

## The FALSE Pre-Tribulation Rapture Theory

---

This was supposed to be a letter to my sister about the popular “Rapture” of Christians as portrayed with things like the Left Behind series. In this letter, I am a bit “snarky” due to being upset with all the false teachings within Christianity today. I apologize for my attitude. I get frustrated sometimes. Although not a sin, I don’t want to offend anyone purposefully, which is so easy to do these days.

---

*Ezekiel 33:1 NKJV – Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying,*

*Ezekiel 33:2 NKJV – “Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them: 'When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their watchman,*

*Ezekiel 33:3 NKJV – ‘when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people,*

*Ezekiel 33:4 NKJV – ‘then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his own head.*

*Ezekiel 33:5 NKJV – ‘He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But he who takes warning will save his life.*

*Ezekiel 33:6 NKJV – ‘But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.’*

---

Jennifer,

You asked me to tell you about this pre-tribulation rapture thing because so many at your church are beginning to see problems with it in scripture. Okay, so where to begin? There is so much to refute in this theory that I am not sure where to begin. I do expect there to be some unwelcome sarcasm in my argumentation. I can’t help it. I’m only human. “The devil made me do it.” I’m just going to say what comes to mind, and see what happens.

First of all, Jude said that everything that was needed to “earnestly contend for the faith” was already “once and for all” delivered to the saints... that is the Apostles.

**Jude 1:3 NKJV** - Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was **once for all** delivered to the saints.

When you take that with what Paul said in Galatians 1 with following a “different gospel”, you can see that the “gospel” was completed during the time of the Apostles. There was nothing to be added to it.

**Galatians 1:6 NKJV** - I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,

**Galatians 1:7 NKJV** - which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

**Galatians 1:8 NKJV** - But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what **we have preached** to you, let him be accursed.

**Galatians 1:9 NKJV** - As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed (ἀνάθεμα).

There was no other gospel to be preached. Can you see that? Even Jesus upon His death said, “It is finished.” (John 19:30)

The Galatians had already begun to twist the scriptures so soon after Paul had already given them the truth of the “Gospel of the Kingdom”. And it is the ‘Gospel of the Kingdom’, not ‘the Gospel’ as we know it. Ask someone today to tell you what the Gospel is. They’ll say something like, Jesus died on the cross for my sins. And He was raised again, blah, blah, blah... Well, you might say something like that is now included, but when Jesus Himself was here, He preached the “Gospel of the Kingdom” and He hadn’t died, nor was He resurrected yet. So how is that the Gospel? What is the Gospel of the Kingdom? What is the hope of the Christian? It’s resurrection in order to inherit the kingdom. Wait! I digress. The topic, the topic...

So the Galatians had already begun to twist the scriptures so soon after Paul had given them the truth of the “Gospel of the Kingdom”. Paul then had to go back and set them straight. (I did an entire study on the book of Galatians, verse by verse, to explain it; and I have sent it on previous flash drives. So you can refer to that study if you want to know more about my previous statement.)

Anyway, John was making sure of the same thing in 1 John.

1 John 4:1 says,

**1 John 4:1 NKJV** - Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Now the context of this passage is different, but the testing of even the spirits is of the utmost importance, and that makes it very relevant here. Even the spirits may not be of God. Paul meant the same thing in testing, even an angel from heaven, that the angel was preaching only that message that was already passed down by Jesus Himself, which was “once for all delivered to the saints”. Once for all means the Gospel was completed at that time. There is nothing more that need be added to the Gospel. We have been given all we need to find salvation through the scriptures. That means that anything new from the time of the Apostles, is a **false gospel**.

For example, Pentecostals and Charismatics did not come on the scene until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. 1906 to be exact. That means for the first 1900 years of Christianity, their Gospel, speaking in tongues,

the 5-fold ministry, modern day apostles, etc., did not exist. What did Paul say, if any other Gospel is preached to you, let him that preaches it be accursed? Why...Because he that preaches it is preaching a FALSE Gospel.

Now that is not to say that everyone teaching those things are deliberately deceiving others. I don't believe that at all. There will be true Christians in every denomination even though every denomination has many, many wrong doctrines. Even in the Catholic Church. I mean, especially the Catholic Church.

### **Encyclopedia definition of the Pentecostal Movement**

*Pentecostal Movement, Christian revivalist movement that originated in the United States in 1906. Spiritual renewal is sought through baptism by the Holy Spirit, as experienced by the apostles on the first Pentecost.*

*The movement represented a reaction against the rigid theology and formal worship of the traditional churches. Glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, often occurs. Pentecostals believe in the literal word of the Bible and faith healing. They disapprove of alcohol, tobacco, dancing, the theater, and gambling. It is an intensely missionary faith, and in-person recruitment as well as through television has been very rapid since the 1960s. Worldwide membership is more than 20 million, and it is the world's fastest growing sector of Christianity.*

*The Pentecostal movement dates from April 4, 1906, when members of the congregation of the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California, experienced "baptism in the Spirit." Its appeal was to the poor and those alienated by the formalism and modernist theology of established denominations. It combined a highly emotional, informal approach to worship with an ethical emphasis on sobriety and hard work, and it became a way for poor and marginal groups to improve their economic and social status while retaining their religious faith.*

*The movement grew rapidly in the American South and in impoverished urban areas, meanwhile dividing into dozens of small, contentious sects separated by doctrine and by such practices as faith healing. In the 1950s, faith healing, represented most prominently by Oral Roberts, was at its peak among Pentecostals. After the 1960s, prosperity through faith became a dominant theme, taken up by Roberts and other television evangelists. But all the Pentecostal sects—ranging from the largest, the Assemblies of God, to small storefront churches—shared an ecstatic tone that continued to have a powerful appeal in the United States, Latin America, and Africa. The movement in Europe, after rapid growth in the early 20th century, had stabilized by mid-century. A similar movement within the Roman Catholic Church, the charismatic movement, won large numbers of followers beginning in the 1960s.*

*Black and white denominations within the U.S. Pentecostal Church voted in 1994 to create a national multiracial association, ending 88 years of racial segregation.*”—Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2003

The same could be said of Baptists with their ‘once saved, always saved’ doctrine, a completely false doctrine; Catholics and transubstantiation, the trinity doctrine, purgatory, etc. etc. Calvinism and Replacement Theology of other denominations, which didn’t come about until after Martin Luther in the early 1500s. All denominations are completely ‘off their rockers’ with regards to some of their doctrines. In fact, most of their doctrines. They all teach some false gospel. The problem is that even though they may truly be seeking the truth, these misdirected doctrines will make their understanding of the truth much more difficult. And could in fact lead some astray.

