

End Times Lesson Four – The Rapture

Well, today is the day that some of you have really been waiting for – since we haven't been raptured yet, we'll be talking about the rapture – and this is one of the more controversial sub-topics when it comes to end times bible prophecy because this is something that's not clearly stated in Scripture – For those who believe in the rapture – there are three different views – and we'll talk about all of these as we go along – but there is a pre-tribulation rapture – that is – the church will be removed from the earth prior to the tribulation period which we'll talk about after Easter. That is what I believe there is the most biblical support for – and we'll examine that in depth today – Then there is mid-tribulation rapture – or the idea that the church will have to go through the first half of the tribulation but will be removed in the middle of the tribulation, before the Great Tribulation. And then there is a post-tribulation rapture where Jesus calls the church up to Him at the end of the Tribulation period and then He and the church come back down to earth – I affectionately refer to this as the yo-yo rapture. But then, of course, there are those who scoff at the idea of the rapture – they say things like “The Bible says we will be persecuted, the disciples were persecuted, we're no different.” In fact, the word rapture doesn't even appear in the Bible. And that's true – it doesn't. But then again, neither does the word Trinity. Or – Triune God.

The Trinity is based on systematic theology or a theology that looks at the entirety of scripture and from that derives a belief about God. And that's the same thing with the rapture. So where does the word Rapture come from? Well, in 1 Thess 4:13-18 (I think I gave you 13-17 for homework but I'm adding in verse 18 and you'll see why later) but in 1 Thess 4:13-18 we see one of the main passages dealing with this – and it says ¹³ **But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.** ¹⁴ **For since we believe that Jesus died and rose**

again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

In verse 17 we see it says “Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them (the dead in Christ) to meet the Lord in the air. That phrase “caught up” is the Greek word *harpazo* – and it means to grab or seize by force, with the purpose of removing and/or controlling—‘to seize, to snatch away, to take away. The theological Dictionary of the New Testament says it’s “To take something forcefully” (firmly, quickly or rapaciously). Thus a. “to steal (like of robbers), Do we remember Jesus saying He would come like a thief? b. “To capture in war.” In the NT the word is used in parables which speak of the conflict between the kingdom of God and that of Satan: (steals) (forcefully snatch c. With the thought of speed: to “snatch” out of the fire. d. “To take rapaciously”

That Greek Word *harpazo* was translated into the Latin Vulgate which is what Christians used for centuries, as the word *rapturo* – so the word rapture is an English word, translated from a Latin Word, translated from a Greek word – regardless – the meaning is the same – it’s this idea of being snatched away or stolen away quickly and without warning.

The other thing we want to keep in mind – is that the rapture and the second coming of Christ, unless you subscribe to post-tribulation rapture – are two separate events. Because what will the second coming

of Jesus be like? Well, it will be visible right? In the book of Acts when Jesus ascends – the disciples watch Jesus ascend – well here’s Acts 1:9-11 **“⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”**

It will be visible. Matthew 24:27 (and also Lk 17:24) **“²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”** Mt 24:30 **“²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory”** In other words – the tribulation has been happening, it’s been hell on earth and then just like when the baby is about to be born it all culminates with this visible event that everyone on earth will be able to see and Jesus will visibly return – **“they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”**

Now I’ve skipped some verses here because they are used by those who believe in a mid or post tribulation rapture and so I will come back to those as we discuss them and how I, and many others interpret them – how they fit into pre-tribulation rapture.

My point is – that with a pre-tribulation rapture – Jesus won’t be visible, He won’t descend to earth yet – He is taking the church and removing it prior to God pouring out His wrath on the earth – think of if you were standing there and a small child was running into oncoming traffic – you would grab them and snatch them out of the road.

Before we really get into the rapture itself more – I want to just put this in the framework of God’s prophetic timeline. So we have all these signs – we talked about them – Jesus said we wouldn’t know the exact time – the day or the hour – but we would know the season – In Matthew 24:28 – this is right after Jesus says “**For as the lightning comes from east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.**” He says “**Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.**” A kind of cryptic verse but not really – He’s saying – when you see vultures flying overhead circling – what does that typically mean? It means something is either dead or about to die and they are getting ready to feast – well all of these signs are like the vultures circling. And so, we need to be vigilant – we need to be ready so we’re not caught off guard. We want to be a part of the rapture and not left to face any part of the tribulation period.

