

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Rapture of the Church

The Rapture of the Church is basically held by two schools of theology: The pre-tribulational view, and the post-tribulational view. Neither the millennial nor the postmillennial views of theology believe in the concept of the Rapture. Instead, their position is basically promoted through the Kingdom now theology, which adheres to the notion that the Church will usher in a world peace.

Post-tribulational theology believes that the Church will go through the great tribulation, and then be removed or raptured, and then will return with Jesus Christ to reign in the Millennial. Most covenant schools of theology believe in this position.

Pre-tribulational rapture theology, believes that Christ will remove His church before the great tribulation. After that, the Church will return with Christ at the Second coming to establish the Millennial reign of Christ!

So, we must begin this subject with some prophecy concerning the future of planet earth. There is a time coming on this earth which is called "Satan's time of desperation." It is a period of the greatest power struggle in all of human history. It involves not only people, but angelic creatures as well. It is not a time that you would want any of your family members, friends, neighbors, and if you truly understood it, even your enemies to have to go through. It is a great period of wrath on this earth, both from God and from Satan, Zep 1:14-18, *"Near is the great day of the Lord, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the Lord! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of trumpet and battle cry, Against the fortified cities And the high corner towers. And I will bring distress on men, So that they will walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the Lord; and their blood will be poured out like dust, And their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of the Lord's wrath; and all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy, for He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth."*

Rev 6:16-17 tells us that it is a time of great judgment on the earth like never before, *and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?"* It is said to be a great time of indignation (Isa 26:20-21). It is called the hour of testing in Rev 3:10. A time of great destruction in Joel 1:15, *"Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is near, And it will come as destruction from the Almighty."* It is a time of darkness in Joel 2:2. The book of Daniel calls it a time of desolation (Dan 9:27). Isaiah calls it a time of punishment (Isa 24:20-21). It is a very difficult time to be alive, and it is called the Tribulation period! The wrath of God will be poured out upon the world during this time, and according to the Word of God, it is a time that could take place on this earth tomorrow. This is because of the immanency of the Rapture!

The nature of the Tribulation is also one of practical importance. If the Church is destined to endure the persecutions of the Tribulation, it is hopeless to proclaim the coming of the Lord as an imminent hope. Instead, it should be recognized that Christ cannot come until these predicted sorrows have been accomplished. On the other hand, if Christ will come for His church before the predicted time of trouble, Christians can regard His coming as an imminent daily expectation and hope.

So, there is a theological event known as the Rapture, and the Church, the body of Christ, will not go through this period. This is because the Rapture is used in a technical theological sense for the resurrection of the Royal Family of God. Since the Church or Royal Family of God is the first spiritual building to be completed, it is resurrected after our Lord. It is the second phase of the first resurrection following the resurrection of Christ. So the Rapture or the resurrection of the Church is God's means of terminating the Church-age and delivering us from the wrath to come. 1Th 1:9-10, *For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.* This is why Tit 2:13 puts the Rapture or the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ like this, *“looking for the blessed hope [makarios elpis - happy guarantee] and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;”*

You should know the Rapture is coming. It may or may not occur in your lifetime, but you still know its coming. In this way you apply doctrine, you are occupied with the person of Jesus Christ, you utilize +H (the happiness of God), you operate in virtue-love, so that you have a wonderful life and a wonderful death. All believers can have confidence, hope and a guarantee with regard to the Rapture, it is a happy guarantee, or a doctrine which produces confidence. The confidence is the fact that we have been delivered from the wrath to come! The Rapture or the resurrection of the Church is totally beyond our control, because resurrection is the Lord's victory. 1Co 15:57 *“Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

So, the Church-age terminates with the transferring of the Church into the Lord's presence.

The promise of the Rapture is found in Joh 14:1-3, *“Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, {there} you may be also.”*

2Th 2:1 *Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him.*

Because the Church and Israel are two distinct groups with whom God has a Divine plan, one has to be taken away while the other is dealt with. 1Th 5:9 says *“For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,”* Therefore, the distinction between the Rapture and the Second Advent must be noted. Another very important point concerning the Rapture of the Church, and the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ will remove the Church from this world when that terrible Tribulational period comes, is found under the principle of mystery doctrine. For example, we have noted many times those passages in the New Testament such as Eph 3:1-6; Col 1:25-27; Rom 16:25-26, which all make it crystal clear that the Church was a mystery and was not known in the Old Testament.

The Church, therefore, could not have been in view in the Old Testament prophecy concerning the Tribulational period which is to come upon the whole earth. There can be no question that this period will see the wrath of God poured out upon the whole earth. Rev 3:10; Isa 34:2; 24:1,4-5, 16-21 and,

many other passages make it very clear as well. Jer 30:7 says this period is called “the time of Jacob's trouble” and Jacob refers to Israel. In Dan 9:24, God says 70 weeks are determined upon thy people (this is the Jews not the Church). Dan 9:24 *Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression.*

So, this whole Tribulational period has special reference to Daniel's people Israel and Daniel's Holy city, Jerusalem. In the Old Testament, the seventy weeks of prophecy are weeks of years. In Gen 29:26-27, and Dan 9:24, one week is equivalent to 7 years. So, 70 times 7 equals 490! God owes Israel seven years! They have had 69 weeks already, that equals 483 years.

Therefore, the Church has nothing to do with this prophecy since the Church did not have its existence until after the death of Christ (Eph 5:25-26), after the resurrection of Christ (Rom 4:25; Col 3:1-3), and after the ascension of Christ (Eph 1:19-20). Therefore, the Church could not have been in the first 69 weeks of this prophecy. So, since the Church had no part in the first 69 weeks which are related only to God's program for Israel, then it can have no part in the 70th week which is again related to God's program for Israel.