So where did this theory of a pre-tribulational rapture come from? Well, John Nelson Darby started this pre-tribulation rapture mess and called it Dispensationalism in 1827. Actually it existed before him, but he made it popular. Just like the theory of evolution, which existed before Darwin, but it is attributed to him because he made it popular. 16-year-old Margret McDonald promoted it with her ‘vision’ in 1830, and C. I. Scofield propagated it throughout the church with his notes pointing to a pre-tribulation rapture in his added footnotes of the King James Bible. But there is not one single Scripture about it in the entire Bible. Even as badly translated as our English Bibles are in many places. You cannot give me a passage that clearly states that the rapture happens **before** the Tribulation, because there isn’t one. It has to be inferred by the twisting of scripture.

And what did Peter say about that?

**2 Peter 3:14 NKJV** - Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

**2 Peter 3:15 NKJV** - and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

**2 Peter 3:16 NKJV** - as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which **untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.**

**2 Peter 3:17 NKJV** - You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;

**2 Peter 3:18 NKJV** - but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

Now, as I am typing this, I seem to want to elaborate on many issues in order to absolutely prove any statement I am making. This is going to be a difficult task as modern day Christianity represents almost nothing of the Christianity of Jesus and the Apostles. I will try to stay on topic.

Now, 1 Thessalonians 4 is **the** key rapture passage. It is the only passage in the Bible that every Christian would agree, that this passage is talking about the rapture. Let’s look at this passage first, since we have already established the old adage, “If it is true, it’s not new. If it is new, it is not true.”

**1 Thessalonians 4:13 NKJV** - But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen **asleep**, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

**1 Thessalonians 4:14 NKJV** - For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who **sleep in Jesus**.

This isn't exactly translated into English correctly. But Paul is saying that he doesn't want them to be ignorant about Christians that have died, or that, 'sleep in Jesus', because, he says, I don't want you to mourn like those who have no hope. Paul is saying that you will see your loved ones again if they are followers in the Christ, Jesus. (See also Galatians 3:26-29) That is why he said, in verse 18:

**1 Thessalonians 4:18 NKJV** - Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Now look at verse 15...

**1 Thessalonians 4:15 NKJV** - For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are **alive and remain** until **the coming of the Lord** will by no means precede those who are **asleep**.

**1 Thessalonians 4:16 NKJV** - 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**.

In verse 16, the clause "the dead in Christ will rise first" equals resurrection. You can see that, right? If you were dead, then you "rise", that is resurrection. Let's continue.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 NKJV - **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.

In verse 17, "caught up" equals "rapture" (αρπαγησομεθα in Greek from G726 ἀρπάζω) & the word "together" tells us that the **rapture** and **resurrection** happen at the same time. They are simultaneous events.

**1 Thessalonians 4:18 NKJV** - Therefore comfort one another with these words.

So the context is that you will see your loved ones again **if** they died in Christ. Where does it say that you are going to escape persecution, or tribulation in these verses? **Nowhere**. Does this passage even mention the Tribulation? Not one thing whatsoever was mentioned about the Tribulation. Verse 18 did not say, 'comfort one another that there is a pre-tribulation rapture.'

Now I want to compare this with Revelation 20:4-6. You will find that the first resurrection happens after the tribulation.

**Revelation 20:4 NKJV** - And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. **Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands.** And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

**Revelation 20:5 NKJV** - But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the **first** resurrection.

**Revelation 20:6 NKJV** - Blessed and holy is he who has part in the **first** resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Verse 4 describes those who went through the Great Tribulation and stood true to God the Father and His Christ. They were beheaded. I think that means dead. They did NOT worship the beast or his image and did NOT take the Mark. Then they came to life and reigned with Christ for 1,000 years.

Verse 5 tells us that this is the first, meaning no others before it, resurrection. And the rest of the dead, that is, the unbelievers, were not raised until the Great White Throne judgement, after the 1,000 years were finished. Here they will give account of their actions, punished accordingly, and then destroyed by being thrown into the “Lake of Fire.”

It is going to be nearly impossible to explain things without stepping off topic and explaining some other things because of the absolutely twisted theology we have today, that has been changing since even before the apostles were gone. I am going to have to explain some of the translation mistakes in our bibles, because there would **seem** to be contradictions with some things I say the way it is translated in our English bibles. Yet, there are no contradictions in passages when you have the correct interpretation. The scriptures **MUST** harmonize or you have a wrong understanding. If you believe modern Christian theology, every single one of the world’s estimated 30,000+ denominations have absolute contradictions with biblical interpretation and their doctrines. And the fact that there are so many denominations, and they all think that they are right and the others are wrong, tells you just how broken Christianity is today. Yet few see that.

The modern “Christian” thinks that as soon as they die they are going to heaven, although the bible never once says that either. They contend that the good guys (believers) go to heaven and the bad guys (unbelievers) go to hell. So, in fact, they didn’t really die. They have just changed form, left their bodies behind and became some kind of spirit being that floats away to their destiny to skip rope in the clouds and eat jelly beans for all eternity. That is the very definition of **reincarnation**. Pick up any dictionary and see for yourself. Then they are going to get some new “glorified” body that must have been hanging in a closet somewhere, to put on, like some new suit. Yet Christians knock Buddhists and Hindus for their belief in reincarnation. It’s almost laughable, if it weren’t so sad.

Well, if that nonsense were true, what is the point of resurrection? You are already at your destination the moment you die... good guys in heaven, bad guys in hell. And what need is the

judgement if you are already in one of these two places? The judgement is supposed to tell you where your eternal destiny will be, but you already know! You're in hell! I'm in hell... right now... at this moment, because of all this crazy thinking. This fantasy does away with two 'ideals', for lack of a better word, that the bible **clearly** states are a fact, even in our English translations... the resurrection, and the judgement. This fantasy is called "immortality of the soul". And it is garbage. I'm trying to be nice here. I don't want to tell you what I really think.

Let me ask this, if Christians are to reign with Christ as kings and priests, which some say they are, and they are in heaven, why does John, under the direction of the Holy Spirit of God, say that the reigning would be done on earth?

**Revelation 5:9 NKJV** - And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

**Revelation 5:10 NKJV** - And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign **on the earth.**"

Compare this with what is said in Revelation 1:1-6.

**Revelation 1:1 NKJV** - The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants; things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,

**Revelation 1:2 NKJV** - who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

**Revelation 1:3 NKJV** - Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

**Revelation 1:4 NKJV** - John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

**Revelation 1:5 NKJV** - and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

**Revelation 1:6 NKJV** - and **has made us kings and priests to His God and Father**, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

This is why Dispensationalists, the pre-tribbers, divide up the bible and say that some passages, like Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 are for the Jews only. Because this states plainly that the Apostles, or Christians, depends on who you ask, will reign as kings and priests **on earth**. So to get around the utter contradiction with their doctrine and scripture, they claim certain passages are for "Jews" and certain passages are for "the church" (Christians).

The problem with that twisting of scripture gets them out of one problem and right back into hot water with what Jesus said in Matthew 28:18-20.

**Matthew 28:18 NKJV** - And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

**Matthew 28:19 NKJV** - “Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

**Matthew 28:20 NKJV** - “**teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

That absolutely includes all the statements Jesus made in Matthew 24. Matthew 24 is the best chapter in the bible to briefly explain endtime eschatology. The point of all this is that Dispensationalism, which 90% of today’s Christians in America believe, is absolute quackery. They have to change directions more often than a professional soccer player does during the world cup. More and more people are learning as the second coming becomes more and more imminent. But it is still a major problem for Christians today.