If you have your timeline with you – just pull that out – and so of course it goes all the way back to Genesis – but we’ll move up to the birth of Jesus, the Messiah – then we have the life of Jesus which we just studied – and then after His resurrection He ascends into Heaven and now He’s sitting at the right hand of the Father, preparing a place for us and preparing to return. He is king, although His kingdom hasn’t been fully realized here on earth. Next is Pentecost which we’ll be celebrating on May 23rd this year. That’s when Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in all believers throughout their lives unlike in the Old Testament and even during Jesus earthly life, where He would come upon someone for a specific purpose or time. And that is where the church age begins. And that is where we are now. So, the next event on the prophetic calendar is the rapture. This would be the pre-tribulation rapture. [Chart]

So the rapture is this awesome moment when the Lord comes in the clouds and snatches away the church from this earth just prior to the Tribulation period as we saw in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Let’s just read that again “¹³ **But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers,**

about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

There is another parallel passage that also talks about the rapture and that's found in 1 Corinthians 15:50-55 **“⁵⁰ I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵ “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”**

He says this is a mystery – we shall not all sleep (that's a euphemism for death – we shall not all die but we will be changed – in a moment – in a twinkling of an eye – in other words – faster than you can blink – That phrase “In the twinkling of an eye”. Scientists have measured the twinkling in a human being's eye and it amounts to eleven one hundredths of a second.

So in 11/100 of a second - you will go from standing here on earth or sitting or driving or doing whatever you are doing and you will no longer have this earthly body – you will have a glorified immortal body.

Matthew describes this in Chapter 24 starting with verse 36 he says **“³⁶ “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. ⁴² Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”**

Luke adds a few things in chapter 17 verses 28-35 **“²⁸ Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, ²⁹ but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all— ³⁰ so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹ On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. ³² Remember Lot’s wife. ³³ Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it. ³⁴ I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken and the other left. ³⁵ There will**

be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left.”

Life will be going on – just like it is right now and then (clap loud/bam) you’re going to be gone – in the clouds with Jesus in a glorified body getting prepared to return with Jesus on white horses. Your non-believing friend who was standing next to you – they’ll be left behind.

Now is that possible? Is there any other biblical precedent for this? Actually yes – there is. There are at least 2 other instances in the Bible in which a person is caught up into heaven and doesn’t taste death (John doesn’t count because his stay was only temporary and he eventually did die on earth and there is also an account with Paul – in fact the account with Paul uses the same word *harpazo* – but we know that Paul was returned to the earth, his body was not changed and he also died on earth). It’s found in 2 Cor 12:2-4 **“² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. ³ And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— ⁴ and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.”** He’s talking about himself there and he doesn’t know if this was a physical rapture or a vision but He was in the throne room, in the presence of God, like John and likely Isaiah - and whatever happened there – he can’t tell us. He was told not to.

But the first documented occurrence that is like what we’re talking about this morning is found in Genesis 5:24 – it says **“²⁴ Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.”** The Hebrew word for took is *lā-qāḥ* and it has a very similar meaning to the Greek word *harpazo*. – it means 1. **grasp**, take hold of, i.e., grasp an object with the hand; 2. **obtain**, gain, i.e., bring an object into one’s possession, either with or without permission of the owner; 3. **collect**,

i.e., receive what is due from a giver, usually as an obligation, which may be a proper or improper goal; 4. **select**, choose, i.e., prefer one object over another, and then grab, possess, or use for a purpose; 5. **send**, i.e., cause one to make linear movement; 6. **lead away**, i.e., cause an object to move to another place; 7. **be led away ,be taken away**; 7. **capture**, i.e., seize control of an object; 8. **flash back and forth**, i.e., the movement of lightning.