So, the Rapture is the blessed hope or the happy guarantee that God is going to take us out from the wrath to come. 1Th 4:13 *“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope.”* Please notice the Rapture removes sorrow and grief and gives hope! Rev 2:22 indicates clearly that the unsaved professing church will experience the tribulational period, Rev 2:18-22, *“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this: ‘I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.’”* Remember, the professing church is composed of those who make a profession of faith in Christ. Unfortunately, it's another Jesus (2Co 11:4), another spirit (2Co 11:4), another Gospel (Gal 1:6), and another doctrine (1Ti 4:1).

The true Church will not, in fact cannot go through the Tribulation period. Therefore the Church must be taken out from the earth which is what we call the Rapture. In fact, Rev 3:10 also describes this principle, *“Because you have kept the word of my perseverance, I also will keep you from [or take you out from] the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth.*

Rev 13 makes it clear that all who are in the 70th week, or the Tribulation period, are brought into subjection to the beast and through him to Satan who gives the beast power. Rev 13:1-9, *“And he stood on the sand of the seashore. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war*

with him?’ And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months [three and one half years] was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in Heaven. And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the lamb who has been slain. if anyone has an ear, let him hear.”

Now, if the church were in this period she would be subjected to Satan and Christ would either lose His place as head, or because of His union with the Church, He would be also subjected to Satan's authority. Such a thing is unthinkable and blasphemous! Phi 2:9-10, *Therefore also the God has highly exalted Him to the maximum, and bestowed on Him the name or rank which is above every name, in order that at the title of Jesus every knee of the Heavens should bow [that's the big Genuflex], and on earth [believers who are alive at the Rapture], and the ones under the earth [unbelievers],*

So the order of events which will take place needs to be noted:

- 1) The Rapture.
- 2) The Big Genuflex.
- 3) The Judgment Seat of Christ.
- 4) The Second Coming.

Point 1 is our definition.

While the Rapture is defined as the act of being transported, it is also defined as the state of being rapt or carried out of oneself. However, Rapture is used here in a technical theological sense for the resurrection of the Royal Family of God. Since the Church or Royal Family of God is the first spiritual building to be completed, it is resurrected after our Lord. It is the second phase of the first resurrection following the resurrection of Christ. Christ is resurrected, ascended, and seated at the right hand of the Father as part of the strategic victory of the angelic conflict. This is known as our Lord's battlefield royalty. This is His only royalty with no family. Therefore, God interrupted the Jewish Age with the Church Age to call out and provide a Royal Family of God. Once the Royal Family is completed, the Church is resurrected as the body of Christ to become the bride of Christ. The Church Age is that period of human history when the Royal Family of God is being formed on earth (Eph 1:22-23, 2:16, 4:4-5; Col 1:18, 24, 2:19). When the Royal Family of God is completed, the Rapture occurs (1Th 4:16-18; 1Co 15:51-58). During the conclusion of the Jewish Age, the bride is prepared in Heaven by receiving a resurrection body. Then comes the Big Genuflex and acknowledgment of Christ (Phi 2:9-11, Rom 14:11). Rom 14:11 *For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall give praise to God.”* Then comes the Judgment Seat of Christ, when all Church-age believers are evaluated and rewarded, 2Co 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

The nature of the Tribulation is also one of practical importance. If the Church is destined to endure the persecutions of the Tribulation, it is hopeless to proclaim the coming of the Lord as an imminent hope. Instead, it should be recognized that Christ cannot come until these predicted sorrows have been accomplished. On the other hand, if Christ will come for His church before the predicted time of trouble, Christians can regard His coming as an imminent daily expectation. So, because of a theological event known as the Rapture, the Church, the body of Christ will not go through this period.

Point 2. Biblical principles that establish the Bi-blical position of a pre-tribulational Rapture of the Church.

1. The great Tribulation is punishment for a Christ-rejecting world, and the nation of Israel, who rejected her Messiah, Rev 6:12-17, *“And I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. And the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?’”*

2. The nature of the Church, and the promises of Christ forbid the Church from going thro-ugh the great Tribulation. For example, the nature of the Church, Col 1:22 *yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.* The promise of Christ, Heb 13:5 *for He Himself has said, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,”*

3. There must be an interval of time between the Rapture and the Second Coming. This is when the Judgment Seat of Christ takes place and believers either receive rewards or lose rewards (1Co 3:11-15, 2Co 5:10).

4. The scripture's which deal with the great Tribulation have particular reference to the Jew. Mat 24:1-2, *And Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. And He answered and said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here shall be left upon another, which will not be torn down.”* He's talking about a Jewish temple not a Christian church.

Mat 24:3-9, *And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what {will be} the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”* And Jesus answered and said to them, *“See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many. And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for {those things} must take place, but {that} is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are {merely} the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name.”* This is a reference to the Jewish nation. In Mat 24:15 we read, *“Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),”*

The abomination of desolation has to do with Jerusalem and the Temple, Dan 11:31 *And forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.*

Look at Mat 24:20 *“But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath;”* Why does it say the Sabbath? Because we are talking to the Jews not to Christians! The Sabbath is for the Jews only (Exo 31:16).

Mat 24:21-22, *“for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.”*

In Mat 24:29-32, *“But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the Heavens will be shaken, and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. Now learn the parable from the fig tree [Israel]: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near;*

Who is the fig tree?

