the restrainer has to be brought into the text. There is nothing there to take out of the text.

To keep things simple, I only want to look at two possibilities of who this is. The first one is the popular view, and that is that the restrainer is the Holy Spirit. The second view is that it is an angel. In the process of deciding who this is, we will compare the ministry of angels with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. First the Holy Spirit.

Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Conviction of sin.....John 16:7-11
Regeneration of sinners.....Titus 3:5
Baptize believers.....I Corinthians 12:13
Indwell believers.....John 14:17
Sanctify believers.....I Peter 1:2
Teach believers.....John 16:13
Seal believers.....Ephesians 1:13
Empower believers.....Acts 1:8
Restrain Satan.....No

In my preparation to discuss this further I read for review a couple of books and a commentary written by a leading theologian who holds to the popular view. In one of his better known books he writes, “The evidence and teaching of scripture points to the identifying of the restrainer as the Holy Spirit”. He goes on to say that, “The failure to identify the Holy Spirit as the restrainer is another indication of the inadequate understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.”⁴ Then he cites ONE passage, and in all of his writings I’ve read, this is the only verse in scripture he has used to support his theory. The verse he cites is Genesis 6:3. It says, “Then the LORD said, ‘My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.’” I don’t see how he gets that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to restrain Satan, or his evil from this verse. In reading Genesis 6:3 in context I see the exact opposite of what he’s trying to imply.

5 The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. 6 The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. 7 So the LORD said, “I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am

⁴ Woolvard, John, *The Rapture Question*, p 80

grieved that I have made them.” 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD....11 Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. 12 God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. 13 So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them.

In context, instead of the Holy Spirit restraining evil or Satan, I see evil getting worse and worse, just as it is today, “as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the son of man”(Luke 17:26). God was grieved that he had made man because he got worse and worse. No sign of the Holy Spirit restraining evil from happening or from Satan working his ill in life.

One thing to note, in the attempt to defend this doctrine as part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, this is the only verse he uses. Where is the rest of the supporting evidence for this doctrine? It doesn’t exist. Again it is merely an assumption. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit as the restrainer was never taught by the church for 1,800 years.

An over looked but important point is this, II Thessalonians 2:6-9 says, the restrainer is preventing antichrist from being revealed. Even more focused on content, the restrainer is preventing the fallen angel, Lucifer, Satan, from manifesting himself in the body of a man (Isaiah 14:12-16). What the text does

not say is, “The restrainer prevents sin” or “restrains sin” or “alters sin”, or in staying with the genuineness of the argument - the Holy Spirit in the church prevents sin. The truth is the restrainer prevents antichrist from being revealed, which happens when Satan manifests into this physical realm, through the embodiment of a man.

So what about Angels? Does the bible anywhere teach that restraining Satan or evil is the ministry of angels? Yes it does, and consistently Michael is the one who goes head to head against Satan. Here are many passages of scripture that you can read that clearly show angels doing the work described.

Ministry of Angels

- Revelation 12:7-9.....Michael beats Satan
- Revelation 20:1-3.....Satan bound by the angel
- Jude 1:9.....Michael battles Satan
- Genesis 3:24.....Restraint and protection
- Daniel 3:28Angel protects from evil
- Daniel 10:12,13.....Michael vs. hell’s angels
- Daniel 12:1, 2.....Michael, restrains, protects
- Hebrews 1:13,14.....Work on behalf of believers
- II kings 6:8-22.....War on behalf of believers
- Psalms 91:1-16.....His Angel has charge over me
- Zechariah 3:1,2.....The Angel vs. Satan
- Isaiah 37:36.....Restrains and protects
- Matthew 13:41.....Restrain, Bind evil

There is much said in Scripture about Angels restraining evil, and particularly Satan, and preventing or getting in the way of him being revealed through “The man of lawlessness”. I see nothing of the sort when it comes to the Holy Spirit.

There was one text I used to cite to try to support the view of the Holy Spirit restraining. It is in the King James Version (Isaiah 59:19) and it said, “When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him”. This kind of sounds like it would support the Holy Spirit as the Restrainer view. But, after more investigating I found that the majority of commentaries opted for the way it is translated in the NIV; “He will come like a pent up flood that the breath of the Lord drives along”. Quite different. So again all I had was a verse that was questionable at best, to support the doctrine that I wanted to defend. The majority of commentaries do not support this interpretation.

Just for fun I’d like to ask, what if the restrainer is the Holy Spirit? Is the ONLY way the Holy Spirit can be taken out of the way, rapture the church? No, that would have to be assumed.

The argument I’m going to discuss next was left off of my original list of things to examine. I had heard it 20 years ago but hadn’t heard it much since. Then, yesterday while listening to Christian radio I heard it again. I thought it had been aban-

done because of how embarrassingly dishonest it was with biblical interpretation.

The argument in question is found in II Thessalonians 2:3. It is the usage of the word “Apostacia”. It is translated:

- Rebellion NIV
- Falling away KJV
- Apostasy NASB
- Great falling away AMP
- The falling away NKJV
- The Apostasy MES
- Great rebellion NLT
- Rebellion ESV
- Apostasy Darby
- Dissension WHYCL
- Falling away YLT

The advocates of the popular view would like us to interpret the word “Apostacia” to mean “Rapture”. That’s right rapture, even though not one biblical interpreter EVER translated it that way. They want the text to read, the rapture has to happen before Antichrist is revealed. The biblical interpreters won’t give them that rendering though. The biblical interpreter’s job is to translate from the original Greek the best possible exact meaning of words. This is done to give an accurate understanding of what God is telling us. Again, NO bible interpreter EVER translated apostacia as rapture. They know that it would not be an honest evaluation of the word.

Why is that? Let's look at the words commonly used in texts that refer to rapture and we will see.

