

The Second Coming of Christ

The first Rapture was Enoch (Genesis), the second was Elijah (Kings) and the third was Christ (Acts). The Rapture of the Church (Revelation 4:1) will thus be the fourth.

The fact is that God chose or elected Israel to be His wife, and Christ chose or elected His people to be His bride, and it is the Father's elect wife experiencing the judgements mentioned in Revelation chapters 6-18.

God has two elect groups upon Earth - the nation of Israel (Romans 11:28) and the Church (1 Peter 1:2) God chose Israel (Deuteronomy 7:7-8) and He has never cancelled His selection. Therefore, Israel remains God's chosen people and heir to His promises as stated in Romans 11:28.

God always protects His own:

- When Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, Lot and his family were spared.
- Daniel was spared in a den of hungry lions.
- When the Flood occurred, Noah and seven of his family were spared.
- The Church will be spared the outpouring of God's wrath. It will fall on the wicked.

The pre-Tribulation Rapture

The Rapture occurs before the Tribulation period begins. The pre-Tribulation view promises that Christians will not endure the great terror of that day when the Antichrist rules, when hordes of pestilences invade our world, when incurable diseases strike humankind, and when the atmosphere of Earth as we know it deteriorates to the point where planet Earth is unliveable, and the air not fit to breathe.

Because the true Church, all born-again believers, wholeheartedly accept Christ as Saviour (John 1:11-12), they are called to Heaven to escape the Tribulation period, or Time of Jacob's Trouble. During this time of disillusionment and despair, the Jews as a nation will finally recognize Jesus Christ as Messiah and King in the midst of their suffering (Romans 11:26). This clarifies Matthew 24:22, which states, "But for the elect's sake [Israel, Deuteronomy 7:6-7] those days shall be shortened."

The Judgement Seat of Christ for the Church then occurs in Heaven as the Tribulation judgement hits the Earth with massive force. Both elect groups are being prepared for the Millennium (1000 years of peace on the New Earth) - one in Heaven, the other upon Earth. At the conclusion of this Time of Jacob's Trouble, Christ returns with an army of believers and judges the nations on the basis of their rejection of Christ and their treatment of Israel (Matthew 25:31-46).

It should be remembered that there will be multitudes, millions upon millions of people, converted / saved during Earth's most horrendous hour because this is the time when God's spirit is poured out upon all flesh (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17), and the greatest revival in history occurs. It will occur after the Rapture, during the seven year Tribulation period when 144,000 Jews (Revelation 7:4-8) will circle the globe, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom

(Matthew 24:14), declaring the good news: The King is coming! At that time, the Bible says, "All Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:26). That means Jews.

Revelation 7:9, then refers to "A great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." These are the ones who have emerged from the Great Tribulation and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (v. 14). They have trusted in the blood of the Lamb, and have been cleansed.

Both Jews and Gentiles are saved during the greatest revival in history, because at that time, God says, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28). In all probability, the Rapture will convince many that all these things they heard about Jesus and the Bible are in fact true, persuading them to want to know the Lord (i.e submit, repent and receive their salvation) before it is too late.

The Revelation

The second phase of the Second Coming, described as "the Revelation", will take place 7 years after the Rapture. Again, the term "revelation" is a coined word, picturing the truth it depicts. "Revelation" comes from the word "revealing". When Christ returns to Earth, He will reveal Himself to all inhabitants of the globe. Hence, this event is called the Revelation or revealing of Christ. Revelation 4:1 describes phase one of the return of Christ, while Revelation 19:11 depicts phase two. Fix these two chapters firmly in your mind, and prophecy will become a stabilized blessing in your life.

The "come up hither" call of Revelation 4:1 is the Rapture, the meeting in the air. The appearance of the rider on the white horse and His armies in Revelation 19:11 is the revelation of Jesus Christ. Chapter 4 removes the believer from the judgements described in chapters 6-18, while chapter 19 restores him to his Earthly sojourn after the judgements are completed. Chapter 4, depicting the Rapture, occurs before the seven years of tribulation described in chapters 6-18, and chapter 19 describes the return of the King and His people, after the horrendous catastrophes of chapters 6-18 occur.

We know this to be true because the Book of Revelation is written chronologically, with the Tribulation Hour taking place in chapters 6-18. Four precedes six, and nineteen follows eighteen. It's that simple. The Church is removed in chapter 4, and the Tribulation follows in chapters 6-18. Then the saints return with Christ at the conclusion of the Tribulation Hour, at the Revelation, in chapter 19.