In Luk 13:6 the fig tree represents the nation of Israel, *And He {began} telling this parable: “A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any.”*

So in Mat 24:33-34, *“even so you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, {right} at the door. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.”*

In Mat 24:37-42, *“For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women {will be} grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.”*

Notice that the Sabbath is used (Mat 24:20).

Jerusalem is trodden under (Luk 21:24).

Kingdom of God is near and at hand (Mat 24:14).

The Church is never mentioned; the Temple is implied; and the abomination of desolation is denoted.

5. The Tribulation is mentioned as a gross time of darkness, evil, and sin, where none have faith (Isa 60:2; Jer 13:16; Luk 18:8).

6. Satan persecutes the women (Israel) in the Tribulation. The Church is not to come under condemnation (Rev 12:1-4; Rom 5:9; 8:1; 1Th 1:10; 5:9; 1Co 15:55-57; 1Th 4:13-18).

7. The Church is not of the world (Joh 17:14; Phi 3:20; 2Ti 2:3-4). The Church is a spirit-ual extension of the Lord Jesus Christ, with promises that are Heavenly related (Eph 1:3; 2:6).

8. Christ is preparing a home for His body the Church, and has promised to return and to take His bride back with Him, Joh 14:3 *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, {there} you may be also.”*

9. The Church has been promised deliverance from the wrath to come (Rom. 5:9; 1Th 1:10; 5:9; Rev

3:10). 1Th 1:10 *and to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.* In 1Th 5:9 *For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

10. The believer is told to watch, or have an attitude of anticipation for the Lord's coming. If believers are to go through the great Tribulation, they would be advised to watch for the signs of the prophecies of the coming of Jacob's trouble (Rom 8:23; 1Co 1:7; Gal 5:5. Tit 2:11-13). Why would we, in Rom 8:23, groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body? Or in 1Co 1:7 await eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ? Or in Tit 2:13 *looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;*

11. God has always protected His people in unique fashion in the face of judgment like Enoch before the flood (2Pe 2:6-8). Lot from Sodom and Gomorrah.

12. The instructions by the apostle Paul never include any preparation or warning that the Church will encounter the great Tribulation.

13. If the Church goes through the Tribulation then the Jew's as well as the Gentiles of the Tribulation period would become part of the Church. After the Tribulation the Jew-ish remnant would go into the promised earthly Millennial reign; but the Gentiles of the Church would be caught up to be with Christ in glory. The body of Christ would become dismembered.

14. The church at Thessalonica would not be concerned of any disadvantage of the dead in Christ if those who were alive had to go through the great Tribulation (1Th 1:4).

15. The message of the Church is the message of the Gospel of grace, and peace which was secured at the Cross by Jesus the Christ (Eph 2:8-10). The message of the great Tribulation is one of God's judgment (Rev 7:4-8; 12:17; 19:10; Mat 24:14).

16. The iniquity of the anti-Christ cannot be released until the Holy Spirit, the restrainer is removed with the Church in 2Th 2:3-10 (mystery of lawlessness). 2Th 2:3-10, *“Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.”*

17. The Church is called to pray for those in authority (1Ti 2:2); if the Church was on earth in the great Tribulation why would those who come through the great Tribulation pray for the destruction of those in authority? (Rev 6:10).

18. Christ's return for His church is unconditional, and He returns to Heaven (Joh 14:1-3). The great Tribulation is conditional, and based upon the abomination of desolation (Mat 24:15-16).

19. Christ returns for His bride in the air and does not touch down upon the earth at the Rapture. He then returns to Heaven (Joh 14:1-3); and at the Second Coming He comes down to the earth.

20. The Bema Seat Judgment takes place after the Rapture. All believers will be judged according to their works, whether wood hay or straw, or gold, silver, and precious stones. This represents the Divine production in the Spirit or in the flesh (1Co 3:12-15).

21. Time is needed for the Bema Seat, and the marriage of the Lamb, and His pure bride dressed in white, the Church. The seven years of the great tribulation provides for this time.

22. The Rapture is a mystery and secret, the Second Coming is a world display of power. 1Co 15:51-58, *“Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”*

23. The Rapture comes at a time of false peace and safety through the promise of the anti-Christ. 1Th 5:2-3, *“For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, ‘Peace and safety!’ then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”*

24. After the Rapture (Rev 4) the day of the Lord begins with the opening of the first seal (Rev 5).

25. The Church is never mentioned after Revelation 4.

26. The 144,000 Jews from Twelve Tribes; the two prophet's probably Elijah and Moses and the angel witness the Gospel (Rev 11:3). The Church is never mentioned as fulfilling its great commission during the great Tribulation.

So the hope of the Church is the return of Christ at the Rapture, who will deliver them from the greatest outpouring of judgment in history (Tit 2:11- 13; 1Th 1:10; 4:18; 5:11). The true Church will not, and cannot, go through the Tribulation period which is coming upon this earth and therefore the Church must be taken out from the earth which is what we call the rapture. In fact Rev 3:10 also describes this principle, Rev 3:10 *“Because you have kept the word of my perseverance, I also will keep you from [or take you out from] the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth.”*

If the Church is in the Seventieth Week or the Tribulation Period, she is subjected to the wrath, judgment, and indignation which characterizes the period, and because of her oneness with Christ, He, likewise would be subjected to the same. Rev 13 makes it clear that all who are in the 70th week or the Tribulation period are brought into subjection to the beast, and through him to Satan who gives the beast power. If the Church were in this period it would be subjected to Satan and Christ would either lose His place as head or because of His union with the Church, He would be also subjected to Satan's authority. Such a thing is unthinkable and blasphemous!

