

## THE BOOK OF REVELATION 31 Key

### *Understanding the Rapture of the Church 4*

#### **I. Review: Five reasons for the rapture of the church.**

A. The first reason for the rapture is for Christ to receive the church and to present it to Himself.

B. The second reason for the rapture of the church is to give the members of the church their glorified bodies.

C. The third reason for the rapture of the church is for Christ to judge the church for its works.

D. The fourth reason for the rapture of the church is for the church to escape the Tribulation Period.

**II. The fifth reason for the rapture of the church is to permit the revelation of the antichrist. (2 Thess. 2:1-8 NKJV)** *<sup>1</sup>Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, <sup>2</sup>not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. <sup>3</sup>Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, <sup>4</sup>who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. <sup>5</sup>Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? <sup>6</sup>And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. <sup>7</sup>For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. <sup>8</sup>And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.*

1. Verse 1 gives an exhortation in view of the coming of Jesus and our gathering unto Him.

2. In verse 2 we learn that someone had written or forged a letter in Paul's name to the church at Thessalonica saying that the Day of Christ, which is a reference to the Second Coming of Christ not the rapture of the church, had already come to pass, and the Thessalonians were being shaken in mind and troubled because this was contrary to what Paul had already taught them.

3. In verses 3-5 Paul reminded them that two things must take place before the Day of the Lord, or Second Coming of Christ comes to pass.

a. The falling away comes first.

1. The Greek that was translated "falling away" here means defection, revolt, and apostasy.

2. It is preceded by the definite article "the" which refers to a specific defection, revolt, apostasy, and falling away.

3. That specific revolt is the great revolt against God led by the antichrist during Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week or the Tribulation Period.

b. The falling away does not occur until the man of sin, the antichrist, is revealed.

c. He is called the man of sin because he will be the embodiment of lawlessness and the leader of the great apostasy.

d. He is called the son of perdition because he is destined for destruction in hell for his great rebellion against God. Judas was also referred to as the son of perdition because he was destined for destruction because of his betrayal of Christ. (see John 17:12)

e. Verse 4 describes the extent of the great apostasy he will lead.

f. Verse 4 also indicates that the Jewish temple will be rebuilt at least by the middle of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week.

4. Verse 6 tells us three very important things.

a. The antichrist must be revealed in his own time. What is his own time? Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week is his time. He cannot be revealed before that time.

b. Also, we see that presently, something is restraining him from being revealed.

c. the Thessalonians knew what that restrainer was because Paul had taught them. If they knew, then we can know. God is not keeping it a secret.

5. Verse 7 tells us that the mystery of lawlessness is already at work in the world.

a. This is the work of rebellion against the rule of Christ being carried on by the spirit of the antichrist in the world today.

b. *(1 John 4:3 NKJV) <sup>3</sup>and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.*

c. But the man who is the leader of this world rebellion, called the lawless one in verse 8, cannot be revealed until the restrainer is taken out of the way.

d. When the restrainer is taken out of the way the antichrist will be revealed.

6. Who or what is this restrainer? There are only three possible restrainers of lawlessness in the world. There are only three possible choices.

a. First, there is the institution of human government. (1 Pet. 2:13, 14 NKJV)  
*<sup>13</sup>Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, <sup>14</sup>or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.*

1. The purpose of civil government on the earth is for the punishment of evil doers and the praise of those who do well.

2. Civil government will still be on the scene during the reign of the antichrist. There will still be kings and authorities on the earth during Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. They will not be taken out of the way, although they will be perverted.

b. The second consideration is the Holy Spirit.

1. (Gen. 6:3 NKJV) speaks of the Holy Spirit striving, contending, or pleading with man during the days of Noah. *<sup>3</sup>And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."*

2. During the first three and one half years of the Tribulation Period, 144,000 Jewish evangelists will be saved. They are the first fruits of Israel. They will evangelize many Jews and Gentiles. The Holy Spirit will be working with them because He is the agent of salvation. You cannot be born of the Spirit without the Holy Spirit. So, the Holy Spirit will be in play during Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week.

c. The third consideration is the church.

1. (Matt. 5:13 NKJV) *<sup>13</sup>"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.*

2. The church is the salt of the earth.

3. Salt is used as a preservative and a hinderer of corruption.

4. We have already seen that the church is in heaven when Jesus breaks the first seal that releases the antichrist.

5. In addition, the restrainer is referred to in verse 7 of our text as "he".

6. The church is always referred to in the masculine.

7. (Eph. 4:12, 13 NKJV) <sup>11</sup>*And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup>till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*

8. (Eph. 2:14, 15 NKJV) <sup>14</sup>*For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, <sup>15</sup>having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace.*

9. The church is never referred to as the Bride of Christ. The Bride of Christ is the New Jerusalem. The church has citizenship in the bride along with all the other companies of redeemed saints, i.e. the OT saints, the Tribulation Saints, the 144,000 Jewish Evangelists, and the two witnesses. (Rev. 21:9, 10 NKJV) <sup>9</sup>*Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." <sup>10</sup>And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,*

10. The church is never referred to in the feminine. Paul would not refer to the church in the masculine twice in the same letter and then start referring to it in the feminine.

11. (Eph. 5:25, 26 NKJV) <sup>25</sup>*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, <sup>26</sup>that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.*

12. (Eph. 5:25, 26 KJV) *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.*

13. The relationship between the church and Christ is portrayed by the relationship between the husband and wife, but do not confuse roles and function with identity. The Biblical identity of the church is the Body of Christ literally.

14. The church is never portrayed as a bride with a bouquet but as an army, wielding weapons, pulling down strongholds, prevailing against the gates of hell.

15. The church is the restrainer of lawlessness that must be taken out of the way before the antichrist can be revealed.