

The “Rapture”

Introduction

The next major biblical event prophesied in scripture that will take place is referred to as “The Rapture”. This is when every Christian presently living (also known as “The Church”) will instantly be called to meet Jesus in the clouds. It is not known whether all Christians will disappear completely taking our bodies with us, or whether our bodies will drop dead and only our souls will go on to meet Jesus. There are no further biblical prophesies that must happen before this event takes place so it could occur at any time.



Caught Up

The main verse that is pointed to that defines the rapture is 1st Thessalonians 4:17. The term used in the common English translations (translated from Greek) to describe the rapture is “caught up”.

[1 Thessalonians 4:17] 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 term “caught up” comes from the Greek word “harpazo” which means to seize, pluck, take, or catch up.

Nowhere in the English translations of the bible is the word “Rapture” used. This word is actually from the word “rapiemur” in the Latin Vulgate translation meaning “we shall be snatched”, “we shall be grabbed”, or “we shall be carried off”.

The term “Rapture” specifically comes from the term “rapturo” which is the participle formed of the verb “rapiemur “. This term means “about to snatch”, “about to grab”, or “about to carry off”.

Paul’s 1st Letter to the Corinthians

Let’s look at Paul’s 1st letter to the Corinthians in which he tells of “a mystery”...

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

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

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

[1 Corinthians 15:53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

When Paul says that we shall not all “sleep”, he is referring to the fact that we will not all “die”.

So what Paul is saying here is that in a moment (the twinkling of an eye):

- 1) A trumpet will sound.
- 2) All dead Christians will be raised and given an “incorruptible” body.
- 3) All living Christians will be “changed” into their “incorruptible” body.

Because of the way it says “we shall be changed”, I tend to think that Christians will disappear completely. This seems to infer that we will take our present bodies which will be changed; However, this is only speculation on my part.



Another point of note is the term referring to the bodies we will receive as “incorruptible”. What this seems to mean is that we will get perfect bodies, just as Adam and Eve had before the fall. These bodies will never get sick or age and may have the capability of appearing and disappearing at will.

Paul’s 1st Letter to the Thessalonians

In this letter, Paul is giving words of support and trying to let the Thessalonians know that they should not worry about their loved ones who have died (fallen asleep).

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

[1 Thessalonians 4:16] For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

[1 Thessalonians 4:17] 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.

[1 Thessalonians 4:18] Therefore comfort one another with these words.



So let's look at what Paul has said here:

- 1) Jesus Christ (The Lord) will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.
- 2) The dead in Christ will rise first (Christians who have died).
- 3) Then the living Christians will be “caught up” or “raptured”.
- 4) We will all come together in the clouds and meet the Lord in the air.
- 5) We will always be with the Lord after this.

It is important to note that the bible does not tell us specifically when the rapture will occur; however, there are a couple verses related to when the anti-Christ will be revealed and the seven year tribulation period will begin that can give us a general time.

When Will The Rapture Occur?

There are four main views on when the rapture will occur. The views basically center around the 7 year tribulation period that is spoken of in the books of Daniel and Revelation. Some individuals also use verses focused on the 1000 year (millennial) rule of Jesus Christ as a reference for the rapture timing. The millennial rule of Jesus will come after the tribulation period has been completed.

- 1) **Pre-Tribulation** – This view believes that the rapture will take place before the tribulation period. The tribulation period is for the Jews and non-believers only. The bible supports this view.
- 2) **Mid-Tribulation** – This view believes that the Church will remain on earth for the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation but will be raptured before the last 3 ½ years known as the great tribulation. This view has minimal biblical support.
- 3) **Post-Tribulation** – This view believes that the Church will experience the entire 7 year tribulation period. This is the most difficult view to support scripturally.
- 4) **No Rapture** – Also known as the “Dominion Doctrine”, this view believes that the second coming of Christ and the rapture are the same event. This view is totally unscriptural.

I believe very strongly in the pre-tribulation rapture. The section of scripture that I believe supports a pre-tribulation rapture is found in Paul’s 2nd letter to the Thessalonians.

Paul’s 2nd Letter to The Thessalonians

This letter was written to the Thessalonians to keep them from worrying about the day Christ would come and gather all Christians together (2nd coming of Christ not the rapture).

Paul tells the Thessalonians things that must happen before the anti-christ appears. The most important thing that must occur before the anti-christ appears is the “falling away” or “apostasy”.

