

## A Biblical look at the Rapture Issue- S.M. Platt

The Pre-tribulation rapture position was not what the early church believed, but came into existence in the 1800's. John Nelson Darby introduced this idea around 1830. Scofield's Reference Bible, full of "Pre-trib." rapture study notes, made it famous and now since then it has become a fundamental teaching in most Evangelical Churches today. Have we come to the truth or been led astray? Something so dramatically different from traditional belief definitely deserves a second look, even at this late hour.

Why do we believe that the rapture will be before the 70<sup>th</sup> week spoken of By Daniel (also known as the 7 year seventieth week)? Is it because the bible tells us it will? There are no scriptures that clearly state that it will. This teaching is a theological assumption based upon 2 general ideas, the pillars of the Pre-tribulation Rapture Position, which are:

1. We cannot be here during the "tribulation period" (seventieth week) because God is dealing with Israel, thus the Church age must be finished.

2. We are not appointed to wrath. Since the Pre-tribulation rapture position defines the entire 70<sup>th</sup> week AS the Day of the Lord's wrath, and "we are not appointed to wrath" it follows that we are removed before it begins. Without these 2 Pillars there is no biblical reason to even suggest a Pre-Tribulation rapture.

**1. We cannot be here during the 7 year tribulation period because God is dealing with Israel.** The reasoning behind this assertion is as follows: Because the Church was not here for the 1<sup>st</sup> 69 weeks, and God is dealing primarily with the Jews during this time, it cannot be here for the 70<sup>th</sup> week; so it is assumed that the Church Age must be finished, and the Church removed. We must keep in mind that because the Church did not exist during the 1<sup>st</sup> 69 weeks, that does not in itself demand that the Church cannot be here for the 70<sup>th</sup>.

Because we know that the Jews will rebuild the temple and re-institute the sacrifices, it is assumed that the Jews will return to the former dispensation of the Law in which God formerly dealt with them, so with that thinking it follows that the Church age must be completed before we can move into another dispensation. There are no clear scriptures stating that the Church must be gone prior to God's dealings with Israel, or that the Church Age must be finished before we move into the 70th week. This is a dispensational assertion that can be refuted by scripture.

The current dispensation began at Pentecost with the birth of the Church and the coming of the Holy Spirit. At that point, the New Covenant or Testament came in and the Old Covenant was done away with. *Hebrews 8:13 ... In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.* The Old Covenant is vanished away never to be seen again. Even though the Jews will rebuild the temple and reinstitute the sacrifices "*which can never take away sins*" the Jews will NOT be saved by continuing to look to the law. God will NOT deal with them according to the requirements of the Old Covenant, but by the New, looking unto "*Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.*"

**They will be dealt with according to the dispensation of the Church Age under the New Covenant.**

How do we know this?

*Hebrews 8:8-12 "For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL and WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH: 9 NOT according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.*

*10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.*

*11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.*

*12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."*

Hebrews 10:15 "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 THIS IS THE NEW COVENANT that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;  
17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

These verses are direct quotes from the book of Jeremiah, correlating these promises of a New Covenant to their fulfillment. The book of Hebrews explains clearly that that New Covenant is in Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 10:10 "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."  
Hebrews 10: 18 Now where remission of these is, THERE IS NO MORE OFFERING FOR SIN."

There should be no question as to whether this New Covenant is the same covenant spoken by Jeremiah. The same language and implied fulfillment by the believing Church is used by Paul in:

2 Corinthians 3:2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:  
3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.  
4 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:  
5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;  
6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.  
7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:  
8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?  
9 For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.  
10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.  
11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

The Old Covenant is gone – vanished away and will not return. It has been replaced by the new covenant. The very thought of a return to the weak and beggarly elements of the law, the old dispensation would amount to the disannulment of Christ's finished work and glorification. Galatians 2:21 "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

Jesus took away the first covenant that he might establish the next. Hebrews 10:9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. He is the only way to God. Though some Jews believed and accepted Christ and the New Covenant, most of the Jews of Jesus' day, rejected their Savior and were subsequently blinded for their unbelief. Even today, they continue to reject the New Covenant through Jesus' blood, and hold to the Old Covenant. Speaking of the Jews who are at this present time partially blinded, Paul writes: *Romans 11:23* "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again."