Point 3. The imminence of the Rapture.

Many signs were given to the nation Israel which would precede the Second Coming which is a totally different event than the Rapture. This is so the nation would be living in expectancy when the time of His coming should draw near. Although Israel could not know the day nor the hour, they could know through these signs that their redemption is drawing near. To the Church however, no such signs were given. The Church is told to live in the light of the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Joh 14:2-3; Acts 1:11; 1Co 15:51-52; Phi 3:20; Col 3:4; 1Th 1:10; 1Ti 6:14; Jam 5:8; 2Pe 3:3-4).

Act 1:6-11, And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; and they also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into Heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into Heaven. For our citizenship is in Heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;"

Phi 3:21 "who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."

Passages like 1Th 5:6; Tit 2:13; Rev 3:3, all warn the believer to be watching for the Lord Himself. Not for signs that would precede His coming. So, if there was no Rapture of the Church, the many signs given to Israel would also be given to the Church! The multitude of signs given to Israel to stir them to expectancy would then also be for the Church and the Church could not be looking for Christ until these signs had been fulfilled. We would be looking for world wars, famines, pestilences, and earth-quakes in several places at the same time. Mat 24:7 *"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes."* We would be looking for the re-gathering of Israel (Ezekiel 36-37). The Rise of Russia and her allies in preparation of fulfilling Eze 38-39. The increase in travel and knowledge. Dan 12:4 *"But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."*

Although many of these things are upon us they seem to be the signs of the last days, the Church is not told to look for these signs. The labor conflicts (Jam 5:1-6). This is said to be the historical trends of the last days. Scoffers (2Pe 3:1-2), this is a sign of the last days. Scoffers dominate the most influential agencies of all coun-tries today, even our own. They control media, entertainment, education, and, for the most part, government. They are willfully ignorant and walk after their own lusts, as predicted. The moral breakdown in Society (2Ti 3:1-5), the trends of moral breakdown during the last days are read almost every day in the newspapers. A Rise in Lawlessness (2Th 2:7-10). A Rise in Occultism and Cults (1Ti 4:1-5). There have always been cults and demon activity, but nothing in modern history is like today, and it is increasing. Apostasy (1Ti 4:1). The liberalism and legalism of doctrine that is around today is deceiving millions of believers.

The Church is to live in the imminence of the Rapture. Imminence means impending, or threatening to

occur immediately. Imminence is used technically for the fact that no prophecy has to be fulfilled before the Rapture occurs. The rapture will occur when the last member of the body of Christ is saved. So, this is why the Church-age is the only dispensation in which there are historical trends and no prophecy. The Church-age began with an event that was prophesied: The baptism of the Spirit. Our Lord prophesied this in the upper room discourse just before He ascended. The Church-age terminates with the Rapture, which was also prophesied, and there is no prophecy between these two events. This is the age of the mystery doctrine. No prophecy between the baptism of the Spirit and the Rapture means that the Rapture is imminent. It could occur at any time. No one knows the day or the hour. The resurrection of the Church, like our dying, is completely out of our control. Before the Second Advent occurs, there are many prophecies which must occur, the Rapture, the events of the Tribulation. However, the Rapture could have occurred at the time of James or Paul because no prophecy had to be fulfilled before the resurrection occurs.

Distortion of the imminence of the Rapture results in instability and foolish explanation or speculation about the time of the Rapture; hence, James gives us an admonition in Jam 5:7-8, *“Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord [the Rapture]. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”*

To have patience means to apply what you know. Patience is a system of thinking Bible doctrine, a system of concentration, the application of doctrine to experience. You can, by positive volition, execute the PPOG or, by negative volition, be a cosmic believer, and be your own worst enemy. In this passage, the farmer invests by sowing seed, he must break up the soil and sow the seed, and then he must wait. There's nothing he can do while waiting, the seed will either come up or it won't. Either he will have production or he will not. In the time of this writing, that depended upon the soil and the rains. The farmer did not have control over those elements. You cannot have patience without a stabilized mentality. Every day in the Church-age, the Rapture draws closer. Every day that the Rapture approaches, you still have control over your life as long as you live. You have control in the sense that you can be a winner believer or a loser believer.

In fact, because there is no unfulfilled prophecy before the Rapture could occur, the early Church anticipated the Rapture under the concept of imminence. 1Co 1:4-8, *“I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* The Corinthian church was made up of loser believers, yet Paul thanked God concerning them because they were the beneficiaries of phenomenal grace, they were in union with Christ, and most of all, were enriched by Him. Enrichment in the Christian life is not measured in terms of work and Christian service, but in terms of doctrine and knowledge. Yet most of the Corinthian believers rejected that doctrine.

So while the Rapture is imminent, no one knows when it will occur. In the meantime, the Royal Family of God lives in this dispensation of historical trends. In fact, the imminence of the Rapture is a doctrine for mature believers only. A mature believer lives as though the Rapture could occur at any moment. A mature believer should be eager for the Rapture to occur. However, only the Trinity knows when the Rapture is going to occur.

Point 4. The Work of the Holy Spirit as the Restrainer (2Th 2:1-2).