That is another problem with Dispensationalism. The doctrine of Immanency, Jesus could come at any moment. If that is true, then what Jesus said in Matthew 24 about having to preach to all of the nations and the Abomination of Desolation happening first would be wrong.

**Matthew 24:14 NKJV** - “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

**Matthew 24:15 NKJV** - “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),

Immanency is clearly not possible with what Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 2 about the Apostasy of the church happening first, and the Antichrist being revealed first. If those things have to happen before the second coming, that doctrine of Immanency is again false.

**2 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV** - Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

**2 Thessalonians 2:2 NKJV** - 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.

**2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV** - 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,

**2 Thessalonians 2:4 NKJV** - who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

What about the rebuilding of the Temple that the Antichrist is going to stand in to claim that he is God that John talks about in Revelation 11:1-2? That also has to happen before the second coming. Therefore the doctrine of Immanency cannot be correct, yet again.

**Revelation 11:1 NKJV** - Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there.



**Revelation 11:2 NKJV** - “But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.

The point is that many things have to happen before the second coming. Therefore, Dispensationalism, which is where the pre-tribulation rapture theory comes from, is wrong again. If they are wrong in so many doctrines, what makes the pre-tribulation rapture the one correct thing that they teach? It is possible, I guess, but not probable. They must be discredited because they are making so many who seek the Christ to be completely unprepared for what is soon to come. And without preparation, they won't make it. If they think they won't be here for the Tribulation, then they won't have to worry about the Mark of the Beast. That makes them much more likely of accepting the Mark. And we are told that there is no coming back from that.

**Revelation 14:9 NKJV** - Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand,

**Revelation 14:10 NKJV** - ‘he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

**Revelation 14:11 NKJV** - “And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

So, with all of that said, let's continue with this pre-trib rapture thing because, as you can see, it can become a salvation issue if the Mark is taken.

Another passage that is used to further that agenda of a pre-tribulation rapture is 1 Corinthians 15:50-54. Let's take a look at this one. And you must get rid of your presuppositions when you come to the scriptures. Just because you have been told something your whole life, and a lot of people believe it, does NOT make it true.

Let me give you an example. “To be absent from the body is to be present with the lord.” I have heard that my whole life. It's 2 Corinthians 5:8. Have you ever actually read the verse for yourself, or are you just going with what some preacher somewhere told you it said? Let's take a look at what it actually says, and in context.

**2 Corinthians 5:6 NKJV** - So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.

**2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV** - For we walk by faith, not by sight.

**2 Corinthians 5:8 NKJV** - We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Did you get that? For every person I have ever pointed this out to, it takes a few times reading for it to actually sink in because they come to the verse with their presuppositions in full force. I start in verse 6 to give a little bit of context before getting to verse 8. Read it again.

**2 Corinthians 5:6 NKJV** - So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.

Paul is saying that as long as we are at home, or comfortable, in our bodies, we are of this world, worldly.... therefore, we are absent from the Lord. Because the Lord is not of this world.

**2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV** - For we walk by faith, not by sight.

**2 Corinthians 5:8 NKJV** - We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Verse 8, We are confident, yes, well pleased rather, (do you see that word 'rather?'), rather, to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Paul is saying that he would rather be absent from his body, ie, Dead, and be with the Lord, rather than continue in his present form and be of this world. Paul had a great desire to be with the Lord. But he also knew he had a mission. And the text absolutely does **not** say that Paul would be with the Lord immediately upon death either.

There is actually a clearer understanding if you read the entire context from 2 Corinthians 4:7–5:11 with the true understanding of the “body” as the whole body of Christ. But people seem to have a difficult time with that.

It is not exactly worded the way you usually hear the verse. And if the wording isn't exact, then the meaning is also not exact. This is exactly the same problem with Philippians 1:23. Paul is saying the same thing he said here in 2 Corinthians 5:8. He is struggling between the desire to depart, ie, die, and be with the Christ. Not immediately, but the very next thing Paul would see would be the Resurrection and the Christ, Jesus.

The bible clearly tells us that when we are dead there is nothing. We are just dead. We are not conscious. We know nothing.

These are statements that I must elaborate on before addressing 1 Corinthians 15:50-54 because these statements are very similar to what Jehovah's Witnesses preach about that Christian leaders term “soul sleep”. Jehovah's Witnesses are truly messed up in some of their theology, but that doesn't mean that they have every single issue wrong. I think that probably goes for all denominations. They are mostly wrong, but they get some things right. But if you say something that the Jehovah's Witnesses say or that sounds like what they say, you will be lumped in as a cultist or said not to be a true Christian. The Jehovah's Witnesses version of “soul sleep” isn't what I am talking about. So to avoid that stigma, I must elaborate.

Job had the distinction of being the most righteous man on earth (Job 1:8). He was “blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil” (Job 1:1). God Himself praised Job's

righteousness, (Job 1:8) and communicated with him in an audible voice (Job 38:1). Job lived before Moses, at about the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Thus, Job's views on death and immortality are the oldest direct evidence from the Bible. His views were not tainted with paganism, but reflected hope based on direct knowledge from God.

When at his lowest, under the affliction from Satan, which God had permitted, Job lamented his own birth, and longed for death as relief.

**Job 3:11 NKJV** - "Why did I not die at birth? Why did I not perish when I came from the womb?"

**Job 3:12 NKJV** - Why did the knees receive me? Or why the breasts, that I should nurse?

**Job 3:13 NKJV** - For now I would have lain still and been quiet, I would have been asleep; Then I would have been at rest

Had Job died as an infant, he would have been "asleep." Here we have the first time in Scripture that death is referred to as "sleep," (so this will give us the definition of 'sleep' that we need to carry into all NT teachings on the subject) and it is associated with stillness, quietness, and rest. Yet, this ought not to be mistaken for a state of bliss, as Job went on to explain.

**Job 10:18 NKJV** - 'Why then have You brought me out of the womb? Oh, that I had perished and no eye had seen me!

**Job 10:19 NKJV** - I would have been as though I had not been. I would have been carried from the womb to the grave.

**Job 10:20 NKJV** - Are not my days few? Cease! Leave me alone, that I may take a little comfort,

**Job 10:21 NKJV** - Before I go to the place from which I shall not return, To the land of darkness and the shadow of death,

**Job 10:22 NKJV** - A land as dark as darkness itself, As the shadow of death, without any order, Where even the light is like darkness.'"

Death is "the land of darkness" and "without any order," where "even the light is like darkness." This is not a description of a blissful conscious existence, but rather nothingness, as is indicated in the statement: "I would have been as though I had not been." Obviously, Job did not believe in the "immortality of the soul," nor did he believe in an intermediate state of any kind other than returning to dust. Death was equivalent to never having existed. In chapter 14, he again spoke of death as falling asleep, but this time with the hope of awakening in **the resurrection**.