Enoch did not die – God took him away. In Hebrews 11:5 Paul adds that “⁵ **By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.**”

The second documented rapture is Elijah in 2 Kings 2:11. Elijah was caught up by a whirlwind into heaven. He too never saw death, a foreshadowing of what true believers will experience on the day when our Savior catches us up in the clouds. So there is a precedence in the Bible for a rapture besides the verses I quoted earlier.

The Rapture of the Church will be the most startling event to happen in all of human history. Imagine – millions of people just instantly disappearing “in the twinkling of an eye”. Great confusion and bewilderment will occupy the minds of those left behind. A co-worker will suddenly be gone. A school teacher will no longer stand before his or her desk as the chalk or the white board marker hit the floor. There will be car accidents and plane crashes as drivers and pilot’s are no longer behind the controls. Police, Fire and EMS will lose significant manpower to deal with all of the accidents. Many doctors and nurses will suddenly vanish leaving hospitals and emergency rooms understaffed. The majority of those left on earth will not know what hit them and those that do know what happened will feel suddenly sick to their stomachs. They will feel an even greater terror overwhelming them as they realize that they have been left behind, that had if they were to

die at this very moment – they would find themselves in hell because there will be many “believers” many “Sunday Morning” Christians, Many “Weekend Warriors”, Many “Lukewarm” followers of Christ left behind. and so you don’t think I’m singling out or pointing to lay people – there are going to be plenty of pastor’s who find themselves in denial and disbelief. Instead of being in heaven with the Lord they were supposed to serve, they along with everyone else left behind, will find themselves about to enter seven years of hell on earth. The world will be ripe and ready to be plucked and during this time there is a world leader waiting in the wings, waiting to step up and rescue the world from this chaos that will make 911 look like a picnic. Waiting to establish the one world government in which the foundation has been and is currently being laid. That person – is the one we know as the anti-Christ and that’s who we’ll be looking at for next week’s lesson.

But the media – which has really shifted from just reporting the news to a propaganda machine – they are primed to deal with this and they will fall right into the antichrists plan – You’ll see the experts on CNN and MSNBC come up with things like – ““It’s proof of evolution – The people who disappeared actually evolved spiritually and just like there are still monkey’s there are still humans who didn’t evolve but it has nothing to do with being a believer or non-believer – because there are still pastor’s and priests – so it couldn’t be that. The explanation will seem to prove the lie. Another explanation may be that they were abducted by aliens. UFO phenomenon is huge today – it’s a great way to explain the disappearance of millions of people. Of course there are all the UFO invasion movies out there that have popped up in the last twenty years – but what’s really accelerated things is the US Government, for the first time in history, has acknowledged UFO’s as being credible with the release of Navy flight cockpit recordings that were previously classified – have any of you seen that footage? There are dozens of television shows currently on the History channel, Nat Geo, the Discover channel several other cable network channels that talk

about this stuff on a regular basis – it’s conditioning the population for an explanation of the rapture whether we know it or not.

Other lies include dimensional shifts (I’ve seen many shows including one this past week about mysterious disappearances – things like the Bermuda triangle, the Alaskan Triangle etc. Another one is called spontaneous human atom disassembly. Whatever the lie, it will be cooked up by Satan himself – and it will be good – and it will deceive many.

So, let’s talk about the different views – and the first one I haven’t even mentioned yet – because it’s the weakest of all of them – it’s called the **partial rapture theory**. The partial rapture theory isn’t about the timing, but the subjects of the Rapture. Advocates of this view believe the Rapture of the believer will be based on reward for the individual’s faithfulness. That only the faithful in Christ will be raptured initially but other believers will be raptured throughout the Tribulation as they get their lives in order. Here’s the truth - This belief has absolutely no scriptural support at all. Zero – none. So if we can’t support it with scripture – it’s wishful thinking and we’re going to toss that one right out.