When the temple is rebuilt and the sacrificial system is re-established in the 70th week, **it will NOT be a reverting to the Old covenant dispensation , BUT a continuation of that blindness and rejection.** It will NOT be accepted by God as a way into his presence.

The Jews of Jesus day entered not into God's rest because of unbelief. Why would their unbelief be acceptable in the 70<sup>th</sup> week? It will not.

Hebrews 10:29 "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

During the Old Testament Priesthood, the priests would enter into the tabernacle to accomplish the service of the Lord, But into the holiest of holies behind the veil, where was the ark of the covenant, the seat of God, went the High priest alone once every year. *Hebrews 9:7* But into the second went the high priest alone once

every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:" The High priest entered in behind the veil with blood to cover over his sins as well as those of the people.

When Christ died on the cross: "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom;" *Matthew 27:51* Why? Because Christ as the Great High Priest, is the new and better way to enter into the presence of God, through him. *Hebrews 10:20* "By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;" Christ's flesh is now the veil. He is the WAY No man cometh unto the Father but by him. Christ was the final and Great High priest after the order of Melchisedec. *Hebrews 7:17* "For he testifieth, Thou art a priest FOR EVER after the order of Melchisedec."

He was superior to all other high priests because he will never die as they did. His priesthood will continue forever.

*Hebrews 7:22* "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. 23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this man, because HE CONTINUETH EVER, hath an UNCHANGABLE PRIESTHOOD."

He needed not to offer sacrifice first for his own sins as the other priests, because he never sinned. *Hebrews 7:27* "Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did ONCE, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."

Also because he did not offer merely the blood of bulls and goats which can never take away sin, but offered his own blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. *Hebrews 13:20* "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant",

When he comes the 2<sup>nd</sup> time, it will only be those who look to him that are saved. *Hebrews 9:28* "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

This blindness of Israel will remain, according to *Romans 11:25* "until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." This phrase is generally understood (by the Pre-tribulation rapture position) to be the end of the Church Age – signifying the completion of salvation for every Gentile who will come to Christ (before the 70th week begins). But is that really what the apostle Paul meant by that phrase?

Even by its own definition and reasoning the Pre-tribulation argument makes no sense. If the fullness of the Gentiles came in at the beginning of the 70th week (with the removal of the church) as suggested by the Pre-trib. position, and the blindness is removed, would it be possible that the Jews are yet blinded enough to be fooled by the Antichrist for at least another 3 ½ years until he breaks his covenant with them, and then on to the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> week until they look on him whom they have pierced? They certainly do not receive their sight and look upon Christ at the beginning of this 7 year period, but at the end: It just does not make sense to suggest that the fullness of the Gentiles comes in (the end of the Church Age) at the beginning of the 7 year tribulation. There is no dispensational reason for the Church Age to end before the 70<sup>th</sup> week.

If, as Pre-tribulation Rapture position asserts, the Church age ends at the beginning of the 70<sup>th</sup> week, and we can easily see that the Old Covenant has been done away with, then under what dispensation are the "great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" *Revelation 7:9* saved? Keep in mind that these are NOT only Jews, but Gentiles, of every nation, kindred and tongue, miraculously appearing in heaven immediately before the trumpet judgments? We are told that these are they that have come out of Great Tribulation. Since we have already seen that God will NOT be dealing with the Jews according to the Old covenant, why would we think that he would deal with the Gentiles that way? It is obvious that they too will be dealt with under the requirements of this dispensation as well.