- First, *Apostacia* is always used in conjunction with a religious falling away from. In Acts 21:21 Paul is accused of teaching people to turn away from the teachings of Moses, *apostacia*.
- Next, when the idea of being “caught up in the air” or “taken up” is trying to be conveyed, the word “*harpazo*” is used. Reference; I Thessalonians 4:17 of believers, Acts 8:39 of Philip, II Corinthians 12:2-4 of Paul, Revelation 12:5 of the man child. This would be the most accurate word to use if rapture was the idea that Paul was trying to express. But he didn't.
- Next, “*Analambano*” is a word that describes Jesus' ascension into heaven and is used in Acts 1:2,11,22 Mark 16:19 & I Timothy 3:16 to describe it. Paul could have used that word, but he didn't.
- Next, two other synonyms for taken up are “*airo*” and “*epairo*”. Paul could have used those, but he didn't.
- Next, Paul would have eliminated any confusion if he had used *Harpazo*, or the word he started the chapter with, “*episunago*”, gather together. This is the same word that was used of the rapture in Matthew 24:31. Gather together. Paul could have used this word, but he didn't.
- Next, Matthew uses the synonym “*sullego*” seven times in chapter 13, describing from Jesus' parable the gathering together at the end of the world. Paul surely could have used this word too, but he didn't.

The entire objective of Paul for writing I & II Thessalonians was to clear up any confusion about the Resurrection-Rapture,

the coming of the Lord and our being gathered together to him. If he was trying to portray a rapture by using the word *apostacia*, then he blew it because he created more confusion than he cleared up. If he meant rapture he would have said rapture, or resurrection.

It is also assumed that because *apostacia* (revolt) is related to *apostasion* (divorcement, separation), and that word is related to *aphistemi* (remove, fall away, or depart), the idea of depart, from *aphistemi* should be leap-frogged over to, and the meaning forced into the word *apostacia*. Again, more assumptions and eisegesis. Paul could have used *aphistemi* if he wanted an idea of departure, but he didn't. He used *apostacia*! I get a vision of a square peg forced half way into a round hole with a sledge hammer and someone saying, "See, it fits". So far I hope that you have noticed a pattern with the proof texts cited in attempts to support the popular view. The meaning that they want to support is ALWAYS implied. It is ALWAYS put into the text, never taken from the text - eisegesis.

The 70th Week
Daniel 9:27



The 70th Week



Daniel 9 is the place in Scripture where we find a seven year period of time yet to be fulfilled. These seven years have been referred to as the “seven year period of tribulation.” However, this text never refers to these seven years as the “seven year period of tribulation.” It merely states that there is a seven year period of time that has not yet been fulfilled. Here’s our text:

1 In the first year of Darius son of Ahasuerus (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom- 2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.....

.....Gabriel came to me and said, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding, 23 As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which

I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision:

24 “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.

25 “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. 26 After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. 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.

First, we observe that the original concern was about a 70 year period of time (verse 2). Then Gabriel comes to Daniel and tells him the vision is about 490 years (70 X 7 verse 24). The word “seven” is some times translated “Week”. It has the meaning of seven years as is seen in Genesis 29:27. “Fulfill her week” meant another seven years. Point being that the usage of week for a seven year period of time was not uncommon.

Verse 25 in our text does some math that equals 483 years. It was from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah that there would be 483 years. That is why Andrew said to Peter, “Come quickly we have found the Messiah”. They were looking for him because they knew by this prophecy that Messiah would be with them at that time in Jerusalem. But there are still 7 years unaccounted for. Take 483 from 490 and you get 7. These are the 7 years that are being spoken of in verse 27. These are the 7 years that have been called, “the seven year period of tribulation.” One thing to be sure of; as we can see, this text never says that or implies that idea, it never says, “the seven year period of tribulation.” This is again assumed, and then read INTO the text. The bible nowhere talks about a seven year period of tribulation.

Two other phrases that commonly arise in the discussion of verse 27 are, “Confirm a covenant”, and, “In the middle of”. By the usage of these two phrases, people have come up with the idea that, “at the beginning of the seven years, Antichrist will orchestrate and sign a peace agreement to allow Israel to rebuild the temple. Then 3 1/2 years into the seven year period of tribulation he will take over the temple and set up the abomination of desolation”. Here’s the error. The word confirm doesn’t mean create something, but to establish something already in place. An example of this would be,

to confirm dinner reservations, not make dinner reservations. Confirmation of faith is stating something that exists. It is argued that Antichrist is revealed by the signing of an agreement on the very first day of the seven years spoken of here, but II Thessalonians 2:3 says he is revealed by self exaltation in the temple of God as God, and setting up the abomination that makes desolate.

It is also argued that an argument against the popular view is to argue that the rapture happens on the very last day of this seven year period (not necessarily true). It is then argued that if that's the case then you could count from the day that the agreement (land, peace, temple) is signed, seven years and know the exact day of the Lord's return, and no one knows that day, so the rapture must happen before the seven years start.

“In the middle of” is used in an effort to again create a measurement within these seven years. In the middle of, or in the midst of, could be any number of places between years one and seven. It is never stated, 3 1/2 years into the seven years or after the seven years start. They are just references to seven years and three and a half years without any indication of their location.

My point is, there is nothing that places any of the events described in the Bible as being in the last days, on a time line

indicator of any kind. In other words, the events that we have discussed in previous chapters do not necessarily ALL happen during the 7 year period of time being discussed here. The Bible tells us when they will happen in relationship to each other, but not in relationship to time. The assumption and subsequent interpretation that I refute goes like this:

- A) The 7 year period is the tribulation
- B) Tribulation is a synonym for wrath
- C) We are not appointed to suffer through wrath
- D) Therefore, the rapture must be “Pretribulationary”

The need of a temple for the fulfillment of the abomination of desolation makes good sense to me, and many of the early church fathers taught and believed it. They also taught about a 7 year period of time at the coming of the Lord. Using these facts with II Thessalonians 2:3 and Daniel 9:27 does not demand we make the above mentioned assumptions though.