2Th 2:1-2, *“Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.”* In the Bible, “The day of the Lord” can include the Rapture, the last half of the Tribulation, Second Advent, and Millennium, all total 1007 years. It is also used for any portion of this period, the context dictating how long (Isa 2:12, 13:6; Joel 1:15, 2:1; Zec 14:1, 1Th 5:2; 2Pe 3:10). The Thessalonians were concerned that the Rapture had already taken place, and that the day of the Lord was already there. This is because the persecutions which they were enduring at the time had given them a basis for this erroneous conclusion. Therefore, Paul writes to show them that such a thing was impossible. 2Th 2:3 *Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,* So, first he shows them in verse that *the day of the Lord* could not take place until there was a departure. In order to understand this we need to note the Greek word for *apostasy* in verse 3. It is *apostasia* and refers to a departure, it could either refer to the departure from the faith or the departure of the saints as mentioned in verse 1. Secondly, Paul reveals that there was to be the manifestation of the man of sin or the lawless one described in Rev 13. 2Th 2:3-7, *“Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.”*

Note that this lawless one could not be manifested until the *restrainer* is taken out of the way. In other words, Someone is preventing Satan from coming to complete power at this time! The restrainer is the Holy Spirit that keeps on restraining Satan. As long as the Holy Spirit is resident within the Church, which is His temple, His restraining work will continue. 1Co 6:19 *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”* It is only when the Church or the temple is removed that this restraining ministry ceases. Then in Dan 9:27, Daniel reveals that this lawless one will be manifested at the beginning of the 70th week, *“And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”*

Point 5. The contrasts between the Rapture and the Second Coming (Advent).

We need to establish the fact that these are two different events. The Rapture removes all living believers from the earth while the Second Coming removes unbelievers from the earth (1Co 15:51-52, Mat 24:40-41).

- In the Rapture, the saints are caught up in the air with Him, while at the Second Advent of Christ, He returns to the earth.
- In the Rapture, Christ comes to claim His bride while at the Second Coming He returns with the Bride.
- The Rapture results in the removal of the Church and insertion of the Tribulation, while the Second Coming results in the establishment of the Millennial kingdom.
- The Rapture is imminent (could take place at any moment) while the Second Coming is preceded by a multitude of signs.

- The Rapture brings a message of comfort while the Second Advent is accompanied by a message of judgment (baptism of fire).
- The Rapture is a mystery while the Second Advent is predicted in both the old and new Testaments.
- The Rapture leaves creation unchanged while the Second Advent entails the change in creation.
- The Rapture takes place before the day of wrath, but the Second Advent follows it.
- The Rapture is for believers only, but the Second Advent has its effect on all men.
- The expectation of the Church in regard to the Rapture is that the Lord is at hand (Phi 4:5), while the expectation of Israel in regard to the Second Advent is that the kingdom is at hand (Mat 24:14).

These are some of the contrasts which may be presented to support the fact that the Rapture and the Second Advent are distinct events!

In continuing to prove the pre-tribulation Rapture, we need to look at Revelation chapter 4. This is a passage which illustrates that the Church is no longer on earth, and that it is in Heaven worshipping the Lord. Rev 4:1-4, *“After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in Heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.’ Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in Heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. And around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.”*

In verse 4, John is given a vision of 24 elders who are seated on thrones. Notice that these elders who are seated on thrones are clothed in white garments, crowned with golden crowns, and in Heaven in the presence of God. Several answers are given as to the question of the identity of these twenty four elders. First of all, notice that these 24 elders are not angels. What is said of the 24 elders could not be true of angelic beings, because angels are not crowned with victors crowns. The phrase the *golden crowns* in the Greek is *chrousous stephanous* which are given to Church-age believers (1Co 9:25, Phi 4:1, 1Th 2:19, 2Ti 4:8, Jam 1:12, 1Pe 5:4). Also there is something which is said in verse 4 that should be very meaningful to most of you by now, *And around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting.* Nowhere in the Scriptures are we told that angels are seated on thrones, which speaks of Royal dignity and Honor. This privilege is given to believers only because of the strategic victory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, these 24 elders are resurrected, redeemed men who are clothed, crowned and seated on thrones in connection with Royalty in Heaven. There are four inerrant marks which identify these elders as representative of the Church: First, their position. They are sitting on the thrones which make up the rainbow around the throne in Rev 4:3. To the Church and only to the Church, is co-enthronement promised. Rev 3:21-22, *“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”* Notice that this co-enthronement is said to the Churches. In Rev 4, the Lord Jesus Christ is not seated upon the throne on earth, but rather in Heaven, and these individuals have been presented faultless and have already received their rewards for glorifying God.

The second inerrant mark which identifies these elders as representative of the Church is the number of these elders. Especially in this book where numbers are so great a part of the symbolism, 24 is the number of the choruses into which the Levitical priesthood was divided (1Ch 24:1-19). The number 24 represented priesthood. Of all the groups of the redeemed only the Church is a priesthood (1Pe 12:5-9; Rev 1:6).

The third inerrant mark which identifies these elders as representative of the Church is the testimony of the enthroned elders. Rev 5:8-10, *And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."* The Church and only the Church can testify to being made a kingdom and priests to our God.

The fourth important mark is that they are called elders, and elder-ship is a representative office for the Church age (Act 15:2; Act 20:17).

The elders are members of the Church, and they are seen in Heaven in the place which the Scriptures assign to the Church. They are there before a seal is opened, or a woe is uttered and before the wrath of God is poured out. Therefore, they are there before the Tribulation period begins. They are in their redeemed state, clothed with white raiment and crowned with crowns. From this chapter to the 20th chapter, the Church is never once referred to as on earth. In fact, the Church is seen in Rev 19 coming down from Heaven following the Lord Jesus Christ. Rev 19:7-16, *"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And he said to me, 'Write, Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.' And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, 'Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' And I saw Heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in Heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.'"*

These believers are seen to be resurrected, in Heaven, evaluated, rewarded and enthroned at the beginning of the 70th week or the Tribulational period. Therefore we can easily conclude that the church has already been raptured. If the Church is not resurrected, and if there is no such thing as a Rapture, how could the Church be in Heaven in Rev 19:7-11?