Mid-Tribulation

The second theory is called the Mid-Tribulation Theory – it says that believers will have to go through the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation. Many who subscribe to this believe that the first half of the tribulation is the wrath of man and Satan and not of God. They believe that Christians will be tested by the wrath of man and Satan, but delivered from the wrath of God. And of course, when we get to studying the Tribulation in depth – and we have talked about it quite a bit when we studied Revelation – we’ll find that there are many many problems with this view - the first being that it ignores the biblical teaching of imminence – that Christ’s return will occur unannounced. As soon as the anti-Christ takes power and the events of the tribulation

occur – the clock will be ticking and believers would know exactly when Christ would return right? Second – the Bible is clear that the other judgments are also the wrath of God.

We've seen in 1 Cor 15:51-52 it says **“⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.** And then 1 Thess 4:16 **“¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.”**

Those are verses that the folks use who believe in a Mid-Tribulation rapture use to justify their position. If we look at our timeline – and again – well look at this in depth after Easter – the trumpet Judgments end at the mid-point of the tribulation – and so when they see at the last trumpet – the trumpet will sound – and with the sound of the trumpet of God... they say that's pointing to the last trumpet of the trumpet judgments at the half-way point. But I believe that logic is flawed. Of course – as we'll see the seal judgments and the trumpet judgments are judgments of God – Jesus is directing these Judgments. It's not just persecution by the anti-christ or human beings.

The third view is what is called the post-tribulation rapture – it says that Christ will come for His own after the tribulation and that they will be raptured and then immediately return to rule and reign with Him for the 1000 year millennium (They'll have to go through the entire tribulation). In essence the rapture and the second coming are the same event according to this idea. There are a host of problems with this view as well – you have the same problems as the mid-tribulation rapture such as ignoring the teaching of imminence, it also ignores a literal view of Scripture and when I say literal I don't just mean concrete word for word reading – I mean a literary sound biblical exegesis of the Bible. It

strongly conflicts with the evidence – which is for a Pre-tribulation rapture.

The Pre-tribulation view of the rapture says that Christ will return – unannounced – like a thief in the night, and remove the church from the earth for the period known as the tribulation period. Then afterwards – the church will return with Christ to rule and reign for 1000 years and then eventually spend eternity with Him in the new Heaven and the new Earth. We’ll talk about the different millennial views after we talk about the Tribulation period but there is strong biblical evidence for God removing the church from the earth prior to the tribulation period. And that’s what I’m going to spend the rest of today on.

As a matter of fact, by senior pastor asked me when we were preaching on this topic back in 2006-2007, “why would God spare the church now when He hasn’t spared believers in the past?” Like for instance the apostles and the martyrs. They weren’t spared.” And that’s true – and here was my response then – 1) those believers fell to the wrath of men and sin and not to the wrath of God. And 2) because there is a specific set of purposes for it – just like there were specific purposes not to spare believers in the past. Actually Scripture tells us that God will spare us from His wrath during this tribulation period.

When God delivers judgment or wrath – He always spares His own. Matthew 24:37 says “**As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.**” When God destroyed the world by flood he had Noah prepare an ark – and the message to the righteous was “*come into*” the ark. Actually – as I was doing my personal Bible study on this back in February, I came upon something that I had never seen any Bible prophecy scholar talk about before – so take this with a grain of salt – but I believe this is very compelling. Jesus said “As it was in the days of Noah – so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.” Well besides the idea of it being a wicked world and judgment coming quickly and unexpectedly – to the disbelief of those who Noah had been

warning” I went back and looked at Gen 7:1-5 and it says **“Then the Lord said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. ² Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, ³ and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. ⁴ For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.” ⁵ And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him.”** And it was verse four that just popped out to me – that gave me that Aha moment. **“For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.”**

God is going to save a remnant from His judgment and He has them go into the Ark seven days before he begins pouring out His judgment. We’ll talk about this in depth after Easter, but how long is the Tribulation period? Seven years right? As it was in the Days of Noah – I believe one of the things Jesus was telling us – because remember Jesus says **“³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left.”** I believe that Jesus is telling us that prior to the seven year tribulation period – He is going to remove the church like he had Noah go into the ark 7 days prior.