Antiochous Epiphanes IV



Antiochous Epiphanes IV



Jesus said, “Let the reader understand, when you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, run! For then there shall be great tribulation, such as has never been seen before”. Jesus said this in Matthew 24:15 and said for us to understand it. Where can we study the abomination of desolation, in order to “understand” what Jesus was talking about? The term “abomination of desolation” can be found in four chapters in the book of Daniel: 8:11-14; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11. Most of these verses speak of Antiochus Epiphanes IV. He is a shadow and type of Antichrist. He is spoken of in Daniel chapters 7 through 11. It is he whom the prophecies are speaking of, and yet, we know they are also speaking of Antichrist. What Antiochus did Antichrist will also do. I’d like to give you a historical account

of what Antiochus did so you can get an idea of what types of things will happen under the campaign of Antichrist. These events are recorded for us in I and II Maccabees and the book of Daniel.

Antiochus gained the confidence of the Jews by deceitful but friendly talk. Once he had gained their trust he turned on them and attacked them suddenly. He dealt them a heavy blow and conquered Jerusalem (I Maccabees 1:30). He issued a decree that all of the people were to become one (no distinction between peoples or nations), abandon their own laws and religion, and accept foreign worship. A new religion was introduced. The priests were no longer allowed to offer sacrifices, and the Sabbath and other feasts were prohibited. The penalty for disobedience was death (I Maccabees 1:41- 50). The same decree said, “All scrolls of the law that were found were to be torn up and burnt. Anyone found in possession of a book of the testament or confirming Jewish law was put to death by the kings sentence” (I Maccabees 1:56, 57). Under his reign the temple in Jerusalem was polluted and defiled. It was dedicated to the Greek god Jupiter Olympius and swine sacrifice was offered on the altar. Epiphemes exalted himself as though he were God, equal with Jupiter (Daniel 11:36/ II Thessalonians. 2:4), and had a coin made with his image on it, with the inscrip-

tion, “THEOS EPIPHANES”, which means God manifested. The eating of pork was commanded of the people as a sign to show that they had abandoned their laws and customs.

A mother and her seven sons were arrested, and the king (Antiochus Epiphanes IV) tried to force them to eat pork. One of the brothers spoke out and said, “We would rather die than break the laws of our fathers.” King Antiochus ordered the boy’s tongue to be cut out, and to scalp and mutilate him before his brothers’ eyes. He was then thrown in a pan still breathing, and roasted. The mother said to the others, “Let us die noble, the Lord God is watching.” The second son was tortured in the same way, and with his last breath said, “You are setting us free from this present life, and, since we die for his laws, the King of the universe will raise us up to a life everlasting made new.” The third son was put to death in the same manner. The fourth son as he was dying said, “It is better to die like this and cherish God’s promise to raise us up from the dead. There will be no resurrection to life for you!” The fifth and sixth sons said, “You are mortal, and only have authority over men. God has not abandoned his people, and you will not escape the consequences of trying to fight against God.” The mother was the most remarkable of all, and deserves to be remembered with special honor. She watched her six sons all die and yet she bore

it bravely because SHE PUT HER TRUST IN THE LORD. (II Maccabees 7: 1-20).

The youngest son was still left. The king offered him riches and swore with an oath to make him prosperous. He promised the young man a position in his kingdom if he would reject his ancestral customs. The mother was summoned, and urged to persuade her son to save his life and accept the king's offer. But the mother said to the son, "I beg you child, look at the sky and the earth, see all that is in them and realize that God made them out of nothing, and that man comes into being in the same way. Do not be afraid of this butcher. Accept death and prove yourself worthy of your brothers, so that by God's mercy I may receive you back again along with them". The son rejected the king's offer and was treated worse than the rest. Then, finally, after her sons, the mother was put to death (II Maccabees 7:24-29, 40, 41).

Antiochus Epiphanes IV was the 8th ruler of the Seleucid Empire. He acted as though he really were Jupiter and the people called him "Epimanes" meaning "the madman". He was violently bitter against the Jews, and was determined to exterminate them and their religion. He devastated Jerusalem in 168 BC, and defiled the Temple (I Maccabees 1:1-63), this abominable act was perpetrated on Kislev 25, 168 BC according to the Book of Maccabees that "left the Jewish people desolate."

They call this the Abomination of Desolation but Jesus taught that this was a preliminary occurrence of a greater fulfillment (Matthew 24:15).

Antiochus by decree, prohibited Temple worship, forbade circumcision on pain of death, sold thousands of Jewish families into slavery, destroyed all copies of Scripture that could be found, and slaughtered everyone discovered in possession of such copies, and resorted to every conceivable torture to force Jews to renounce their religion. This led to the Maccabean revolt, one of the most heroic feats in history (I Maccabees 4:1-61). The Maccabees took back Jerusalem and the temple, cleansed the temple, and rededicated it on the exact day that was prophesied by Daniel, which was the anniversary of the day it was defiled, Daniel 8:13,14 and I Maccabees 4:54. This is known as “the feast of dedication” (John 10:22), or “Hanukkah”, the Feast of Lights.

Antiochus was an exact type of Antichrist to come - a preliminary occurrence of a greater fulfillment. Daniel 11:36, 37 describes Antiochus. In II Thessalonians 2:3-5, Paul applies this Daniel passage to the futuristic Antichrist. There are three things to look for:

Antichrist

1. He will do the things mentioned here about Antiochus: Abomination of Desolation, self exaltation as God - II Thessalonians 2:3-5. He will appear to be the savior of the world.
2. Decree worship of the false image or die - Revelation 13:15.
3. No one will be able to buy or sell unless they participate in his system - Revelation 13:16, 17.

These things will all indicate the occurrence of the abomination of desolation. In Matthew 24:15, Jesus said, “when you see the abomination of desolation.” It appears that Jesus was teaching that believers - the church, would “see” Antichrist and the abomination of desolation. The church always taught and believed this. In the next chapter I will give specific instances of this in the writings of the early church.

Church History



Church History

Ante-Nicene Fathers



There is a good practice in apologetics that attempts to find out what history can teach us about a subject. This is done by establishing what the church always taught and believed. In the first three centuries the fathers of the church were constantly addressing false doctrine, it was one of their jobs. The fathers were always very exact about the doctrine that was taught. So an appeal to the historical writings of the fathers is an attempt to support the correct interpretation of Scripture about the doctrine in question.