We also need to note the problem behind the following: 1Th 4:13-18, *"But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 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, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words."*

The Thessalonian Christians were not ignorant or uninformed about the resurrection. Their misunderstanding was of the relationship between the resurrection and the saints who had died before the Rapture. Paul writes, not to teach the fact of resurrection, but rather the fact that at the Rapture, the living would not have an advantage over the dead in Christ. *“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, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep.”* Now, if the Thessalonians had believed that the Church would be going through the 70th week, or the Tribulational period, they would have rejoiced that some of the brethren had missed the period of suffering, and were with the Lord without experiencing the outpouring of wrath. In other words, if the Church were going through the tribulation it would be better to be with the Lord than to have to await the events of the 70th week. The Thessalonians would be praising the Lord that their brethren were spared these events, instead of feeling that the dead had missed some of the Lord's blessing.

The principle is that the early Church believed that the Church would not go through the 70th week and in their anticipation of the return of Christ they mourned for their brethren whom they thought had missed the blessing of this event. Therefore, the apostle Paul says, *“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who have died, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again.[and we do], even so God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 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, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.”*

The Word of God teaches in Pro 30:5 that every word of God is pure, and this means that no matter what the subject is, you need to learn it! It also teaches in 2Ti 2:15, that a pastor should *“Study to present himself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.”* In fact, this same word translated as *study* in 2Ti 2:15 is also found in 2Pe 1:10 *“Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent [study] to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;”* So the pastor is to study and teach, that is his job, and then he is to take this study and as Eph 4:12 says, *“equip the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;”* I say all of this because one of the reasons why it is so important to document the Rapture accurately is that there are large movements in this nation which are based upon the belief that there is no Rapture. Such as movements like the Christian coalition or the Promise keepers. There is also a movement called Dominion theology or re-constructionalism which teaches post-millennialism and they are anti-dispensationalists. These conflicting views impact the way believers are involved in this present society.

Christian reconstruction teaches that the victory of God's kingdom on earth is during and continuous with our present era. Whereas those who believe in the Rapture believe that Christ will come back for His bride, then seven years later His intervening judgment will destroy current society, and then He will institute the Millennial conditions. Today, many Christians are attracted to the dominion position because they have an agenda. They are often involved in politics or social reform for which they believe re-constructionalism provides the vision to lead them to success. This is nothing more than creature credit! This movement is not concerned with the fulfillment of such passages as Eph 4:12-13, or 1Ti 2:3-4, but rather fulfilling their own agenda. Eph 4:11-13, *“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of*

the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.”

1Ti 2:3-4 says, *“This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”*

These movements are made up of individuals from all different Biblical beliefs, in fact some of them do not even believe in the Bible, and that Jesus Christ is God! Many believers get involved with these movements not directly, but indirectly through the back door, rather than the front door which is Biblical study. They arrive at these views not from the study of Scripture, but by the romantic attraction of changing the world. This is why a true student of the Word of God will let the Scripture be the final authority, not what seems pleasing to the world.

They also believe in the application of the Judicial laws of Moses in modern society. These beliefs will not produce believers who honor, love or respect the Lord Jesus Christ, but rather produce a group of disillusioned people, completely distracted from God's present purpose for the Church-age believer.

What is God's present purpose for the Church-age believer? It is to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18). It is to walk by means of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:16). It is to execute the Pre-designed Plan of God (PPOG), 1Jo 2:6 *“And this is virtue-love, that we walk according to His commands. This is the command, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it [the PPOG for your life]”*

Those who do not believe in the Rapture believe that our apostate civilization can be converted into the kingdom of God. Therefore they ignore or spiritualize Scriptures like 1Th 4:16-17, 2Th 2:1-3, 1Co 15:51-52, all of which speak of the Rapture. They ignore 1Th 1:7-9, Rev 19:11-16, which speaks of the Second Coming. They have no Scriptural documentation to back up their belief of changing the world and making it a better place to live. Their major leaders state that all of God's laws, including the Mosaic Law, every jot and tittle, as the King James says, should be applied directly to American life. This belief is contrary to the New Testament teaching in the Epistles, referring to the Mosaic Law as well as the subjection to human governments. Rom 13:1-7, *“Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil. Wherefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.”*

Look at 1Pe 2:13-16, *“Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.”*

Believing in this eventual earthly triumph of the Church, the reconstructionists have found a natural

ally in many other organizations such as the positive confession movement. In fact, some even misinterpret Mat 11:12 and Luk 16:16 and say that we are to take the kingdom that God has given us even by violence if necessary. What happens in this movement is that they teach their followers to use their authority in Christ to overcome all barriers to materially successful lives. They take Scriptures like Phi 4:19 out of context which says *“And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”* Notice it says needs not wants! Of course all of this is very attractive to those in the lower-middle class life hoping to escape the economic restrictions of their lifestyles. So rather than a trust in the provisions made available from God the Father who is intimately concerned with each one of His children, and the care of the Lord Jesus Christ for His bride, they are hoping for the improvement of the world to make things better for them. The point is that their hope is not as Tit 2:13 says, *looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus*; their hope is not the hope of Col 1:27 *“to whom the God decreed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery in the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of the glory.”* The fact that Jesus Christ indwells you is the basis and origin of your hope, not changing the world and getting involved in politics. Hope anticipates the function of the integrity of God on our behalf. 1Th 1:3 *“constantly bearing in mind your work of doctrine, and labor of love, and courage under pressure from hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of God the Father.”* Hope is cultivated through the intake of doctrine. Bible doctrine in the soul gives you confidence in the future and the enjoyment of what God provides for you now and in eternity, not changing the world and making it a better place to live. Job 4:6 *“Is not your respect for God your confidence? And is not your hope the integrity of your ways?”* Heb 11:1 *“In fact, doctrine is the reality from which we receive hope, the proof of matters not being seen.”* The reality of blessing for time and eternity is found in hope or confidence of Bible doctrine not in changing the world!