\*As a side note- Who has been witnessing to this great multitude that no man can number? If the Church is gone, with the removal of the Holy Spirit prior to the 70<sup>th</sup> week, the two witnesses of God spoken of in revelation do not appear on the scene until around midpoint, (3 ½ yrs. into the 70<sup>th</sup> week), and the 144,000 Jews of Rev. 7 (asserted by Pre-tribulation rapture proponents to be Evangelists) are not sealed until immediately prior to the great multitude's appearance in heaven; that leaves a remarkably short period of time (3 ½ - 5 yrs.) for who? to do what it has taken the Church over 2000 years to do. Is it even plausible that so great a number would come to faith without the presence of the Holy Spirit and without any left to witness

or preach the gospel?- especially considering also the great delusion that God will give to them (because they loved not the truth)? The bible spells out great persecution and death for believers during the great tribulation, will those who rejected the truth now, under strong delusion be willing to be martyred? If these later passages of Revelation are any indication of man's mindset during this time, they will not; *Revelation 9:20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:*

*Revelation 16:9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.*

*Revelation 16:11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.*

So what is Paul talking about when he refers to the fullness of the Gentiles?

*Romans 11:25 "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob;"*

In verse 26 Paul ties this timing of the lifting of Israel's blindness and fullness of the Gentiles to the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> week when Israel will turn to Christ and be saved. He is quoting Isaiah here. *Isaiah 59:20 "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD."*

When will the Jews turn to Jesus? Not at the beginning of the tribulation, but at the end, after their seventy weeks have been fulfilled. Which is interestingly referred to by the angel Gabriel as finishing the transgression and making an end of sins. (Sounds a little like Isa. 59:20.)

*Daniel 9:24 "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."*

Paul knew well the prophecies concerning Israel and the seventy weeks decreed upon her. It seems that Paul is more concerned with pointing to the prophecies' fulfillment rather than the salvation of the Gentiles.

*Daniel 8:13 "Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? 14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."*

For 3 ½ years following the abomination of desolation, Jerusalem and part of the temple property will be trodden under foot by the Gentiles. Some interpret this passage as being fulfilled with the coming of Antiochus Epiphanes, but Jesus referred to this event as well in: *Luke 21:24-27 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.* - Jesus links the fulfilling of the times of the Gentiles to the completion of the 70<sup>th</sup> week.

*Revelation 11:2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.* The mystery of God is finished at the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The completion of the mystery is at the same time as "coming in of the fullness of the Gentiles. When Paul referred to the fullness of the Gentiles, I believe that it was also a reference to Old Testament prophecy, not about the completion of the Church Age.

2. **We are not appointed to wrath.** On this point the scriptures agree; we as believers are clearly NOT appointed to wrath.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

1 Thessalonians 5:9 "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"

The problem is that the Pre-tribulation rapture position defines the entire 70th week year AS the Day of the Lord/Wrath of God. If this is so, then it would logically follow that we are removed before it begins. So we must ask: **When does the Day of the Lord begin? Is it synonymous with the 70<sup>th</sup> week?**

By comparing scripture with scripture, we will see that descriptions of the Day of the Lord do not line up with events found in the description of the beginning of the 70<sup>th</sup> week. The following verses describe the great and terrible Day of the Lord:

*Isaiah 13:6 Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.*

*Isaiah 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.*

*Jeremiah 46:10 For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries:*

*Joel 1:15 Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.*

*Joel 2:11 And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?*

*Revelation 6:16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:*

*Revelation 6:17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

*Isaiah 2:17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.*

*Isaiah 2:19 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.*

20 *In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;*

21 *To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.*

*Zephaniah 1:14 The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.*

The opening of the seals of Revelation 6 describe the events beginning the 70th week:

**1st seal:** Revelation 6:2 "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."(Traditionally interpreted as the arrival of the Antichrist)

**2nd seal:** Revelation 6: 4 "another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword". (wars)

**3rd seal** Revelation 6:5 "and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6 ... A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. "(famines)

**4th seal:** Revelation 6: 8 "And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." (pestilence)

**5th seal:** Revelation 6:9 "... under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Martyrs slain)

**\*Interesting that these martyrs ask, how long ...dost thou not judge?**

So we see the events beginning the 70th week, the 1st 5 seals, (Antichrists, wars, famines, pestilences, and death of God's people) do not sound much like the terrifying descriptions of the day of the Lord. As a matter of fact, they are really not much different than the way things are right now. These are the things we hear about every day. We know that in the end times, these things will progress, but do these seals really describe the Great and terrible Day of the Lord which comes "cruel both with wrath and fierce anger"? A day of destruction? Such a great and very terrible day, who can abide it? Are men hiding in the dens and caves, calling to the rocks to fall on them to hide them from the face of the Lord at this time?

