



A
Ministry
of:

**CORNERSTONE
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WHY THE CHURCH WILL NOT GO THROUGH THE TRIBULATION. *Challenge Xtra! April 2011*

INTRODUCTION: DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH & NATURE OF THE RAPTURE. I believe it is impossible to fully understand the Bible unless you have a knowledge of **Dispensational Truth**. God has ordered His program for man with seven distinct steps. There are seven time periods where God has given man different light and instructions. It was all laid out by Him before the foundation of the world. It is like a set of stairs with seven steps. It is one stairway with seven stages. (For further information on this topic we have a booklet you can get for \$2 pp.). Israel is dispensation #5 and the Church is #6. They are not the same. The Church is not spiritual Israel. They are related but they are not the same (just like the stairway). Then, the **Rapture** relates basically to the Church. In a real sense, Israel has nothing to do with it. The Rapture is the completion of the Church's role in this world as we know it; (the Church will come back with Christ in the Kingdom). The Church is completed and glorified at this event. This is not true for Israel, for when the Rapture takes place, she will enter into the Great Tribulation. To put the Church into any part of the seven year Tribulation, is to confound the Dispensations. It also means that God will do something He promised not to do – namely, put the Church under His wrath! See I Thessalonians 5:9, etc. You have this time of the wrath of God described in Revelation 6 – 19. The true Church of God does not appear once in these 14 chapters except when she comes back to earth with Christ in chapter 19. You do have the harlot church in chapter 17, but that is the devil's counterfeit, not the Church of God. Summing up thus far: Israel and the Church are two distinct entities; The Church is taken out before the period of God's wrath, The Great Tribulation, and Israel will go through it.

I. A MOST IMPORTANT SCRIPTURE ON THE SUBJECT. An important Scripture for this entire subject is Daniel 9: 24-27. I don't have space here to quote it all but I will quote v.24: **“Seventy week are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.”** Now, notice to whom this prophecy applies: **“thy people...thy holy city.”** It is Israel, of course, Daniel's people! It couldn't be the Church: it has no holy city on earth. The passage goes on to say that within 70 weeks a number of things will happen. Now, the 70 weeks is literally *seventy sevens* of years; or 490 years. It began in Neh.2:1,5,6 and 69 weeks (483 years) ended the week Jesus died on the cross. Did the 70th week follow immediately? Clearly, NO! Do we have everlasting righteousness, etc? It hasn't happened yet! The reason: God is building His Church! When the Church is completed, Raptured, God is going to give Israel that 70th week, The Great Tribulation, to purge and save Israel, and to punish the nations. (For greater detail, see “The Coming Prince” by Sir Robert Anderson).

II. MIDTRIBUATION RAPTURE: A FALSE DOCTRINE. This false doctrine is based on two false premises. First, it claims that the two witnesses of Revelation 11 (for good reason, I believe they are Moses and Elijah) are a picture of the Rapture of the Church. They prophecy forty-two months, or half of the tribulation, when they are slain and taken up to Heaven. These people say, this is the Rapture. But it is not the Church, it is two men. They say they represent the Church – but the Bible nowhere says that! Then, they claim that the last trumpet of I Corinthians 15:52 is the same as the last trumpet, the 7th trumpet in Revelation 15. Let me briefly give you some reasons this cannot be true.

1. It ignores Dispensational Truth. The Tribulation relates to Israel (“Time of Jacob’s trouble.”); not the Church.
2. The two witnesses are said to be “two olive branches...” These are first mentioned in Zechariah 4; are Israelites.
3. It makes the Church undergo the wrath of God. “God has not appointed us to wrath...” I Thess.5:9; Nahum 1:2.
4. The Bible gives many details of the Tribulation, as the events unfold, the Church members would be able to figure out Christ’s coming.
5. The two witnesses preach the last half of the Tribulation and thus go up at the end, not the middle of the Trib.
6. The last trumpet of I Cor.15 is the Rapture of the Church. The 7th trumpet of Rev. 11 is the end of the Trib.
7. It makes the Scriptures allegorical and not literal.
8. They make the Tribulation into two separate parts when in reality it is one! One seven year period.