**Job 14:10 NKJV** - But man dies and is laid away; Indeed he breathes his last And where is he?

**Job 14:11 NKJV** - As water disappears from the sea, And a river becomes parched and dries up,

**Job 14:12 NKJV** - So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, They will not awake Nor be roused from their sleep.

**Job 14:13 NKJV** - Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, That You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, That You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!

**Job 14:14 NKJV** - If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, Till my **change** comes.

**Job 14:15 NKJV** - You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands.

The sleep of death will not be disturbed until the appointed time, the renovation of the heavens and earth. ((This expression refers to the passing away of the present order, (not the physical creation itself), when the creation will be made new again, as in the Garden of Eden. See Isaiah 65:17-25.)) Job looked to the resurrection when God would “remember” him. God is not involved with the dead at all. Job believed that when awakened from the sleep of death, he will be “changed.” Paul used this term in the same way when speaking of the resurrection of the righteous in 1 Corinthians 15:51. God will “call” Job forth, and Job will “answer,” because God desires “the work of [His] hands.” Job was created in the image of God who desires to preserve his creature in the end. Thus in Job’s view, there is no intermediate state of conscious existence. The only hope for a man facing death is resurrection, because of God’s grace and His desire to give man a future beyond death. We see this confidence in the resurrection as man’s only hope again in the following passage.

**Job 19:25 NKJV** - For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth;

**Job 19:26 NKJV** - And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in **my flesh** I shall see God,

**Job 19:27 NKJV** - Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

The hope of the resurrection of the righteous was the resurrection to immortality according to Job. Yet, the wicked will also be raised to stand before the judgment.

**Job 21:30 NKJV** - For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom; They shall be brought out on the day of wrath.

The earliest testimony in Scripture concerning the state of the dead is unmistakably “conditional immortality,” that the resurrection is the only means for reward or punishment. The dead are not conscious. Man is not inherently immortal.

Let me ask you this. If we die and just go straight to heaven or hell without the resurrection of our own bodies, how will we be rewarded or punished? If you are a spirit or a ghost, how do you get a spanking? You can’t spank Casper, the friendly ghost, the belt will go right through him.

David was a prophet of God, (Acts 2:30) and “a man after God’s own heart.” (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22) Wait, let me cut and paste something here. That way I don’t have to write it again. It comes from my emails with 4 different pastors on what I call the “Concept of Heaven”. I sent this

to you on a flash drive some time ago as well. It is still relevant now. I'm going to later throw in some things from my old pastor as well. I hope this doesn't get too long.

So, using simple logic, if David is a man after God's own heart, shouldn't he go to Heaven when he dies? I mean, if any man were going, it would be David over you or me. I think that is a safe bet. However, Peter, said that David was rotting in his grave, so to speak.

**Acts 2:29 NKJV** - "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

In Acts 2:34 Peter actually said that David did not ascend into the heavens.

**Acts 2:34 NKJV** - "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand,

Paul said the same thing.

**Acts 13:36 NKJV** - "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption;

Peter and Paul are writing a thousand years after David. A thousand years after he is dead and David is still not in heaven, but modern Christians think they are going to heaven as soon as they die? "Hello, Reality knocking."

David was a prophet of God. He was given the throne of God's people in Israel by God. And yet, David didn't go to Heaven, but stayed dead and buried in his grave. So am I to understand that today's Christians are better than David, from which Jesus Christ Himself was a descendant? (see Matthew 1:1) That one gives me pause.

David agreed with Job in **every** detail. The dead are asleep and have no conscious existence at all. In fact, the righteous dead do not even remember God, nor can they praise Him. Death is a state of non-existence according to the Psalms.

**Psalms 6:5 NKJV** - For in death there is no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks?

**Psalms 13:3 NKJV** - Consider and hear me, O LORD my God; Enlighten my eyes, Lest I sleep the sleep of death;

**Psalms 30:9 NKJV** - "What profit is there in my blood, When I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it declare Your truth?"

**Psalms 88:9 NKJV** - My eye wastes away because of affliction. LORD, I have called daily upon You; I have stretched out my hands to You.

**Psalms 88:10 NKJV** - Will You work wonders for the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise You? Selah

**Psalms 88:11 NKJV** - Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or Your faithfulness in the place of destruction?

**Psalms 88:12 NKJV** - Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

Notice the similarities between David and Job. Both viewed death as sleep. Both viewed the grave as a place of total darkness. Yet, David adds terms like “the place of destruction” and “the land of forgetfulness.” Such terminology is fitting only for death being viewed **as the enemy** of the righteous. This is why, when describing the resurrection of Christians, Paul burst forth with joyful anticipation: “So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ (Isaiah 25:8) ‘O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’ (Hosea 13:14; 1 Corinthians 15:54-55) For the righteous, “victory” over death and Hades, which is the grave, is realized when the Last Trumpet sounds, and Jesus Himself calls forth the dead out of their graves, just as He did with Lazarus!

It is significant that Paul based his point that the enemy of the righteous, death and Hades, is defeated when the resurrection occurs, is based squarely on two Old Testament passages of Scripture. This is proof that the Old Testament view of death and resurrection is consistent with Paul’s teaching. Paul did **not** introduce a different view, or he would not be able to cite such OT passages as proof.

Neither Job nor David viewed death for the righteous as a happy existence in a state of awareness. The Psalms reflect a kind of non-existence, where nothing is remembered, and reasoning ceases.

**Psalms 115:17 NKJV** - The dead do not praise the LORD, Nor any who go down into silence.

**Psalms 115:18 NKJV** - But we will bless the LORD From this time forth and forevermore. Praise the LORD!

**Psalms 146:3 NKJV** - Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.

**Psalms 146:4 NKJV** - His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; In that very day his plans perish.

The word translated “plans” in the NKJV/NIV is rendered “thoughts” in the KJV/NASB. The Hebrew word is “esh-tonah” (#6250), which according to Strong’s & BDB Hebrew Lexicon means: “thinking, thoughts, contemplation.” The LXX translates it as “διαλογισμός” (literally through-logic G1261), also meaning “contemplation, reasoning.” It is used several times in Scripture, always in reference to reasoning of the human mind. (See also Daniel 2:30; 4:19; 5:6; 7:28; Luke 2:35; 5:22; 6:7-8; Romans 1:21, and James 2:4) The meaning of this Psalm is that a man’s cognition ceases on the day of his death. By translating it as “plans” the translators give the **false**

impression that the implementation of the dead man's thinking comes to nothing, thereby giving cover to the **false** view that man continues to contemplate and be aware after death. But this translation is incorrect.

Solomon, David's son, God's chosen king, the wisest man prior to Jesus, (Matthew 12:42) held the same views on death as his father David and Job. The book of Ecclesiastes, through which Solomon left his wisdom for the nation of Israel, contemplates mankind and his enemy, death. It answers the most important questions plaguing man: What is the point of life? And, is there really justice (reward or punishment) in the end? Having the right answer to these questions provides the motivation to live righteously, to enjoy life's simple pleasures, and to refrain from the pursuit of things that have **no** eternal value, like a big house, or new cars.