The Christian re-constructionists emphasize exercising dominion authority, or their so called power in Christ, to advance His Lordship over all things. Since our Lord is the King of kings and the Lord of Lord's they say that His dominion extends to all of life, and therefore we must take dominion and authority over the world and do it boldly. They say that the promise land belonged to Israel, but first Joshua and the Jews had to claim it by annihilating its occupants, and so we must do the same! They are supporters of prayer in schools, involvement with the Government! Blowing up abortion clinics. Getting Jesus into society, etc. What they teach is that God's kingdom is in this world, and we must be like a church militant group confident of triumph. Yet in Joh 18:36 our Lord says, *“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting,”*

Let's take a look at how subtle their teaching is. They teach that Adam forfeited his lawful inheritance when he rebelled against God. Therefore Satan received this inheritance when he caused Adam to sin, so Satan conquered the world in one day by Adam's default, so far so good. However, then they say that the Lord Jesus Christ restored the inheritance to His people when He defeated Satan on the Cross. Makes sense, but it is not Biblical. They teach that Christians are required to pursue the same program of world dominion which God originally assigned to Adam, and reassigned to Noah. Again, ignorance of dispensational truth, and an inaccurate understanding of the Word of God. They have been led astray and distracted in order to help Satan clean up his world and create further accusation against God. The point of Christian reconstructionism is that it teaches the victory of God's kingdom on earth during and continuous with our present era. Some even think that we are in the Millennium and therefore we should do our part to change the world!

Now, a pre-millennialist, which is what I am, believes that Christ's intervening judgment will destroy the current society, and then Christ will institute millennial conditions. Most people who get involved with this anti-rapture creature credit movement arrive at these views not from the study of scripture, but by

the romantic attraction of changing the world. Many reconstructionist believe that their job is to rebuild our apostate civilization into the kingdom of God, and so pave the way for the coming Millennium. This, of course, contributes greatly to Satan's plan to try and counterfeit the Millennium and get individuals to help him clean up the world and make it a better place to live.

Remember that Satan's major objective is to be like God, as found in Isa 14:14 where Satan said *"I will make myself like the Most High."* This is actually one of the most important principles concerning Satan, and it also one of the least known. This is why we are warned in 2Co 2:11 *"in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes."* Satan has deceived the world, including the Christian church, to make us think that he is totally opposite of God. In fact one of the meanings of 2Th 2:4 which says that Satan opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, is that Satan makes you think that he is something that he is not. Satan wants you to think that he is this ugly looking creature with a red epidermis, carrying a trident. This isn't the devil at all, the devil is the most beautiful creature whoever came from the hand of God. Probably one of the most shocking things you will ever hear is the fact that the devil is not interested in getting people to sin. Instead, he is vitally interested in getting you to perform human good. If you are a do-gooder living under the power of your old sin nature, the devil applauds you, and he doesn't bother with you. Satan is actively interested in putting down any believer anywhere who knows Bible doctrine. Satan is interested in performing all the good he can, and eliminating the bad. Satan is not interested in immorality, immorality is embarrassing to him because he is the ruler of this world. As the greatest creature ever created, this world is an insult to his leadership. Satan's plan is to get humans to produce as much human good as possible, and to infiltrate the plan of God with human good, and the only way he can do so is to persuade believers to perform human good. However, Satan cannot do this to a believer who has knowledge of Bible doctrine, but he can do it to a believer who is ignorant of doctrine and therefore a sucker for human good. Human good appeals to approbation lust, to power lust, and to the old sin nature. As far as most believers are personally concerned, the only contact the devil will have with them will be the fact that they performed X amount of human good to help the devil clean up this world. Government, morals, education, art, commercialism, vast enterprises and organizations, and religious activity are included in the Satan's plan to deceive the human race. In fact, the presence evil in the world is not due to Satan's intention to have it so, but rather his inability to control the human race.

This is why God's plan for the human race is *not* to clean up the devil's world, rather it is to offer salvation to the unbeliever and knowledge of Bible doctrine to the believer. What make his deceptions so great are the overt similarities that he has with God. Throughout history and prophecy there can be no doubt about the fact that the one thing Satan is after is worship from man. That's why he said to the Lord Jesus Christ in Luk 4:6 *"I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours."* That's why during the Tribulation period, the man of sin will demand the worship of the people of the earth, or they will pay the penalty of death (Rev 13:4; Rev 13:8; Rev 13:12; Rev 14:9-11; Rev 19:20).