We know that at least for the Jew, the beginning of the 70th week will be a time of "peace and safety." They will be enjoying the freedom to rebuild their temple and initiate their sacrifices under the false protection of the Antichrist for the 1st 3 ½ years.

The Antichrist will also rise in power reaching his highest point at about that same time, and will exalt himself to be worshipped in place of God in the temple. How does that line up with Isaiah's description of the Day of the Lord in *Isaiah 2:17* And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. The Lord alone will NOT be exalted during this part of the 70th week. All the world at this time will wonder after the Antichrist and worship him instead. So can the entire 70th week be the Day of the Lord?

**What are the signs of the beginning of the Day of the Lord?** *Joel 2:31* "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come."

The same thing is repeated in: *Acts 2:20* "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:"

And again in: *Isaiah 13:9* "Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

*10* For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine."

The disciples asked the same question: *Matthew 24:3* "What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?" The Lord gives the same signs: *Matthew 24:29* "...shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:"

*Luke 21:25* "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

*26* Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

When will these signs occur? According to Matthew & Luke these signs will occur sometime after the Great Tribulation. We know that the great tribulation begins after the abomination of desolation, (midpoint) when the Antichrist puts an end to the sacrifices, desecrates the temple and sets himself up to be worshipped. That puts the signs of the Lords coming (which according to Joel and acts, must happen before the Day of the Lord) somewhere after midpoint of the 70th week, NOT at the beginning.

*Matthew 24:15* "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

*16* Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: "

*Matthew 24:21* "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

*22* And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

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

*30* And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

The Lord also described to the disciples other events which would occur prior to the signs of his coming. They are told that these, described as the beginning of sorrows (initial birth pangs), are not the end but are the things which will happen before the sign of his coming and before the end. These also precede the abomination of desolation.

Matthew 24:5 “For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (Antichrists)

6 And ye shall hear of (wars) and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be (famines), and (pestilences), and earthquakes, in divers places.

8 All these are the beginning of sorrows. (beginning birth pangs, not the travail of labor)

9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. (martyrs)”

Sounds a lot like the description given of the 1st 5 seals.

Revelation 6	Matthew 24
1st seal- white horse- false Christ- v. 2	Antichrists-v.5, Luke 21:8
2nd seal- red horse- wars -v.3	wars and rumors of war-v.6, Luke 21:9
3rd seal-black horse- famine -v. 5	famines- v.7, Luke 21:11
4th seal-death, pestilence-v. 8	pestilences-v.7, Luke 21:11
5th seal- martyrs slain-v. 9	shall kill you- v.9, Luke 21:16

Comparing scripture with scripture, we can see that the seals of revelation easily line up with the beginning of sorrows in Matthew 24- After these things, as we have seen comes the abomination of desolation. After the Jews have been lulled into a time of peace and safety, then the Antichrist turns on them at the abomination of desolation, scattering them immediately prior to the signs of the Lord's coming. *1 Thessalonians 5:2 “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*” The beginning of the 70th week is described by Jesus as the beginning sorrows (initial birth pangs), while the coming of the Day of the Lord is described as travail (intense labor).

If Matthew 24 passages describe the same events as the 1<sup>st</sup> 5 seals, and Jesus refers to these as the beginning of sorrows (initial birth pangs) we know that this cannot be the travail (intense labor) associated with the coming of the Day of the Lord.

The sixth seal of Revelation also lines up with the order of events in the account of Matthew. Verse 24:29, describes the signs of the Lord's coming : *Revelation 6:12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.*

Revelation 6	Matthew 24
6 <sup>th</sup> seal-sun darkened, moon blood	Sun darkened, moon shall not give light-v. 29
Stars of heaven fall	stars shall fall from heaven

Remember our verse in Joel 2:31 ? *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.*

The description of the sixth seal continues in:

*Revelation 6:14 “And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.*

*15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;*

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

Sounds a lot like the Day of the Lord descriptions.

Isaiah 2:19 "And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

20 In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;

21 To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

But isn't the entire 70th week the Lord's wrath? Although we know that the Lord is sovereign and is in fact opening the seals to unfold the events in the beginning of the 70th week, the nature of these events tells us that these are the results of man's sin and the wrath of Satan, not the Lord's wrath.