First we appeal to Scripture, but when there is an impasse we then appeal to history for help. There is a great weight of historical evidence that needs to be considered in the writings of Apostolic Fathers and Ante-Nicene Fathers. I bring it as a credible witness into our court of apologetics to give our

jury reliable testimony to render an accurate verdict. This is an attempt to render a verdict on the proper interpretation of the Scriptures that have been mentioned in previous chapters.

I established two facts in our first two chapters of our book that should be confirmed by history. The first fact is there is only one resurrection for the believers. This can be seen in the writings of :

- Tertullian, 200 AD, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*. In Chap.24-27 he states that there is a spiritual resurrection at the commencement of the life of faith, but only one resurrection of the body at the end of the age. In this same chapter it is said to be the first resurrection described in Revelation 20:4,5 and the harvest described in Revelation 14:15. It also says “The beast Antichrist with his false prophets will wage war on the church of God”, and after that the first resurrection.
- Victorinus Bishop of Petau, 270 AD, in his writing *On the Apocalypse of John* Chapter 20 states, There are two resurrections. The first is of the souls that are of the faith, the second is the second death.

The second fact is the rapture is the resurrection of the living believers.

- Again Tertullian addresses this in, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, Chapters XLI and XLII. He applies I Corinthians 15:51-53 and II Corinthians 5:1-4 to all of the people mentioned in I Thessalonians 4:13-17. He makes this point clear, the rapture is the transformation of the believers who are alive at the first resurrection.

- Methodius 295AD says the same thing in “Discourse on the resurrection part III” Chapter II, verse VII:

VII. “Now the passage, The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive, St. Methodius thus explains: Those are our bodies; for the souls are we ourselves, who, rising, resume that which is dead from the earth; so that being caught up with them to meet the Lord, we may gloriously celebrate the splendid festival of the resurrection, because we have received our everlasting tabernacles, which shall no longer die nor be dissolved.”

He again says in “The Banquet of the Ten Virgins” discourse 9, Tusiane, ch.3

“On the first day of the resurrection when we come to the judgment seat of Christ, if we are without fruit we shall not be able to feast with God, nor have part, according to John, in the first resurrection.”

Methodius absolutely views the resurrection of I Thessalonians 4 as the first resurrection of Revelation 20:4-6. This is absolutely unmistakably a positive confirmation and a redundant theme.

Another thing that the fathers were unanimously agreed upon is, the Church will be persecuted by Antichrist. They

ALL interpret Daniel 7:25; II Thessalonians 2:1-12; Matthew 24:15, 21, 29; Revelation 13:7-17 as the *Church* not “tribulation saints” that will be put through trial and death. The doctrine about people that get saved after the church is resurrected, also known as “tribulation saints”, can not be found anywhere in the writings of Apostolic Fathers and Ante-Nicene Fathers. The above claims can be read in:

- Hippolytus 180AD, *Dogmatical and Historical*, “Treatis on Christ and Antichrist”.⁵ In chapter 60, 61, 65 and 66 he writes:

60. Now, concerning the tribulation of the persecution which is to fall upon the Church from the adversary, John also speaks thus: “And I saw a great and wondrous sign in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. And she, being with child, cries, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And the dragon stood before the woman

61.....”And the dragon,” he says, “saw and persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child. And to the woman were given two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.” That

⁵ Ch.5,6,14,28,43,44,47,49,56,60 - 67.

refers to the one thousand two hundred and three-score days (the half of the week) during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church.

Hippolytus also states in the same discourse that Revelation 20, Matthew 13, I Thessalonians 4, are all speaking of the Resurrection – Rapture:

65. Moreover, concerning the resurrection and the kingdom of the saints, Daniel says, “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall arise, some to everlasting life, (and some to shame and everlasting contempt).” Esaias says, “The dead men shall arise, and they that are in their tombs shall awake; for the dew from thee is healing to them.” The Lord says, “Many in that day shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” And the prophet says, “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” And John says, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power.” For the second death is the lake of fire that burneth. And again the Lord says, “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun shineth in his glory.” And to the saints He will say, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” But what saith He to the wicked? “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, which my Father hath prepared.” And John says, “Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever maketh and

loveth a lie; for your part is in the hell of fire.” And in like manner also Esaias: “And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me. And their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be for a spectacle to all flesh.”

66. Concerning the resurrection of the righteous, Paul also speaks thus in writing to the Thessalonians: “We would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive (and) remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice and trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive (and) remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

Many many times Hippolytus states in the rest of his discourse that the church is persecuted by anti-christ, and, the resurrection of the church- believers happens after that persecution. He also makes it unmistakably clear that the rapture is part of and happens at the same time as the resurrection of the believers. Read the entire treatise and you will see

even more support for the arguments set forth as true in our previous chapters.

- Also Justin Martyr 140AD says the church will be persecuted by antichrist in “Dialogue with Trypho” Chapter CX.

“...two advents of Christ have been announced: the one, in which He is set forth as suffering, inglorious, dishonored, and crucified; but the other, in which He shall come from heaven with glory, when the man of apostasy, who speaks strange things against the Most High, shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against us the Christians.”

The Ante-Nicene Fathers confirm in their writings that the correct interpretation of I Thessalonians 4, II Thessalonians 2, Matthew 24, and Revelation 11, 14, 20 have been accurately presented in the chapters of this book. There is much more written in Ante-Nicene Fathers that confirms what we have presented here. They were ALL in agreement.

