

# The Church and The Tribulation

1 Thessalonians 4:16: For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Eng- caught up- Grk- Harpazo / Lat- Raptus "Rapture"

- To seize or carry off suddenly, often with decisive force.
- To snatch away swiftly.
- To remove or rescue from imminent danger, judgment, or destruction

By the end of the 2nd century, **Latin** was the **dominant** language in the **Western Roman Empire**. Jerome translated the **Latin Vulgate** in AD 400. (Dominant Bible for 1000 years.)

Social Media- **A Pre-Tribulation Rapture**—is a modern belief, being newer than Mormonism (1830)—**FALSE**—


- Irenaeus of Lyons (c. AD 130–202)
- Hippolytus of Rome (c. AD 170–235)
- Cyprian of Carthage (c. AD 200–258)

- The Shepherd of Hermas (1st–early 2nd century)
- Ephraem the Syrian (AD 306–373)

A Pre-Tribulation Rapture— is a DISTINCT, SEPARATE event from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus at the end of the Tribulation!

1. The church meets Jesus in the air.
2. The church will be taken home to heaven by Jesus.
3. Jesus will come for His saints.
4. Only believers will see Jesus.

## 1. The Natural Reading of the Book of Revelation

 Revelation 1:19: Write the things which you have seen (ch. 1), and the things which are (ch. 2-3), and the things which will take place after this (ch. 4-22).

Revelation 1	The Revelation of Jesus in all His Glory
Revelation 2-3	The Church Age
Revelation 4	The Church <u>called up</u> to heaven

Revelation 4:1: After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven and the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up here!

Revelation 5	The Church in heaven worshipping
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Revelation 5:9: They sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy ... For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation...

Revelation 6            The Antichrist coming on a white horse.

Revelation 6-19        The 7 year tribulation and the wrath of God.

Revelation 19          Christ's 2nd Coming.

Revelation 20          The 1000 reign Jesus / Great White Throne

Revelation 21-22      The New Heaven and New Earth.

## 2. The Wrath of God

Revelation 6:15-17: And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

- 11:18: The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come...
- 14:19: ... the great winepress of the wrath of God.
- 15:1: ...the wrath of God is complete.

- 16:1: Go and pour the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.
- 19:15: He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

1 John 2:2: And He Himself (Jesus) is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10: How you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers (rescues) us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 5:9: For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

John 3:36: He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

### 3. The Words of Jesus

Luke 21:36: Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things (coming horrors) that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Revelation 3:10: Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from (out of) the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who

dwell on the earth.

#### 4. The Imminent Return of Jesus

Jesus can RETURN at any moment for His church!

Matthew 24:44: Therefore, you also **be ready**, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Matthew 25:13: **Watch** therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour the Son of Man is coming.

Mark 13:32-34: But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, **watch and pray**; for you do not know when the time is. It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to **watch**. **Watch** therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming - in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning lest, **coming suddenly**, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: **Watch**!

Titus 2:11-13: For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, **looking for** the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:20-21: For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Hebrews 9:27-28: And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

The New Testament church...CLEARLY lived in expectation that Jesus' coming again was imminent ...  
at any moment!

Revelation 5:9: They sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy ... For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation

2 Peter 3:9: The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

## 1. Irenaeus of Lyons (c. AD 130–202)

Key emphasis: The righteous are preserved and gathered by God before judgment falls.

- In *Against Heresies* (5.29; 5.30), Irenaeus speaks of believers being “suddenly caught up” and preserved when judgment comes upon the earth.
- He explicitly connects divine judgment with prior preservation of the faithful, drawing on Noah and Lot as typological examples.

Significance: Irenaeus links rescue with eschatological judgment and affirms a literal return of Christ for His people.

## 2. Hippolytus of Rome (c. AD 170–235)

Key emphasis: The church is removed before the outpouring of divine wrath.

- In *Commentary on Daniel* and *On Christ and Antichrist*, Hippolytus describes a period of unparalleled distress and distinguishes the fate of the righteous from those under judgment.
- He speaks of the righteous being “taken away” and preserved before wrath is unleashed.

Significance: Hippolytus clearly separates the church from God’s punitive judgment on the world.

## 3. Cyprian of Carthage (c. AD 200–258)

Key emphasis: God removes His people before judgment intensifies.

- In Treatise 7: On the Mortality, Cyprian writes of believers being “withdrawn” before calamities worsen: “We are being taken away from the world when the world is being shaken.”

Significance: Cyprian views removal as an act of mercy, not escape from suffering in general, but rescue from coming judgment.

#### 4. Ephraem the Syrian (AD 306–373)

Key emphasis: **The saints are gathered before tribulation.**

- In On the Last Times, the Antichrist, and the End of the World, we read:  
“All the saints and elect of God are gathered together before the tribulation which is to come, and are taken to the Lord, lest they see the confusion that is to overwhelm the world.”

Significance: This is the clearest explicit statement of removal before tribulation in early Christian literature, widely cited in scholarly discussions.

#### 5. The Shepherd of Hermas (late 1st–early 2nd century)

Key emphasis: **Escape from coming tribulation through faithfulness.**

- Speaks of a great tribulation and the faithful being counted worthy to escape it.
- Strongly echoes Luke 21:36 in both language and theology.

Significance: Demonstrates that early Christians already held a category for escaping eschatological distress by divine action.