Revelation 12:12 "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

When the Lord pours out His wrath, it is done through supernatural means, by the hands of his angels.

Matthew 13:39 "The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels."

Matthew 13:41 "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;"

Matthew 13:49 "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,"

Matthew 16:27 "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

Matthew 24:31 "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

2 Thessalonians 1:7 "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,"

The beginning of the 70<sup>th</sup> week (the 1<sup>st</sup> 5 seals) is not the wrath of God, but the persecution from the reigning antichrist.

Matthew 24:9 "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another."

Revelation 6:9 "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

"

They ask: How long dost thou NOT judge? Can this be the wrath of God poured out on his saints when they tell us he has not yet begun to judge or avenge? The word wrath is also never used in the 1<sup>st</sup> five seals. It is not used until: Revelation 6:16 "And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

The wrath of God does not begin until after the events and signs of 6<sup>th</sup> seal.

Revelation 6:12 *“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;  
 13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.  
 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.  
 15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;  
 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:  
 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”*

After the 6<sup>th</sup> seal signs, the 144,000 are sealed and the great multitude appears in heaven (I believe this is the rapture of the church) Then at the 7<sup>th</sup> seal, silence in heaven in anticipation of the events to come. The Trumpet judgments begin the pouring out of God’s wrath.

Just prior to the sealing of the 144,000, and the great multitude’s appearance in Heaven, 4 angels are told to hold back the 4 winds. Revelation 7:1 *“And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.”*

Then, once the 144,000 are sealed, then suddenly the great multitude appears in Heaven. Sounds strangely similar to the next events described in Matthew 24 v.31 *“And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”* Mark 13:27 *“And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.”* ( Followed by the description of the rapture one taken, another left...)

37 *“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.  
 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,  
 39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.  
 40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.  
 41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.”*

Again we see that Rev.6 and Matthew agree:

Revelation	Matthew 24
7:1 -4 angels hold 4 winds	v. 31 angels gather saints from 4 winds
7:9 Great multitude every tribe, tongue appears in heaven	v. 40-41 One taken another left

Since there are no scriptures that directly or even indirectly state that the rapture will precede the 70th week, removing these two pillars should remove any biblical arguments for the necessity of a Pre-tribulation rapture. However, we will for the sake of argument, address some secondary arguments as well.

**Secondary Arguments for a Pre-tribulation Rapture**

**Restrainer removed** 2 Thessalonians 2:7 *“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.”*

It is suggested that he who now letteth (restrains) is the Holy Spirit of God within the Church, removed at the “Pre-trib.” Rapture. However there are no proof texts to substantiate this claim. Nowhere does the bible define who the restrainer is. Actually, in comparing scripture with scripture, aligning like time references, it may even point to the Archangel Michael (the protector of Isreal) instead.

There is not a verse of Scripture anywhere that suggests a diminishing of the Spirit’s ministry during the 70th week. These arguments are based on silence. The Lord speaking within the context of the 70th week said, *“But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate; but whatever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy*

*Spirit" (Mk. 13:11). And again, within a 70th week context the Lord taught, "But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaketh in you" (Mt. 10:19-20).*

It is important to notice exactly WHEN "he who now letteth" is "taken out of the way." According to Pre-trib. teaching, the falling away occurs prior to the 70th week. They suggest that the revealing of the man of sin is the "appearance" of the anti-Christ at the signing of the covenant. This interpretation is curious in that it ignores the clear meaning of the word "revealed," (Revealed: apokalyptō 1) to uncover, lay open what has been veiled or covered up a.) disclose, make bare 2) to make known, make manifest disclose what before was unknown) This will be for the Jews a time of "peace and safety" as the covenant is signed to guarantee their peace. It is only when the covenant is broken and the Anti-Christ sets himself up as God that his true identity is uncovered, or revealed to them which was previously unknown.

It also contradicts its own doctrine of imminency. According to this doctrine, the Lord could come at any moment, with NO further biblical events preceding it. In this verse we see that even in interpreting the man of sin being revealed as his appearing on the scene, this must still precede the Day of Christ.