**Apostolic Fathers, The Didache
(The teaching of the 12 Apostles of Jesus Christ
to the Gentiles)**

This document was written as I see it in about 45AD by Paul and Barnabas, the Apostles to the Gentiles. It was a secondary answer to the question “What shall we tell the

Gentiles?” (Acts 10:44-47, Acts 15:1-30). I believe this document was written before any of the New Testament writings. This document tells of the Way of Death and the Way of Life (The same as in “The Epistle of Barnabas” ch.18). It tells us about the observation and liturgy associated with the sacraments of the Eucharist and Baptism. But in the last chapter it speaks of the end of the age. Chapter 16:

- 1) Watch concerning your life; let not your lamps be quenched or your loins be loosed, but be ye ready, for ye know not the hour at which our Lord cometh.
- 2) But be ye gathered together frequently, seeking what is suitable for your souls; for the whole time of your faith shall profit you not, unless ye be found perfect in the last time.
- 3) For in the last days false prophets and seducers shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate;
- 4) and because iniquity aboundeth they shall hate each other, and persecute each other, and deliver each other up; and then shall the Deceiver of the world appear as the Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands; and he shall do unlawful things, such as have never happened since the beginning of the world.
- 5) Then shall the creation of man come to the fiery trial of proof, and many shall fall away and shall perish; but they who remain in their faith shall be saved by the rock of offence itself.
- 6) And then shall appear the signs of the truth; first the sign of the rift in heaven, then the sign of the sound of the trumpet, and thirdly the resurrection of the dead

- 7) not of all, but as it has been said, The Lord shall come and all his saints with him;
- 8) then shall the world behold the Lord coming on the clouds of heaven.

Just as in Matthew 24 and the rest of scripture, here we see the order of events:

- 1) Antichrist is revealed
- 2) Great tribulation of the church
- 3) The sign of Joel (6th seal)
- 4) The Resurrection-Rapture

Again...Just as in Matthew 24, Victorinus writes: The church will be persecuted during and raptured after the sixth seal.

Victorinus Bishop of Petau, 270 AD,

“*On the Apocalypse of John*” Chapter 6 states,

12. “And I saw, when he had opened the sixth seal, there was a great earthquake.” In the sixth seal then was a great earthquake; this is that very last persecution.

“And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair.” The sun becomes as sackcloth; that is the brightness of doctrine will be obscured by unbelievers.

“And the entire moon became as blood.” By the moon of blood is set forth the Church of the saints as pouring out her blood for Christ.

13. “And the stars fell to the earth.” The falling of the stars are the faithful who are troubled for Christ’s sake.

“Even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs.” The fig tree when shaken, loses its untimely figs; when men are separated from the Church by persecution.

14. “And the heaven withdrew as a scroll that is rolled up.” For the heaven to be rolled away; that is, that the Church shall be taken away.

Irenaeus

Irenaeus was the second bishop of the church of Lyons. He claimed to have been taught by the beloved John and was a contemporary and friend of Polycarp. Polycarp was the direct disciple of John and was appointed by John as second bishop of Smyrna. Irenaeus heard first hand John’s views on the first resurrection and the millennium. Irenaeus dedicated much of his ministry as an apologist writing against the heresies and heretics of his time. He was very precise about correct doctrine and proper interpretation of scripture.

John tells us, “ Jesus said and did many other things in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book (Gospel of John).....If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.” Irenaeus was privy to these things that we today have no way of knowing about. I’m sure through discussion that he had a better understanding of

John's writings, Paul's epistles, Jesus's words and their interpretation of old testament prophecies, than any of us today could possibly have. For this reason I put more credence in his writings as commentary for our subject, than any others in history. I believe that his accounts of scriptural interpretation should be taken above and before any of our modern theologians. Irenaeus wrote in "Against Heresies, Book V" eleven chapters that discuss our subject and the scriptures we associate with it. I think these chapters should be read in context to get the full appreciation of what he said. However I am going to condense them here but will record the first part of chapter XXV so you can get a feel for the eleven chapters.

Irenaeus 115 AD *Against Heresies*, Book V Chapters 25-36

He writes:

Chapter XXV.—The fraud, pride, and tyrannical kingdom of Antichrist, as described by Daniel and Paul.

1. And not only by the particulars already mentioned, but also by means of the events which shall occur in the time of Antichrist is it shown that he, being an apostate and a robber, is anxious to be adored as God. And that, although a mere slave, he wishes himself to be proclaimed as a king. For he Antichrist being endued with all the power of the devil, shall come, not as a righteous king, nor as a legitimate king, one in subjection to God, but an impious, unjust, and lawless one. As an apostate, iniquitous and murderous, as a robber, concen-

trating in himself all satanic apostasy, and setting aside idols to persuade men that he himself is God, raising up himself as the only idol, having in himself the multifarious errors of the other idols. This he does, in order that they who do worship the devil by means of many abominations, may serve himself by this one idol, of whom the apostle thus speaks in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians: “Unless there shall come a failing away first, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped. So that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God.” The apostle therefore clearly points out his apostasy, and that he is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped—that is, above every idol—for these are indeed so called by men, but are not really gods, and that he will endeavour in a tyrannical manner to set himself forth as God.

2. Moreover, he (the apostle) has also pointed out this which I have shown in many ways, that the temple in Jerusalem was made by the direction of the true God. For the apostle himself, speaking in his own person, distinctly called it the temple of God. Now I have shown in the third book, that no one is termed God by the apostles when speaking for themselves, except Him who truly is God, the Father of our Lord, by whose directions the temple which is at Jerusalem was constructed for those purposes which I have already mentioned. In which temple the enemy shall sit, endeavouring to show himself as Christ, as the Lord also declares: “But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand),

then let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains; and he who is upon the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house. For there shall then be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be.”

3. Daniel too, looking forward to the end of the last kingdom, the ten last kings, amongst whom the kingdom of those men shall be partitioned, and upon whom the son of perdition shall come, declares that ten horns shall spring from the beast, and that another little horn shall arise in the midst of them, and that three of the former shall be rooted up before his face. He says: “And, behold, eyes were in this horn as the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things, and his look was more stout than his fellows. I was looking, and this horn made war against the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came and gave judgment to the saints of the most high God, and the time came, and the saints obtained the kingdom.” Then, further on, in the interpretation of the vision, there was said to him: “The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall excel all other kingdoms, and devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and cut it in pieces. And its ten horns are ten kings which shall arise, and after them shall arise another, who shall surpass in evil deeds all that were before him, and shall overthrow three kings; and he shall speak words against the most high God, and wear out the saints of the most high God, and shall purpose to change times and laws; and everything shall be given into his hand until a time of times and a half time,” that is, for three

years and six months, during which time, when he comes, he shall reign over the earth.