That the dead are not conscious is stated plainly by Solomon.

**Ecclesiastes 9:3 NKJV** - This is an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing happens to all. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

**Ecclesiastes 9:4 NKJV** - But for him who is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

**Ecclesiastes 9:5 NKJV** - For the living know that they will die; But **the dead know nothing**, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten.

**Ecclesiastes 9:6 NKJV** - Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; Nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun.

"Nevermore" in verse 6 is a bad translation. This English term means to infinity. But the Hebrew and Greek say "until the age," a phrase that refers to the time when the creation is renewed.

Solomon contrasted the knowledge of the living with the knowledge of the dead. The living are aware that they will die, because they can reason. But the dead know nothing at all. Thus, they are not aware of anything, and do not hope in the resurrection. Even their emotions die with them, including love, hate, and envy. The saying, "A living dog is better than a dead lion," expresses the idea that the dead are not in a glorious or pleasant state of being dancing in the clouds, since nothing of their conscious existence remains. That "they have no more reward" proves beyond doubt that the dead are not in a happy "Paradise," as those who teach "immortality of the soul" claim. Leave no doubt that the dead are unconscious, Solomon adds in verse 10, "*Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; **for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.***" The meaning of "knowledge" is obvious. But the word translated "device" is the same word used in Psalm 146:4 (with the preposition 'through' as a prefix). Again, this is a term that means reasoning, contemplation, or cognition. Solomon denounced all forms of mental faculty (reasoning, knowledge, and wisdom) for the dead. "Knowledge" is information stored in the brain as memory. "Wisdom" is the understanding of knowledge. And "reasoning" is the devising activity of the brain in using knowledge and wisdom. None of these things exist for the dead according to Solomon. All cognitive activity ceases when a person dies.

The wisest man on earth, although he ended on a bad note, stated that death for man is the same as for animals. No one would suppose that animals remain conscious after death, or have immortal ghosts.

**Ecclesiastes 3:17 NKJV** - I said in my heart, "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, For there is a time there for every purpose and for every work."

**Ecclesiastes 3:18 NKJV** - I said in my heart, "Concerning the condition of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are like animals."

**Ecclesiastes 3:19 NKJV** - For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity.

**Ecclesiastes 3:20 NKJV** - All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust.

**Ecclesiastes 3:21 NKJV** - Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth?

The word "spirit" in verse 21 is the same word as "breath" in verse 19 (in both the Hebrew and the Greek), and ought to be translated "breath" in both verses. There can be no doubt that Solomon was referencing the creation of man in Genesis 2:7, where God breathed into man the "breath of life" and he became a "living soul." The reason Solomon said that at death the "breath" of man goes upward and the "breath" of animals goes down to the earth is obvious from verse 17: "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked." The animals will not be resurrected for judgment, punishment, or reward. But man will be resurrected to stand before the judgment. Thus, God retrieves the "breath of life" which he gave to each man so that He can raise each one from the dead at the appointed time. (When a man dies, the breath of life returns to God, and the body returns to dust. This is exactly the reverse of the creation of man. Cf. Genesis 2:7.) "All are from the dust, and all return to dust." Solomon confirms this again just a few chapters later: "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the breath will return to God who gave it." (Ecclesiastes 12:7) There is no room for a ghost or "immortal soul" in the Scriptures.

Isaiah was a prophet of God. He referred to the tombs of the great kings using the language of "sleep" for death. "All the kings of the nations, All of them, sleep in glory, Everyone in his own house." (Isaiah 14:18) In contrast, the "King of Babylon" will be "cast out of your grave like an abominable branch, Like the garment of those who are slain, Thrust through with a sword, Who go down to the stones of the pit, Like a corpse trodden underfoot. You will not be joined with them in burial, Because you have destroyed your land and slain your people. The brood of evildoers shall never be named." (Isaiah 14:19-20)

Isaiah was sent to king Hezekiah to deliver a rather depressing message: Get your house in order, because you are going to die. Isaiah then recorded Hezekiah's prayer, pleading with God not to take his life. Hezekiah's appeal was based on the fact that the dead cannot praise God (in agreement with David), and the dead cannot "hope for Your truth." Hezekiah appealed to God to extend his life so that he could continue to praise him, to hope in God's truth, and to declare his works.



**Isaiah 38:12 NKJV** - My life span is gone, Taken from me like a shepherd's tent; I have cut off my life like a weaver. He cuts me off from the loom; From day until night You make an end of me.

**Isaiah 38:13 NKJV** - I have considered until morning; Like a lion, So He breaks all my bones; From day until night You make an end of me.

**Isaiah 38:14 NKJV** - Like a crane or a swallow, so I chattered; I mourned like a dove; My eyes fail from looking upward. O LORD, I am oppressed; Undertake for me!

**Isaiah 38:15 NKJV** - What shall I say? He has both spoken to me, And He Himself has done it. I shall walk carefully all my years In the bitterness of my soul.

**Isaiah 38:16 NKJV** - O LORD, by these things men live; And in all these things is the life of my spirit; So You will restore me and make me live.

**Isaiah 38:17 NKJV** - Indeed it was for my own peace That I had great bitterness; But You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.

**Isaiah 38:18 NKJV** - For Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You; Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth.

**Isaiah 38:19 NKJV** - The living, the living man, he shall praise You, As I do this day; The father shall make known Your truth to the children.

God did not challenge Hezekiah's claim that only the living could praise Him or hope in God. Instead, God honored his request and extended his life for fifteen more years so that he could continue to praise God for His works, hope in Him, and instruct his children in the ways of God.

Daniel the prophet received many visions and dreams from God, and was repeatedly visited by angels. Daniel's prophecies are consistent with all that we have seen. The only hope for the dead is resurrection to immortality. The dead are not conscious, but asleep, just as Job, David, and Isaiah indicated.

**Daniel 12:2 NKJV** - And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Not only did Daniel refer to death as sleep, but also to resurrection as awakening, as did Job. (Job 14:12) It is **indisputable** that the "sleep" of death in these Old Testament passages means that all life and cognitive function ceases entirely. Therefore, when the New Testament writers used precisely the same "sleep" and "awaken" terms to describe death and resurrection, they simply could not have had a completely different concept from what was revealed through Job, David, Solomon, Isaiah, and Daniel.