II. POSTTRIBULATION RAPTURE: ANOTHER FALSE DOCTRINE.

This false teaching says that the Church will not be Raptured before the Great Tribulation but will remain on earth until Jesus comes back to set up His Kingdom. Alexander Reese, a spokesman for this doctrine has said, “The Church of Christ will not be removed from the earth until the Advent of Christ at the very end of the present age. The Rapture and the appearing take place at the same time: hence Christians of the generation will be exposed to the final affliction under the Antichrist.” This heresy has many of the common errors of the previous one and is nothing more than human wisdom and confusion.

1. Disregards Dispensational Truth. Confounds Israel and the Church.
2. It makes the Rapture and Jesus’ Return to earth the same event. (Even though one is a meeting in the air(Thess.4) and the other is His coming to earth (Matt.24,25, etc.). Common sense says they cannot be the same.
3. God’s Church will undergo His wrath, something he said He would not do! See Nahum 1:2; I Thess.5:9.
4. Last trumpet of I Cor.15 and Rev. 11 are the same to them. No, one is for the Church and the other for Israel!
5. They say that all of Daniel 9:24-27 is already fulfilled. Just read it! How can anyone believe that?
6. Makes no distinction between tribulation in general (John 16:33) and the Great Tribulation (Matt.24:21).
7. Makes the Scriptures which are for Israel relate to the Church. Matt.24,25; Rev.6-9 = Israel. (Church not here).
8. Denies doctrine of imminency (Christ may come at any moment). The Bible has recorded many major events during the Tribulation so one could easily figure out Christ’s coming.

III. PRETRIBULATION RAPTURE: THE TRUE RAPTURE DOCTRINE. The Pretribulation Rapture is based on the literal interpretation of Scripture, not an allegorical one. Allegories are easily twisted to suit one’s own assumptions. We simply believe that the Bible says what it means and means what it says. We are told to “Rightly divide the Word of Truth.” There are many different interpretations of the Bible but only one can be right! **“Knowing this first that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.”** II Peter 1:20. The true interpretation is from the Holy Ghost – v.21. The Pretribulation teaching is the right one for the following reasons:

1. A proper understanding that Dan.9:24-27; Matt.24,25; Rev.6-19; etc. refer to Israel and not the Church.
As we said before, Israel and the Church are separate entities in God’s program. It is like a man has two Sons – they are related but they are not the same! They are different:
Israel is an earthly people – the Church a Heavenly... Israel’s Head is Abraham – Church, Christ...
Israel – Holy Spirit came on some, may leave – Church – Holy Spirit indwells all, never leaves...
Israel – Christ returns to earth...Church – Christ returns to the air...(Many more differences)
2. The 70th week is a time of wrath and has to do with Israel and the nations. As above, wrath is not for the Church.
3. Christ’s coming for the Church is imminent and secret – I Thess.4:13-18; I Cor.15:50--; etc.
4. Many signs before Christ comes to earth to set up kingdom with Israel. Matt..24,25; Rev. 6-19; etc.
5. Church, Christ comes for His Bride – Return to earth, Christ comes with His Bride.
5. Rapture – Church is given their resurrection bodies. Israel not until end of Tribulation – Dan.12:1,2.
6. The 70th week is yet future; events of Dn.9:24-27, have obviously not been fulfilled!
7. Only a literal, dispensational interpretation relates the true interpretation.

IV. ARE YOU READY FOR THE RAPTURE? Jesus said, **“Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”** The Rapture may happen any moment. When Jesus comes **“with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God...”** it will be too late! **“God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”** You need to change your mind about your sin, about how to have your sins forgiven. Jesus Christ came to pay for your sins but you must put your trust in Him. **“Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under Heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved.”** **“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”** Call on Him TODAY!