#26

—John and Daniel have predicted the dissolution and desolation of the Roman Empire, which shall precede the end of the world and the eternal kingdom of Christ.

1-In a still clearer light has John, in the Apocalypse, indicated to the Lord's disciples what shall happen in the last times, and concerning the ten kings who shall then arise, among whom the empire which now rules the earth shall be partitioned. He teaches us what the ten horns shall be which were seen by Daniel, telling us that thus it had been said to him: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but shall receive power as if kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and give their strength and power to the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, because He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings." It is manifest, therefore, that of these potentates, he who is to come shall slay three, and subject the remainder to his power, and that he shall be himself the eighth among them. And they shall lay Babylon waste, and burn her with fire, and shall give their kingdom to the beast, and put the Church to flight.

#28

3-.....For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years, and in six days created things were completed. It is evident therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousand year.

4-And therefore throughout all time, man, having been moulded at the beginning by the hands of God, that is,

of the Son and of the Spirit, is made after the image and likeness of God. The chaff indeed which is the apostasy, being cast away. But the wheat, that is, those who bring forth fruit to God in faith, being gathered into the barn. And for this cause tribulation is necessary for those who are saved, that having been after a manner broken up, and rendered fine, and sprinkled over by the patience of the Word of God, and set on fire for purification, they may be fitted for the royal banquet....

#29

1-.....And therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, “There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be.” For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption.

#35

1-.....For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule.....

#36

3-John, therefore, did distinctly foresee the first resurrection of the just, and the inheritance in the kingdom of the earth, and what the prophets have prophesied concerning it harmonize with his vision. For the Lord also taught these things.

Irenaeus believed that, the restrainer Paul talked about was the Roman Empire, not the church getting raptured. Antichrist

makes war against the saints and the church, not people who get saved after the church is raptured. The church gets raptured during the time of great tribulation, three and a half years. This tribulation will refine the faith of those who endure till the end. The first resurrection John spoke of in Revelation 20 is the rapture. And.... He makes my point I have been preaching through this entire book. THE RESURRECTION AND RAPTURE HAPPENS AFTER ANTICHRIST NOT BEFORE! He says, “The Lord taught these things!”

This is what the Lord taught and what the church always taught, consistently for 1,800 years. The writings of Apostolic, Ante Nicene, Nicene, and Post Nicene Fathers are all in agreement with what I’m sharing with you. There are many more commentaries written by them but it’s up to you to research the rest.

Psuedo Ephrem

Psuedo Ephrem is a writing from about 600AD that was popular in it’s time because of its poetic beauty. It was a writing that was attributed to Saint Ephraem of Syria who lived around 350AD, but was unanimously rejected as having been a genuine writing of the saint. The attempt of psuedo writers was to add credibility to their writing by ascribing it to a more prominent

person than themselves. Still, the fact is that this was a popular well known piece of literature. Some advocates of the popular view cite Psuedo Ephrem in the sermon entitled “Last Times, the Antichrist, and the End of the World”, chapter 2, in an attempt to support their position.

Ephrem Chapter 2

“...For all the saints and elect of God are gathered, prior to the tribulation that is to come, and are taken to the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to overwhelm the world because of our sins.”

This sentence is one that I would cite if I wanted to believe the popular view but, I don't hold to this as a, “Rapture before Antichrist is revealed” for many reasons. It appears to have its origin in Isaiah 26:19-21. The idea of hide yourself for “A little moment” is the intent of this writer as I see it, because he in the very next sentence says in context, that this is the harvest and the angels have sickles in their hands and are ready to reap. This is Revelation 14:14-19. But it happens after Antichrist is revealed. Notice that he never refers to it as, “The seven year period of tribulation”, or “The 3 1/2 year period of tribulation”. The tribulation spoken of here is probably in reference to what will happen at the time of the last seven golden vial plagues. There will be much confusion and trail, and the pouring out of God's wrath.

Another reason why I reject the idea of a rapture before Antichrist is revealed is because he concludes in Chapter 10 with the resurrection and judging of the believers as happening in the order that Jesus gave us in Matthew 24.

And when the three and a half years have been completed, the time of the Antichrist, through which he will have seduced the world, after the resurrection of the two prophets, in the hour which the world does not know... the Lord shall appear ...as the angelic trumpet precedes him, which shall sound and declare: Arise, O sleeping ones, arise, meet Christ, because his hour of judgment has come.

Notice the similarities to Matthew 24:29-31 and Isaiah 26:19. This takes place after the tribulation of Antichrist.

Another reason I reject the idea of rapture before Antichrist, is found at the end of Chapter 8. It says, “Believers will be fleeing to the desert from the face of Antichrist, bending their knee to God in prayer, and being sustained by their salvation. The salvation of the Lord”. This is a good time to note, the doctrine of “Tribulation saints”, is taught nowhere in scripture, or in history! It is fiction. The term “tribulation saints” is only found in the last 100 years!

Another reason I reject the idea of Rapture before Antichrist is that Psuedo Ephrem and all the Early Fathers’ writings that I have read before him, claim that it is the Roman Empire that

restrains and keeps Antichrist from being revealed before the fullness of time. It never was the doctrine of the church that the church - holy spirit is restraining in II Thessalonians 2, and that the rapture of the church reveals Antichrist. The idea that the Roman Empire keeps Antichrist from being revealed is seen here in Chapters 1, 2, and 5 very clearly. This one truth completely ruins the idea that is attempted to be sold as true, in II Thessalonians 2:7, that there is a rapture before Antichrist. This interpretation of II Thessalonians 2 is completely refuted by history and can only be found in the last 100 years or so. With the overwhelming evidence of history, the popular view has serious problems attempting to make the doctrinal epistles of I & II Thessalonians support their view.