Jesus also spoke of death as "sleep." Jesus said, "The child is not dead, but sleeping." (Mark 5:39) This statement was meant to reference the Old Testament teaching regarding death as sleep, because sleep implies eventual awakening – resurrection. When Lazarus died, Jesus made one of the clearest statements to His disciples concerning the state of the dead. "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up." (John 11:11) We are then told, "However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep." (John 11:13) How

would the disciples understand such use of terminology unless it was based on the Old Testament precedent? And **this precedent unquestionably portrays the sleep of the dead as being completely unconscious.** One of Jesus' disciples, Matthew, also portrayed death as "sleep": "And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised." (Matthew 27:52) Should we suppose that Matthew had a completely different understanding of death as "sleep" than the very Old Testament saints whom we have surveyed, and whom Matthew said arose from "sleep?" Luke referred to death as "sleep" also, recording Stephen's death as: "And when he had said this, he fell asleep." (Acts 7:60)

Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, spoke of death as sleep and resurrection as awakening more than any other writer. Luke recorded that in his speech in the synagogue of Antioch, Paul said: "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption." (Acts 13:36) It is absurd to suppose that Paul would ascribe a kind of conscious "sleep" to David when in fact David himself indicated that the dead are not conscious!

In writing to the Corinthians, Paul wrote: "For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep." (1 Corinthians 11:30) When discussing the witnesses of Jesus' resurrection who had already died, he wrote: "the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep." (1 Corinthians 15:6) He referred to the same group again, saying that if there is no resurrection, "then those who have fallen asleep have perished." How could Paul say the departed saints have already "perished" if he thought they were ghosts living in heaven or some paradise? Unless there is a resurrection, then the sleeping saints no longer exist according to Paul. In the same chapter, he wrote: "Christ has risen, and become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep," (1 Corinthians 15:20) and, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:51)

In his epistles to the Thessalonians, Paul again referred to death as sleep: "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope." (1 Thessalonians 4:13) In the next verse he wrote: "For if we believe that Jesus died and arose, in this way God, through Jesus, will lead forth together with Him those who fell asleep." (1 Thessalonians 4:14 Some versions have "sleep in Jesus," which is incorrect. It should read, "sleep through Jesus". The preposition is "δια" not "εν.") Immediately following this, he wrote: "... we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep." (1 Thessalonians 4:15) Paul also repeatedly used the term "awaken or risen" (G1453 or G58 – εγρηγερται or ἐγείρω) in reference to the resurrection, including Jesus' own resurrection. (Romans 4:24-25; 6:4, 9; 8:11, 34; 10:9; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:4, 12-17, 20, 29, 32, 35, 42-44, 52; 2 Corinthians 1:9; 4:14; 5:15; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2 Timothy 2:8.)

Peter also spoke of Jesus as having been "awakened" or "risen" in 1 Peter 1:21 in resurrection. Like Paul, he referred to the saints of the Old Testament as being "asleep." "Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.'" (2 Peter 3:3-4) Granted, Peter was recording what future scoffers

would say. Yet, the problem with the scoffers' remarks was not that the fathers were "asleep," but rather the denial of coming judgment. Again, the "fathers" who "fell asleep" were the very men quoted previously who stated in no uncertain terms that in the sleep of death there is no remembrance of God, no reasoning, no knowledge, no wisdom, or even emotions. The dead are in a state of nothingness, having returned to the dust, the "breath of life" having returned to God, and kept by Him for resurrection. See Ezekiel 37:9-13 in the "Valley of dry bones" prophesy. This is what resurrection is... what Christians believe today is actually reincarnation.

The concept of death as sleep, and resurrection as being awakened, so plainly stated by Job, David, Solomon, Isaiah, and Daniel, is the **basis for all of the New Testament similar references** by Jesus and His Apostles. The Bible does not contradict itself. Harmony is essential between the prophets and the Apostles if both reported revelation from the same God.

Now for 1 Corinthians 15:50-54.

**1 Corinthians 15:50 NKJV** - Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

**1 Corinthians 15:51 NKJV** - Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed;

**1 Corinthians 15:52 NKJV** - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

**1 Corinthians 15:53 NKJV** - For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

**1 Corinthians 15:54 NKJV** - So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

Most pre-tribulationists believe the pre-tribulation rapture was not taught by Jesus, but was given to Paul as a special revelation. Therefore, it is important for us to see if what Paul taught about the rapture is different from Jesus' teaching. If there are **mutually exclusive** differences between what Jesus taught about His second coming and what Paul taught about the rapture, we might conclude they were speaking about different events. However, if Paul's teaching about the rapture is compatible with Jesus' teaching about the second coming, there is no reason to suppose that Paul taught a distinct coming of Christ apart from the coming Jesus mentioned.

Post-tribulationists believe Paul's teaching concerning the rapture is completely compatible with, and built upon, the teaching of Jesus in the Olivet Discourse. There were certainly some new details added by Paul. But the general sequence of events is identical.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul wrote primarily of the resurrection of believers, and the fact that we will be raised "incorruptible." I would like to point out **three things** that I believe connect this event to Jesus' post-tribulation coming described in Matthew 24.

1. Paul said the reason our bodies will be changed is because; **“flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 15:50)**. The future “Kingdom of God” to which he referred was Christ’s earthly reign, the Kingdom prophesied throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. Since the purpose for putting on “incorruption” is because our old bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom to reign with Christ, this implies that the change would occur at the commencement of that Kingdom. There is nothing here about going to heaven. Heaven is never “the Kingdom of God” anywhere in Scripture. The context also clearly indicates **Paul was referring to the Millennium**, (see verses 22-28).

**1 Corinthians 15:22 NKJV** - For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

**1 Corinthians 15:23 NKJV** - But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.

**1 Corinthians 15:24 NKJV** - Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

**1 Corinthians 15:25 NKJV** - For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.

**1 Corinthians 15:26 NKJV** - The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

**1 Corinthians 15:27 NKJV** - For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted.

**1 Corinthians 15:28 NKJV** - Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

2. Paul said this transformation of the living and resurrection of the dead will occur “at the last trumpet” (1 Corinthians 15:52). If we try to impose a pre-tribulation scenario on this passage, the “last trumpet” could not really be last. Jesus said He will sound the **trumpet** to gather His elect “immediately after the tribulation” (Matthew 24:29-31). In order for this trumpet to be “the last trumpet,” it cannot sound before the end of the tribulation described in the Olivet Discourse signalled by the trumpet blast at His coming.

**Matthew 24:29 NKJV** - “Immediately **after the tribulation** of those days the **sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven**, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

**Matthew 24:30 NKJV** - “**Then** the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, 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.

**Matthew 24:31 NKJV** - “And He will send His angels with a **great sound of a trumpet**, and they will **gather together His elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Notice also the order of events:

**Tribulation >>**

**Sun & moon darkened, stars fall >>**

**Son of Man (Jesus) coming in the clouds** (And that phrase ‘Son of Man’ should always make you think of Daniel 7:13-14) >>

**Trumpet >>**

**Gathering of the elect (believers) >>**

**God’s wrath** (Day of the Lord)

The same order of events are in: Mark 13:24-27; Acts 2:19-20; Joel 2:10-11 & 2:30-31; Isaiah 13:9-13. So then how are the elect (believers, Christians) taken before the Tribulation?