It is interesting to note that the term "the day of Christ" is consistently used in reference to the rapture. The Day of Christ is: for believers (Body of Christ), Is a day of blessing and reward, Is a heavenly hope, Is eagerly anticipated 1 Corinthians 1.8, Philippians 1.6, 10, 2.16

While the Day of the Lord Is: for rejectors of Christ, Is a day of judgment, Is earthly despair, Is feared and dreaded. Isaiah 2.12, 13.6, 9; 34.8; Ezekiel 13.5; 30.3; Joel 1.15, 2.1, 11, 31, 3.14; Amos 5.18, 5.20; Obadiah 1.15; Zephaniah 1.7, 14; Zechariah 14.1; Malachi 4.5; Matthew 24.1-51; Acts 2.20, 1 Thessalonians 5.2, 2 Peter 3.10

According to 2 Thessalonians 2:1 -3 "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;"

Is there any way to truly argue that the Day of Christ is speaking of the rapture!

2 Thessalonians 2: 4 "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." This is specifically referencing the abomination of desolation, But first there will be the falling away...

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way."

And then the removal of the restrainer, the one who had been fighting against the Devil, now stops and his wickedness escalates. This occurs immediately prior to the abomination of desolation by which the true identity and intentions of the Anti-Christ are revealed to a previously deceived Israel.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:"

Revelation 12 describes a war in heaven with Michael the archangel fighting against (restraining) the Devil persecuting the woman Israel. 7 "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

Then we see the martyred believers: Revelation 12:10 "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

The timing of these events can be pinpointed to midpoint (the abomination of Desolation) by the following verses:

Revelation 12:13 " And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. 14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into

*the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.”(second half of 70th week)*

According to Matthew 24. We see the same scenario, The antichrist deceives, persecutes and kills believers, then, at the point, the abomination of desolation, turns on Israel. Immediately following the abomination of desolation, there will be great tribulation:

*Matthew 24:21 “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be”.*

Daniel 12 :1 describes the same scenario with Michael mentioned as the one who stands for Israel (stands still, or ceases fighting?), then a time of great trouble such as never was. This is directly linked to the abomination of desolation at midpoint in vs.

*Daniel 11:42-45 “And at that time shall Michael stand up, (stand still or cease) the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time:”*

There are no verses whatsoever indicating that the Holy Spirit restrains or fights against the wicked one during this time period. The entire idea that it is the Holy Spirit that is the restrainer is an assumption based upon the dispensational argument.

### **“Come up hither...”**

Many claim that when John is told to “come up hither” in chapter 4 that this is a clear illustration of the church’s removal. This is an allegorical interpretation at best, with no other supporting texts.

### **The Church is not mentioned after chapter 4 of Revelations**

Lack of mention is not sufficient argument. (The elect are mentioned)

### **The Pre-tribulation Rapture:**

-Demands the absence of Church based on lack of mention, and dispensational theory, stating that the Church age must be over with because God is dealing with Israel's 70" week, thus the Church cannot be there.

-Offers only presuppositions such as the Holy Spirit being "he who now letteth, as further proof of the church being removed.

-Demands 2 raptures (1 pre-tribulation rapture and one at great multitude) without one single verse of scripture to support 2 raptures.

-Demands 2 resurrections (1 at pre-tribulation rapture and 1 at Dan. 12 resurrection), before 2nd death, (making the first resurrection, actually the second resurrection.), with no scriptural justification, again only because of positional demands. No scriptural justification.

-Demands the designation of the "coming of the Lord and our gathering together unto him" in 2Thess. 2: 1-2 as 2 events separated by a period of no less than 3 1/2, years. When Jesus told us that His coming would be like in the days of Noe and Lot, "that same day"

-Or it places the "revealing of the man of perdition" outside of (prior to) the 70" week. Redefines the word revealed to mean “appears”. *revealed: apokalyptō 1) to uncover, lay open what has been veiled or covered up a) disclose, make bare*

*2) to make known, make manifest disclose what before was unknown*

-Makes the rapture a mysterious, secret event not seen by the world, while Rev. 1:7 says that every eye will see Him, and Matthew describes it as lighting shining out of the East unto the West, so shall the coming of man be. Rev 1:7 also places Jesus' coming in the clouds, as in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, as well as the whole world wailing because of his coming, as in Rev. 6 "The great day of his wrath is come. Who shall be able to stand?"