Another reason I reject the popular theory here, is because of what is written in chapter 2, before the statement that is cited as the popular view's proof text.

“We ought to understand thoroughly therefore, my brothers, what is imminent or overhanging. Already there have been hunger and plagues, violent movements of nations and signs, which have been predicted by the Lord, they have already been fulfilled, and there is not other which remains, except the advent of the wicked one in the completion of the Roman kingdom”.

In my words he says, the only thing left is the revealing of Antichrist when the Roman kingdom is done. There remains no other sign except the revealing of Antichrist. The only thing that is imminent according to Psuedo Ephrem is the revealing of Antichrist, not Jesus Christ. That means he anticipated seeing Antichrist before they were to be gathered and taken to the Lord.

Shepherd of Hermas

Shepherd of Hermas is another document cited in an attempt to support the idea that the popular view is somehow historical. It is a series of revelations given to the pastor from an angel and has a composition date of about 148AD. Again a sentence is lifted out of context and given the identity of rapturing even though the context says the exact opposite. Here is the statement out of context,

...You have escaped a great tribulation because of your faith...23:4

Here is the context of great tribulation and escape.

...And the beast had on its head four colors, black, then fire and blood, then gold, then white 22:10. I asked her about the four colors which the beast had on his head. And she said, “the black is the world in which you live, but the fire and blood signifies that the world must be

destroyed by blood and fire, but the gold part are you who have escaped from this world. For as gold is tested by fire and becomes useful, so also are you tested by fire who dwell in it. Therefore, those who endure, and pass through the fire, will be purified by means of it. 24:1-6...

Blessed are those of you who patiently endure the coming great tribulation and will not deny their life 6:7.

This is self explanatory. The level of dishonesty or self deception is glaringly apparent to me. The context of escape is obvious.

Deliberation of the Jury

In closing I would like to organize for the jury our witnesses and their testimonies:

Resurrection-Rapture after Antichrist

Daniel
Jesus
John
Luke
Paul
Barnabas - Didache
Justin
Tertullian
Hippolytus
Irenaeus
Methodious
Victorinus
Nicene Fathers
Post Nicene Fathers
Psuedo Ephrem
Wycliffe
Luther
Calvin

The Popular View

Shepherd of Hermas
Psuedo Ephrem

Who else are they going to call as their witness? The historical witnesses do not exist. The popular view is kind of lonely. I have read claims on popular view websites where they say things like, “besides Psuedo Ephrem there are *dozens* of other historical writings” that support their theory. I wrote to them and requested these references and they have failed to produce the documentation so that I could read the citations for myself. Therefore, I have attempted to focus more on the Fathers’ interpretation and commentary of the pertinent scriptures to our discussion and less on their isolated comments. After deliberation, what verdict do you think our jury should render?

Conclusion



In conclusion, I hope that this challenged you. The Foundation chapter of this book did establish and confirm the truths concerning the resurrection of the believers. That is our guideline for studying the rapture of the believers. The guideline for our study is confirmed as:

- Jesus was raised from the dead
- His resurrection was bodily
- His body was changed
- Our resurrection will be the same as his
- There is only one resurrection for believers
- It happens in a nanosecond
- The resurrection and rapture is one event
- The resurrection happens after Antichrist is revealed

Other facts established in subsequent chapters are:

- The restrainer is not the Holy Spirit
- The resurrection does not happen at Revelation 4:1

- The doctrine of tribulation saints is fiction
- The church fathers always taught that I Thessalonians 4, Matthew 13, Revelation 14 and 20, are all speaking of the same single event – the resurrection of the believers
- The view of the church for 1,800 years was, “resurrection after Antichrist”

What about today? What do I do about this? It really doesn't have any immediate application. The correct doctrine in and of itself doesn't change my relationship with Jesus today. It doesn't change how he communicates with me or what his will is for my life. Today this doctrine or understanding it is at the bottom of the list as far as its importance, but that will change. When the time comes and these prophecies unfold it will rise to the top of the list.

What people believe about this will directly affect their behavior and decisions. We will have to be able to identify and reject the mark of the beast and the worship of the image. Many of the hypothetical scenarios I come up with have the believers of the popular view being deceived. It would go something like, “This can't be the mark of the beast because we get raptured before that, right?”, and as a result they get tricked into receiving the mark. Remember, this will be a time of great deception and confusion. It will be, “...the work of

Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives...”

I know believers that have told me, “I’m a strong Christian and I hear from the Lord daily. If I’m wrong he will show me when the time comes. Pan-trib, it will all pan out.” I used to think, ya that makes sense, that guy is a pillar of faith. But then I thought, what about his children or grandchildren? How would he feel if he taught them incorrectly and it set them up for a fall in the end? He would feel sick to say the least. Every errant doctrine has some sort of consequence.

One scripture that comes to mind when I reflect on this scenario is, “beware, let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall” (I Corinthians 10:12). This in turn leads me to think of what Peter said, “Even though all of these will fall away, I will not fall away, I will not deny you, I will follow you unto prison and even death.” We know from Scripture that when tribulation came Peter did deny the Lord. Peter thought he would stand yet he fell. Peter walked with Jesus for three years, saw the miracles, and still fell away. This is an example of why I wouldn’t want to bet that just because of a strong prayer life and consistent devotional time one could not be deceived by such a subtle error.