3. When this transformation occurs, Paul said an Old Testament prophecy will be fulfilled at that time.

**1 Corinthians 15:54 NKJV** - So **when** this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, **then** shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: **“Death is swallowed up in victory.”**

This is a direct quote of Isaiah 25:8. And, Isaiah’s prophecy clearly refers to the coming of Christ’s Kingdom to earth. **Paul said that this particular Kingdom prophecy will be fulfilled at the resurrection of the Church.** Therefore, the rapture must occur at the beginning of the Kingdom, which is post-tribulational, “after the tribulation of those days...”

These three things connect this passage with the post-tribulational coming of Christ. What can pre-tribulationists point to in this passage that would exclude this connection, or demonstrate the uniqueness of the Pauline “rapture” that they allege? **Nothing!** So far Paul’s writings fit perfectly into Jesus’ teaching in the Olivet Discourse. And these three points eliminate the possibility that the events described by Paul could be separated from the post-tribulational coming of Jesus, the Christ.

So again, the very passages used by pre-tribbers to justify their doctrine, with careful reading without bias or presuppositions, completely discredit their own claims. And their claims would not harmonize Scripture in all of the previously mentioned books, but in fact, create conflicts in scripture. And we know that God is not the author of confusion, 1 Corinthians 14:33. And so far we have only covered two of the passages that are generally used by pre-tribbers to justify their point of view.

Let’s go ahead and check out another passage they like to use, 1 Thessalonians 5:9. I have already mentioned this in a document of the same name on a flash drive I’ve sent you and/or mom in the past. So if you’ve not heard it before it will be good for you to learn. If you have read it, it is still good to review.

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

Many pre-tribulationists make every attempt to paint a picture of the tribulation as so horrible, no Christian could possibly survive it. The entire period is labelled, “the time of wrath.” Then, they introduce 1 Thessalonians 5:9, “For God did not appoint us to wrath...” Therefore, a pre-tribulation rapture **must be implied**. After all, “Jesus would never allow His bride to be dragged through the mud before the wedding!” So the reasoning goes. I have heard that response so many times that it makes me want to vomit.

This sounds good to modern Christians who have never missed a meal, or slept on the ground. It seems only reasonable, for believers who have service agreements on all their appliances, to be raptured before that awful time of tribulation... just ask Corrie Ten Boon through her writings. But for the Thessalonian Christians who received this letter, life was not so easy. They were already being persecuted severely for their faith; many had been killed, (1 Thessalonians 2:14, 2 Thessalonians 1:4-6). Paul was not telling them they would not have to suffer. They were already suffering.

### **The Context of 1 Thessalonians 5**

1 Thessalonians 5:9 must be interpreted within its context. Paul wrote in verse 2, the “Day of the Lord” is coming as a “thief in the night.” Since the sun and moon will be darkened, “after the tribulation” (Matthew 24:29) but before the “Day of the Lord” (Acts 2:20), it is clear that the “Day of the Lord” is **not** the tribulation, as pre-tribulationists claim, but follows it. It is the day of Christ’s coming to judge, after the tribulation. So the context in which Paul makes this statement is the judgment that will overtake the wicked at Christ’s return to earth. Paul wrote that “sudden destruction” (1 Thessalonians 5:3) will overtake the ungodly at that time. The “seven year” tribulation cannot be characterized as “sudden destruction,” Can you be ‘suddenly destroyed’ for seven years? Nor can it rightfully be labelled the “Day of the Lord.” During the tribulation the tension builds to the climax when Jesus is revealed from heaven, to destroy the ungodly. This is further developed in 2 Thessalonians 1.

- 2 Thessalonians 1:4 NKJV** - so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,
- 2 Thessalonians 1:5 NKJV** - which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;
- 2 Thessalonians 1:6 NKJV** - since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,
- 2 Thessalonians 1:7 NKJV** - and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
- 2 Thessalonians 1:8 NKJV** - in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Thessalonians 1:9 NKJV** - These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,
- 2 Thessalonians 1:10 NKJV** - when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

The wicked will be destroyed on the day Jesus is revealed from heaven. And this is when believers will receive “rest” from persecution and trouble. It is within the context of the “Day of the Lord” that Paul wrote, “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We are not promised exemption from persecution, or even martyrdom. In fact we are promised persecution, (Luke 21:12-19, John 16:1-4, 33, 2 Timothy 3:12). But we can be certain, as Paul reassured the Thessalonians, that God will destroy those who persecute us, and deliver His people from persecution. Read Psalm 37. When He comes in judgment, we will be spared, because, “God has not appointed us to wrath...”

## **The Wrath of the Tribulation**

The Tribulation is not exclusively God’s wrath. Some of the events are clearly the result of man’s own behaviour. Wars, for example, are instigated by men. Much of the horrors of the tribulation is the wrath of Satan (Revelation 12:9-12). Christians have no promise of exemption from the wrath of Satan or fallen man. No doubt, the great tribulation will be dreadful. Jesus said in Matthew 24:21 and Mark 13:19 that there has never been anything like it before, nor will there be anything like it again, as did Daniel in Daniel 12:1. But Revelation paints a picture of a large group of overcomers emerging from the hour of trial, (Revelation 7:14, 12:11, 20:4). Certainly, God’s wrath will be unleashed during the tribulation on the followers of Antichrist. But this wrath is specifically said to be selective, not universal. (See Revelation 9:4, 16:2, 16:10). The judgments sent down by God are to get those who are on the fence to make a choice.

## **God’s Wrath in the “Church Age”**

In Daniel 9:26, Matthew 24:2, Mark 13:2, Luke 19:41-44, and Luke 21:20-24, the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 was foretold. According to two of the above passages, Luke 19:41-44 and Luke 21:20-24, this was God’s wrath on Israel. If it is true that 1 Thessalonians 5:9 teaches Christians cannot be on earth when God’s wrath is unleashed, why didn’t the rapture come before A.D. 70? Forty years into the so-called “Church age” we find God’s wrath unleashed without a rapture to heaven of believers! Since God’s wrath can be found prior to the tribulation within the alleged “Church age,” (I say alleged because that is another false teaching,) and Christians were not raptured, there is no logical grounds for demanding a pre-tribulation rapture in order to keep Christians separate from “wrath” in the Tribulation.

In Luke 21, Jesus prophesied about the events of 70 AD as well as the end of the age. And He concluded His discourse with the following command to His followers:

**Luke 21:36 NKJV** - “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

The clause, “all these things” in the context refers to both the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD and the events preceding the second coming of Christ. The question is, what is meant by the word

“escape?” This is a critical question, because whatever it means relates to Christians and the tribulation. The meaning of “escape” is clear from both the grammar and historical precedent.

The Greek word translated “escape” is in the active voice. It literally means “to flee.” The active voice indicates that the **subjects** are doing the action of the verb. That is, they are fleeing to safety by **their own action**. If this referred to a rapture, it would have to be in the passive voice, (As it is in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 with the phrase “caught up”, that which we like to refer to as “rapture”) with an outside force acting upon the subject(s), performing the action of the verb.