Remember that the unregenerate and even regenerate humanity are said to be deceived by Satan. Their delusion is both tragic and disgraceful because they don't have to be deceived. In Rev 12:9 *"And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world;"* In Rev 20:3 *"and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed {it} over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed;"*

Many religious leaders today have dreams of a transformed, regenerated world as a result of human effort by means of Christian service and Christian values, and this is without foundation according to

the Word of God. This is a perfect description of what's going on today with most churches and with most Christians who are involved with, trying to make the world a better place to live. This is what happens when individuals do not understand the importance of the Rapture position. The Church is not here to help the devil clean up his world. Satan's deceptions in this area will continue until he is bound and consigned to the Abyss. Who will bind Satan and place him in that prison? It is not the Church or the believer that binds Satan, it is the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a form of deception which has seized members of the human race so that they have failed to see the uncomplicated teaching of the Bible with respect to the course and end of evil. Evil is cleaning up the devil's world! Heb 5:12-14, *For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.*

The form of deception that Satan uses to blind believers is that of negative volition toward doctrine. So when God declares, as he does throughout the Bible, that the world is to continue with increasing deception and to continue to live in the lie until it is crushed by the infinite power of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is little ground for any attempts to save the world or to transform it. That's exactly what those who reject the doctrine of the Rapture are trying to do, clean up, save and transform the world. It's an amazing principle when you think of it! Here is this world that abuses people, misuses them, takes advantage of them and yet people invest all of their time in trying to make it better! The point is that most Christians are involved with movements and programs to try and make this world a better place to live. If you try to point out the danger, you are considered to be a heretic and even evil. When in reality, these apostate believers are so influenced by evil that they cannot even see their very own deception. As Isaiah said in chapter 5 verse 20 they call evil good and good evil. Isa 5:20 *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

Christians should not be involved in the attempted rescue of that which God has doomed to destruction which is this world system. This world system is by its' very nature anti-God. Again this is a perfect description of what's going on in Christianity today. God has doomed this world, under its present leader Satan to destruction, and yet so many believers are working overtime to try and preserve the world that God has doomed. They are forgetting of course the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ controls history. Think of it, here is this world that the Bible describes as anti-god, and here are all these Christians sidetracked, minus doctrine, trying to clean up the devils world. One of the greatest delusions Satan imposes is the supposition that only such things as society considers evil could originate with the devil, if indeed there is a devil at all to originate anything. Actually it is the Word of God which reveals the fact that governments, morals, education, art, commercialism, vast enterprises and organizations, and much of religious activity are all a part of the deception of Satan. Satan even uses all the good which he can in the world to try and accomplish his goal which is to be equal with God.

What are the things he aims to accomplish?

He aims to be like the most high! That is why the presence of evil in the world is not due to Satan's intention to have it so but the fact that Satan's ambition has led him to undertake more than any creature could ever handle. The Bible teaches that the world system must be destroyed, not its evil alone, but all that is in it, both good and bad. God will include nothing of Satan's failure into that kingdom which He

will set up in the earth. All the programs out today, whether Christian or non-Christian will be rejected when the Lord comes back to set up His kingdom. So the Satanic lie is expanded to the point where its manifestation embraces all that is in the world and it is built on the one original idea which characterizes it all, namely, independence of God. One thing that Satan promotes is independence from God. He is the father of creature credit! Today scores of believers are involved with trying to clean up the world and make it presentable for the Lord, when in reality they are helping the super creature genius, Satan! Those of the world system are not influenced by God's word. Even cosmic Christians are not influenced by Bible doctrine. This reveals the far-reaching effect of the Satanic deception.

There you have the reason why many things that Christians are involved with are classified as evil. They are not dedicated to doctrine. They are not accurate in their doctrine. They are not interested in doctrine. They are too busy cleaning up the devils world. Too busy getting prayer back into schools. Too busy because they are involved in politics! Too busy blowing up abortion clinics. Too busy trying to make the world a better place to live. Too busy sticking their nose into other people's business. In a priest or client nation to God, there exist all the concepts of freedom, including privacy, the sacredness of property and life, free enterprise, and little government with big people. Yet evangelicals today want to pass laws which would, in effect, make all unbelievers outlaws. Under freedom, people have the right to believe in Christ, to be evangelized, and to say no or yes to the Gospel. People's rights must be protected whether we agree with them or not. Furthermore, believers in a client nation should be free to find their right pastor and learn the details of the PPOG from him, and as a result, to have a fantastic historical invisible impact. In any client nation there are both believers and unbelievers, as well as many other religions besides Christianity. There is no such thing as so-called Christian laws. The standards for Christianity are found only in the PPOG and in our portfolio of invisible assets.

Therefore, we have no right to interfere in the lives of others and dictate what they should wear, how they should think, or what they should say. The impact of Christianity is found only in evangelism, yet few believers understand Salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Therefore, to outlaw a certain segment of society because they do not adhere to Christian principles is a disaster. To force a superficial theory of Christianity on all people becomes tantamount to tyranny. We have the right to our opinions, but so do other believers and others who are involved in cults and religions. People have the right to believe what they want to believe. We have no right to persecute or imprison such people. The Bible clearly emphasizes that the impact of Christianity on a nation is definitely spiritual. Christians have civil responsibility in military service, paying taxes, and in fulfilling certain civic responsibilities. This does not include violence, destruction of property, intrusion on the privacy of anyone, or any form of civil disobedience.

Yet Christian leaders in evangelicalism today are advocating civil disobedience. The separation of Church and state demands that the believer understand his role in society in terms of the will, plan, and purpose of God for the Church-age believer as a member of the Royal Family of God.

The spiritual impact of the PPOG not only opposes the present modus operandi of Christian activism, but assigns it to the arrogance of the cosmic system.