-Rejects the normal interpretation and chronological order of Matthew 24 (even though it correlates with Revelations 6-7, 2Thessalonians 2, and Daniel passages)

-Sometimes even suggests that "one taken, another left" and description of Lord's coming in Matthew 24 are related to Armageddon. Even though it can be clearly shown that these parallel the 6<sup>th</sup> seal.

-Rejects the only two passages of scripture that describe anything even remotely resembling an event such as a rapture, (one taken another left Matt. 24:40 &41, and great multitude suddenly appearing in heaven Rev. 7:9 ) only because the timing conflicts with the pre- tribulation rapture position.

- Applies "thief in the night" to the rapture when it is clearly referring to the coming of Christ at the Day of the Lord, and then strangely, tries to separate the two events.

-Calls the entire 70th week the wrath of God, when it is easily proved that the day of the Lord begins at the 6<sup>th</sup> seal.

All of this confusion can easily be resolved by placing the rapture at the appearance of the great multitude in heaven of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal and at the correlating point in Matthew 24 of angels gathering the elect, after the great tribulation and sign of the Lord's coming. It easily reconciles all of these prophetic passages simply by comparing scripture with scripture.

Why would we reject this interpretation? Aside from theories, conjectures and presuppositions, what biblical support is there for the pre-tribulation rapture? What proof is there that the Holy Spirit is "he who now letteth?" Where is the scripture that refers to 2 raptures? What biblical justification is there to reject the simplest, literal, chronological interpretation?

A literal interpretation, comparing scripture with scripture reveals a different timing of the rapture.

**\*See also Pre-Wrath Chart**

**Comparing scripture with scripture, aligning key points as time markers, here is a brief outline of event in the suggested chronological order:**

**1<sup>st</sup> 4 Seals of Revelation align with Matthew 24 beginning of sorrows (birth pangs)** Isaiah's description of the events preceding the day of the Lord begins with sorrows and pangs, and proceeds to travail.

*Isaiah 13:8 " And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.<sup>9</sup> Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it."*

*Matthew 24:7 "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.<sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of sorrows. "*

Clearly these events, the beginnings of sorrows, (birth pangs) are part of the 7 year tribulation-the time of Jacob's trouble.

**They will kill you, love of many waxes cold, apostasy, falling away/ 5<sup>th</sup> seal**

Could not be God's wrath because God's faithful are being martyred. How then can they claim that they are not appointed to wrath?

**Abomination of Desolation**

**Great tribulation, which is cut short for the sake of the elect.** The elect here cannot be only Jews because this is immediately prior to sign of the Lord's coming *Matthew 24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the*

powers of the heavens shall be shaken: Revelation 6:12 *And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. Then the great multitude of all nations, kindreds, peoples and tongues appears in heaven.*

### **Signs of the Day of the Lord**

Sun darkened, moon turns to blood

### **Great multitude in heaven/ one taken another left**

These two passages of scripture, being the only ones describing events even similar to the rapture are generally rejected as rapture passages by Pre-tribulation rapturists, NOT for exegetical reasons, but simply because they do not line up with their position.

As in the day of Noah, they were marrying and giving in marriage

**Elijah, or someone like him must appear before the day of the Lord** (*Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD*)

Two witnesses, generally agreed to be Elijah and Moses do not arrive until midpoint.

### **Coming of the Lord describes both Rapture and Day of the Lord, as together.**

Just as with case of Noah, and Lot the Lord will deliver the righteous and pour out his judgment in the same day.

*2 Thessalonians 1:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,*

*8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

*9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;*

*10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.*

This is same order idea of Jesus coming to judge and to deliver his saints is repeated in

*2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,*

*1 Thessalonians 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.*

*16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

*17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (rapture)*

*18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

*1 Thessalonians 5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. (times and seasons of what?- of what he was just discussing of course-the rapture.)*

*2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

*3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*