Historical precedent also defines the word. Since it refers to both the events of 70 AD and the events of the tribulation described in this chapter, simply observing what “escape” meant to Jesus’ followers in AD 70 defines what it must also mean for us regarding the tribulation events. Eusebius records that Jesus’ followers living in Jerusalem fled to the mountains when they saw the Roman armies coming to surround Jerusalem. Christians were spared. The Jews who did not believe Jesus were not spared because they didn’t “flee to the mountains”. Therefore, the “escape” promised in this passage to Jesus’ followers is not a pre-tribulation rapture, but relocation on earth in order to survive. Also notice that the “escape” is conditional. We are commanded to watch and pray always, so that we may be found worthy to escape these events. If this referred to a pre-tribulation rapture, it would not be conditional upon our own actions of watching and praying. The fact is, some Christians are going to fare better than others in the Tribulation depending on their attention to this command... to **watch** and pray.

### **God’s People in the Tribulation**

The book of Revelation refers to the followers of Jesus Christ in the Tribulation several times. **All rapture views place saints of God on earth during God’s wrath.** Whether we call them Israel, the Church, or “tribulation saints,” is irrelevant.

**Revelation 12:10 NKJV** - Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

**Revelation 12:11 NKJV** - And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

**Revelation 12:12 NKJV** - Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

Who are these who overcome Satan “by the blood of the Lamb” if not Christians? If a single child of God is on earth at that time, all of the pre-tribulationists’ logic, about 1 Thessalonians 5:9 demanding a pre-tribulation rapture to spare believers from “wrath,” is nullified. The only way to maintain this distinction is with an artificial (unbiblical) distinction between us and them, and a haughty elitist attitude that we are somehow superior to other saints of God, who are chopped liver and are “appointed unto wrath.”



## Old Testament Precedent

God has routinely judged the wicked while supernaturally protecting His children at the same time. The precedent set with the plagues of Egypt is important because it establishes God's normal method of judging the wicked. God protected His own people while pulverizing the Egyptians with a series of plagues identical to many of the plagues in Revelation. Other examples could be cited, such as Noah and the flood, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Ezekiel 9 describes God's preservation of the righteous during Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem. God never raptured His people before to avoid His wrath, He has always supernaturally preserved them through it, or given them the means to protect themselves, such as Noah's ark, the early warning given to Lot, or the Passover. He has even on occasion supernaturally preserved them from the wrath of the enemy. A case in point is the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace in Daniel 3.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 means exactly what it says. And God's past precedent proves it to be true, all without any rapture to heaven. The pre-tribulation argument from this passage is a circular argument, and therefore **illogical**.

## The Blessed Hope of Titus 2:13

**Titus 2:13 NKJV** looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

This verse is so simple, yet so profound. It has strong implications regarding the timing of the rapture. In the NKJV, it seems to imply that the "blessed hope" and the "glorious appearing" might be separate events. But, in the Greek text, it is quite clear that this is not the case. The "glorious appearing" is what we as Christians are awaiting. It is a part of our "hope." The NKJV is technically correct here, by translating the word "and." But, it does not account for the "Granville Sharp Rule," which applies to this verse.

The Greek word **καί** or **καὶ** is equivalent to our English word "and" or "also." It is often used to connect two nouns in some way. It sometimes means the second noun is in addition to the first noun, distinguishing the two nouns. That is, two unrelated things are mentioned together. Example, "heaven **and** earth." But, under certain circumstances, "**καί**" is used to connect two nouns together. With personal singular nouns it can refer to the same person. With impersonal or plural nouns the two are being joined together as a unit. Example with singular personal nouns: "the God **and** Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The second noun is a further description of the first noun, referring to the same person, yet different roles. In the case of impersonal and/or plural nouns, this structure indicates that both nouns are a single unit, or one noun is a subset of the other. The basic Granville-Sharp rule is as follows;

"If two nouns of the same case are connected by a "**καί**" [and] and the article is used with both nouns, they refer to different persons or things. [Sharp's rule VI] If only the first noun has the article, the second noun refers to the same person or thing referred to in the first."

(Vaughn and Gideon, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979), p. 83.)

The key to understanding this rule is the use of the definite article (the). When we have two nouns connected by “και” (and), we must look to see if the definite article (the) is used before BOTH nouns, or just the first noun. If it is used before BOTH nouns, Sharp's rule VI applies and the two nouns are referring to separate things or persons being distinguished or contrasted. But, if only the first noun has the definite article, Sharp's rule I applies. Both nouns refer to the same person (in the case of personal nouns) or two things are joined in some kind of unit (with impersonal and plural nouns). Now, let's apply this rule to Titus 2:13. Here is the Greek text followed by a word for word translation.

προσδεχόμενοι τὴν μακαρίαν ἐλπίδα καὶ ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης  
anticipating **the** blessed hope **and** appearing [of] the glory

### Reference:

Wallace, Greek Grammar, Beyond the Basics, pp. 286-288, has the following explanation of Sharp's Rule. “The Granville Sharp rule indicates that the two nouns are referring to the same person when personal singular nouns are found in the TSKS (Sharp) construction. When impersonal nouns are used, it implies one of the following:

- a) the two nouns are being viewed together as a unit.
- b) the two nouns are overlapping entities
- c) the first noun is a subset of the second
- d) the second noun is a subset of the first
- e) the nouns are identical (synonymous)”

In this case the nouns are impersonal things. Both “blessed hope” and “appearing” are nouns of the same case. And, the first noun (blessed hope) has the definite article, while the second noun (appearing) does not. This indicates the “appearing” and “blessed hope” are being referred to **as a unit**. In an impersonal Sharp rule I construction, the relationship between the two nouns is either, **a.** distinct things being joined together as a unit, **b.** the first noun is a subset of the second, **c.** the second noun is a subset of the first, or **d.** the two nouns are identical. In any case, with this construction, some kind of unity is being stressed between the two nouns. The NIV, although I cannot recommend it due to its evil owners, captures the meaning best in this verse: “*while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.*” So, in essence, this verse says that the “blessed hope” for which we are looking is (or at least included within) the “glorious appearing” of Christ. This begs the question, what is the “glorious appearing?”

**Matthew 16:27 NKJV** "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

**Matthew 24:29 NKJV** "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

**Matthew 24:30 NKJV** "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, 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.

**Matthew 24:31 NKJV** "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

**Mark 8:38 NKJV** "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

The "glorious appearing" is when Christ comes in all His power and glory, being manifest to all the world. So, in effect, Titus 2:13 says that we are watching for Christ's coming in power and glory, which is after the tribulation. This **strongly** implies that the rapture is after the tribulation.

Okay, with the major passages that pre-tribbers like to use to justify their position addressed, and the overwhelming Old Testament precedent that contradicts their position, I hope this will be enough to get you started in your studies. I can truly triple the amount of biblical evidence if necessary. But I want to get this to you quickly and I have so many other things going on right at this moment that my time is short. So I hope this helps. Let me know if you need more on the subject, or you need clarification of what is already here.

Sincerely,

Your brother, James