And some would say – Rick – that’s a stretch – that’s not the best hermeneutics or best practice for Bible interpretation – but what really

made this click for me was something we just saw in our Chronological life of Jesus study – I really feel like the Holy Spirit illuminated this to me. Jesus used another cryptic saying like this before – referring to His first coming – When Jesus was scolding the Pharisees for not recognizing the signs of His first coming, he also used a cryptic saying or sign similar to this one to show his resurrection – Matthew 16:1-4

“And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. ² He answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ ³ And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. ⁴ An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” So he left them and departed.” What’ the sign of Jonah? Well Jesus would be in the grave for 3 days like Jonah was in the belly of the fish for 3 days. Jesus will remove the church 7 years (just prior to Daniel's 70th week which again we’ll talk about in our lesson on the Tribulation) prior to God's Judgment (the tribulation period) just like Noah went into the ark 7 days prior to the flood.

Jesus also mentioned Lot in the Luke Passage. When God destroyed the cities of the plain including Sodom and Gomorrah, the angels told Lot and his family to “*come out*” of the city. God spared them from His wrath. And then at this time of tribulation – God’s command to us will be “*Come up*”. However as always, only a select group will be rescued from this heinous period in human history.

Okay - well what else points to the church being removed prior to the Tribulation period and not say – at the mid tribulation or at the end of the Tribulation. The first one – and this is huge – is the removal of the Holy Spirit prior to the Tribulation period. 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8a – this is talking about the anti-christ (who we’ll talk about next week – what is keeping the anti-christ from coming into power now? What is preventing

him from being recognized – what will prevent him from being recognized because after next week – if you don't already -you'll be able to recognize the antichrist. It's the Holy Spirit – Paul says **“And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed”**

A mystery in the biblical sense, is a truth that cannot be discerned simply by human investigation, but rather requires special revelation from God. Generally, this word refers to a truth that was unknown to people living in the Old Testament times but was revealed to humankind by God during Jesus' and the apostle's ministries. Let me ask you – is there any human being on earth who could restrain Satan or the antichrist? No – only God can do that – only the Holy Spirit can do that - And where is the Holy Spirit? In believers.

Is God suddenly going to remove the Holy Spirit from believers at the beginning for the Tribulation? No – Jesus said in John 14:16-18 – we just saw this passage on Sunday ¹⁵ **“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”** He will give you another Helper to be with you forever... And I could give you several more verses about the Holy Spirit being in believers, but Let me ask you – does Jesus lie? No. When the Holy Spirit is removed – because He resides within believers – that means current believers will be removed as well. True believers – those who are actually saved. We also talked about an apostacy happening now – right? But there will eventually be a massive apostacy to the point of a one world religion instituted by the false prophet and the anti-christ. What true Christian is going to take part in that? No one – and so the

removal of the holy spirit and the church also best explains this massive apostacy that will take place during the tribulation itself.

Quickly a few more – I know I’ve gone long today – and we’ll circle back to some of this next week and in coming weeks as well – because it all meshes together – but Rev 3:10 – Jesus says **"I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth."**

Notice the definite article (the) before the word hour in this verse. This indicates that a specific and distinctive time period is in view, not just any "hour of trial." This verse reveals that the church saints will be kept from the actual hour of testing, not just the testing itself. The Greek text supports this view. The Greek preposition ek (translated from) carries the idea of separation from something. This means that believers will be kept from the hour of testing in the sense that they will be completely separated from it by being raptured before the period even begins.

What else? Well – No Old Testament passage on the tribulation mentions the church. No New Testament passage on the tribulation mentions the church – when we study that after Easter – I’ll give you some reading home work to review – see if you can find mention of the church anywhere during that.

1 Thess 1:10 says **“¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”** This verse explicitly states that Jesus "delivers us from the wrath to come". The Greek word translated delivers(rah-hoo-ah-my) means "to draw or snatch out to oneself, to rescue, to save, to preserve." That definition is very similar to the definition of harpazo. Also the Greek preposition "ek" (from) is used in this verse just as it is used in Rev 3:10.

I'll give you a chance to ask questions – or maybe you have to go home – digest, watch the lesson again and then come up with your questions – because we've covered a ton of ground today – And I may have to answer your questions next time – but give me your questions if you have any and we'll go from there – and then next time – we'll talk about the anti-christ.