The 4 Judgements that occur during the Tribulation:

1. Judgement of the believer's sin

"Without shedding of blood is no remission of sin" (Hebrews 9:22). More than nineteen hundred years ago, Christ came from Heaven's glory to shed His precious blood for a world of ungodly sinners. He did not die for His own sin, for He knew no sin, but became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). Through His substitutionary death, dying for Mankind, all who receive

this Christ can have the past, present, and future stains of sin forgiven and forgotten (Hebrews 8:12). "The blood of Jesus Christ [God's] Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7; see Titus 3:5 and Romans 8:1).

2. Judgement of the believer's service

The believer's lifetime of works are judged at the Bema Seat (2 Corinthians 5:10). Some Christians do not take this judgement seriously. However, to do so is to refuse life in accordance with God's Plan. The life of a Christian will be judged, and God's pronouncement of that verdict must not be taken lightly. If one fails God's investigative judgment in that day, there will be no crowns to place before Christ on His throne (Revelation 4:10-11).

3. Judgement of Israel

When the armies of the world converge on the Middle East, culminating at Israel (Zechariah 14:2; Ezekiel 38, 39), this period of bloody devastation becomes the Time of Jacob's Trouble (Jeremiah 30:7). During this Tribulation period, the whole world will come into judgement. One in three will be consumed by fire, and half of all people will die during this time (Revelation 6:8; 9:18).

Numerous passages describe this time as the Earth's worst event (Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 12:1; Joel 2:2). Jesus said, "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21). At this time they will "look on Him whom they have pierced." Their response will cause them to repent and recognize Christ as Messiah.

4. Judgement of the nations

Matthew 25 pictures the glorious return of Christ to this Earth. This correlates with Revelation 19:11-16 when Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords. After Armageddon, and before He establishes His Millennial Kingdom upon Earth (Revelation 20:4), Christ purges the Earth of its rebels.

The "sheep" nations are invited to enter the Kingdom (Millennium) along with the "brethren," the Jews. The *goats*, those who mistreated Jews and rejected Christ, are cast into the Lake Of Fire (Matthew 25:41,46).

The 21 special judgements that fall upon Earth during the Tribulation:

They are in three series of sevens described as seals, trumpets, and vials (or bowls):

1. The Seal Judgements

This is the beginning of the programme of God to pour out judgements upon the Earth, and includes:

The world's greatest dictator (Revelation 6:1-2)

The world's greatest war (Revelation 6:3-4)
The world's greatest famine (Revelation 6:5-6)
The world's greatest death blow (Revelation 6:7-8)
The world's greatest persecution (Revelation 6:9-11)
The world's greatest ecological disaster (Revelation 6:12-17)
The world's greatest hour of fear ... actually the lull before the storm (Revelation 8:1)

2. The Trumpet Judgements

The trumpets of Heaven sound an alarm throughout the world announcing the public judgements of God. Each blast ushers in an added judgement.

The world's greatest fire (Revelation 8:7)
The world's greatest oceanic disturbance (Revelation 8:8-9)
The world's greatest pollution of water (Revelation 8:10-11)
The world's greatest darkness (Revelation 8:12-13)
The world's greatest pestilential invasion (Revelation 9:1-6)
The world's greatest army (Revelation 9:16)
The world's greatest storm (Revelation 11:15-19)

3. The Vial Judgements

The world's greatest epidemic (Revelation 16:2)
The world's greatest contamination by blood (Revelation 16:3-7)
The world's greatest contamination by blood, continued (Revelation 16:3-7)
The world's greatest scorching (Revelation 16:8-9)
The world's greatest plague (Revelation 16:10-11)
The world's greatest invasion (Revelation 16:12)
The world's greatest earthquake (Revelation 16:18)

These twenty one judgements unleash unbelievable war, ecological disasters, and atomic catastrophe on our Earth. Note this judgement in particular; Revelation 14:20 reads, "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." According to today's calculations, that is a river of blood two hundred miles long, which is *the exact length of the nation of Israel*. Think of it! An entire nation saturated and soaked with blood. The Rapture means that the Church of Jesus Christ will not be present to endure this terrible suffering. The Bride will be at home, at the Marriage ceremony, and afterward return for the Supper (Revelation 19:7-16).

True believers, the Church, will be spared the horrors of the Tribulation. Revelation 3:10 declares, "*I also will keep thee from [ek-out of] the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the Earth.*"

Then, at the end of the 7 years, Jesus Christ comes back to Earth to set up His Kingdom for a thousand years; called the Millennium. It is important to remember that the Millennium Reign (1000 years of peace) is blended with the eternal state, ie what begins in the Millennium will continue on the new Earth for all eternity. Hallelujah!