The majority of biblical scholars and religious leaders at the time of Christ missed Jesus being the fulfillment of the

Messianic prophecies. As we saw in an earlier chapter, they had a Messianic time table that told when Messiah would be in Jerusalem. They were given the exact year it would take place (Daniel 9:25) and they missed it. They also had the witness of John the Baptist. The priests and Levites sent messengers and asked John if he was the Messiah. John declared Jesus to be the Messiah and quoted Isaiah 40:3 to point this out to them, yet they misunderstood the prophecy. Jesus quoted Isaiah 61:1, 2 as he taught in the synagogue. He plainly told the scholars and priests that this messianic prophecy was being fulfilled in their ears that day. They didn't understand the prophecy or its fulfillment. Jesus said "search the scriptures for they speak of me, Moses wrote about me, but if you don't believe his words, how can you believe me?" Again they did not understand his reference to Deuteronomy 18:15, 18. They didn't understand Isaiah 7:14, born of a virgin. Even Paul, the Pharisee of the Pharisees, concerning the law blameless, concerning zeal the most zealot, understanding the scriptures an elitist, and a graduate of Rabbinical school, missed Jesus being the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies. The scholars and religious leaders of 30AD collectively misunderstood the prophetic scriptures concerning Messiah. They missed the Messiah because they believed something incorrect about the prophetic scriptures.

In my opinion it appears that the scholars and leaders of today are doing the same thing – they believe something different or incorrect about prophetic scripture. There is a movement that has gone unchecked to teach something that is popular and attempt to portray it as orthodox. The church never taught the popular view that many people have fallen in love with today.

This seems like a good time to point out our recent church history. In Nazi Germany much of the professing church, Catholic and Protestant, made frequent declarations of loyalty to Hitler. Their allegiance was based mostly on self preservation and a misunderstanding of Scripture. They understood Romans 13:1, 2 to be saying that the Nazis were a God ordained government, and those who opposed it should receive damnation. One of Hitler's goals was to redefine and do away with historic Christianity by the reinterpretation of scripture, and introduce in his opinion, a new more enlightened form of a Christian religion. Many of the non German Christians were convinced that Hitler was the Antichrist prophesied by scripture because of the things he did. He and Antiochus Epiphanies were of the same spirit of Antichrist. What Hitler and Antiochus did will be reflected in the behavior of their modern day prophetic equivalent, Antichrist. The misquoting of scripture and its misapplication is a tactic often used by

our adversary the devil in his attempts to confuse and deceive. He even had the audacity to try it on Jesus. He attempted to deceive him by rendering a misapplication of Psalm 91 when he was tempting him on the pinnacle of the temple. The devil is the author of confusion. He is the originator and father of all lies. He definitely has a plan to use this popular, but incorrect doctrine, to confuse and deceive during his conquest at the end of the age.

I believe that a misunderstanding of prophetic scripture will be used against professing Christians by Antichrist. We will be forced to make a decision; side with Antichrist instead of historical Jesus Christ. This mandate will be presented as the correct choice by the combination of a misinterpretation and misapplication of scripture that will be accompanied and confirmed by miracles, and counterfeit signs. This will cause great confusion. In the midst of this confusion a decision will have to be made under duress. If not prepared it will be a very difficult decision for some to make. Part of the church will be deceived and go along with Antichrist and direct people incorrectly, causing more confusion, deception, and turning against one another. I'm not saying that everyone who believes the popular view will be deceived. I am saying that belief in this view will greatly increase the chance for deception though. If a person is not willing to be corrected about the errors of the

popular view when there is no pressure on them, no persecution, no threat of death, what would make someone think they would be able to find the ability to make a corrective decision when it could mean one might die, or be forced to watch loved ones put to death. Waiting to see how it will “pan out” before receiving correction about this doctrinal error looks like a bad decision to me. I think at that time people would be more apt to go through a process of rationalizations to stay alive and justify following a lie. I don’t think any of us can fully imagine how subtle yet powerful the deception will be!

Today people aren’t hearing the truth about this premillennial resurrection-rapture on TV or radio, because people to a large degree support with their funds things that sound good. Things that don’t sound good usually don’t get funded in this day and age of multi-media. How can the Holy Spirit guide us in all truth if the truth about our subject is rarely taught? How can it be believed if it can’t be heard? The truth about our subject is rarely taught in church because the church has to walk a fine line between “maintaining the unity of the Spirit of believers in the bond of peace”, and contention over a doctrine that is deemed a nonessential tenet of faith. In actuality to the people who will go through this time period it is essential. What they have previously learned and believe will be critically essential when faced with decisions about participation in the

system of antichrist. If we live in the end the age, like is commonly taught, then this issue is critical. So in that light I think it is extremely important for the church to address the need for corrective repair concerning the premillennial resurrection-rapture doctrine.

Unfortunately in this type of discussion we inevitably arrive at a place where there is debate. Sometimes it is a heated debate. Unfortunate again is the fact that people's feelings can get hurt. In addressing our proof texts I'm sure that I have inadvertently offended someone. For this I am sorry. My intention isn't to offend, but to address a genuine concern I have that it is not going to go down like the popular teaching tells us - a concern to warn that I think this popular doctrine should be reconsidered for many reasons. If there was ever something I would take pleasure in being wrong about it would be this subject. Unfortunately I don't think that is going to be the case.

I'd like to close with the same comment that I started with in my Introduction, and that is, I attempted to present information as clearly as possible, and *I pray that the Holy Spirit shows you what he has shown me.*

Bibliography



Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the writings of the early fathers down to AD 325, A. Roberts & J. Donaldson, Edinburgh, Clark 1867-72 24 volumes <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/ecf/index.htm> .

The Apostolic Fathers, Lightfoot & Harmer, Grand Rapids, Baker, ECPA, 1989.

Archer, Feinberg, Moo, Reiter, *The Rapture Pre,-mid,-or post-Trib-
ulational?*, Grand Rapids, Zondervon, 1984.

George E. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, Grand Rapids, Eardmans, 1972.

A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures of the New Testament*, <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/robertsons-word-pictures/>.

Marvin J. Rosenthal, *The Pre wrath Rapture of the Church*, Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1990.

Walter Martin, *The Tribulation and the Church*, Audio CD, <http://www.waltermartin.com/prodserv.html> .

Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, Oliphants LTD, 1940
<http://www2.mf.no/bibel/vines.html> .

John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, Aug 25, 1979.

John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, SP publications, USA, July 1 1983.

John F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, Grand Rapids, Dunham, Oct 1, 1969.

John F Walvoord, *End Times. Understanding today's world events in biblical prophecy*, Nashville, Word, June 6, 1998.