Many false teachers were telling the Thessalonians that the gathering of the Church had already occurred, and the tribulation period had started so they were actually living in “the day of the Lord”. Because they were being so heavily persecuted, many believed this false teaching. There are many false teachers around today as can be seen by the billboard below.



Let's look at the verses and then dive deeper into the actual Greek word used for “apostasy” or “falling away”.

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

[2 Thessalonians 2:2] not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

[2 Thessalonians 2:3] Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

[2 Thessalonians 2:4] who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

[2 Thessalonians 2:5] Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

[2 Thessalonians 2:6] And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.

[2 Thessalonians 2:7] 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.

[2 Thessalonians 2:8] And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

[2 Thessalonians 2:9] The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

[2 Thessalonians 2:10] and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

[2 Thessalonians 2:11] And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

[2 Thessalonians 2:12] that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

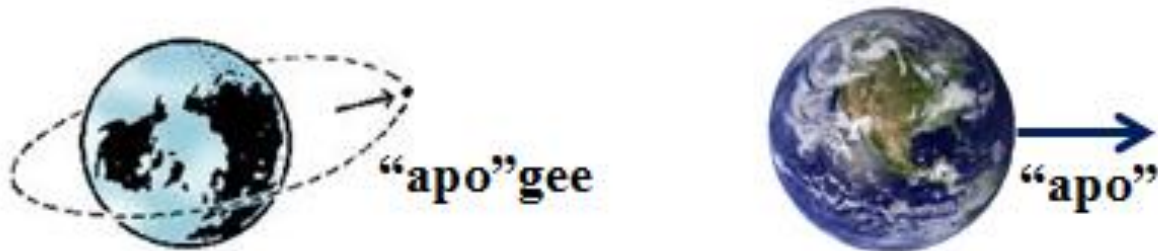
Most theologians interpret this “falling away” or “apostasy” as a mass exodus of Christians from following Christ or as a huge turning away or a “religious apostasy” of people from the Church. This is not the correct interpretation of the verse.

Paul tells them that before the 2nd coming of Christ can occur, a “falling away” must come and the anti-Christ must be revealed first.

Falling Away (Apostasy)

The Greek word translated as “falling away” in [2nd Thessalonians 2:3] above is “apostasia” which can be defined as defection from truth , falling away, forsake. By realizing the original Greek root of the word “apostasia” is “apo”, we can see the true meaning of the word apostasia here.

apo – Denotes motion from the surface of an object, as a line drawn from the circumference. It is used to describe motion away from a place or marking the distance that separates two places as in the term “apogee”.

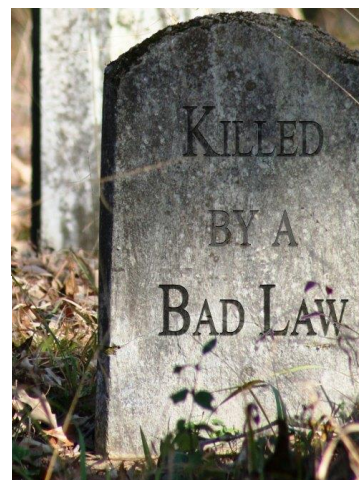
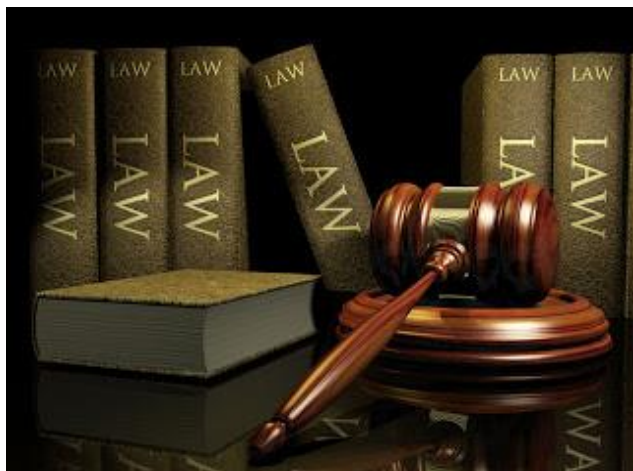


So it should be clear that the “apostasy” or “falling away” is actually the rapture! Because the anti-Christ (referred to as the lawless one or the son of perdition) appears at the beginning of the tribulation period and makes a 7 year covenant with the Jews, which defines the tribulation period, this shows that the rapture must take place before the tribulation period can begin.



This is an incredible and frightening thing to think about. Right now, there are millions of Christians spread throughout the world. They are judges, politicians, police officers, school teachers, legislators, pastors, mothers and fathers, etc. All of these Christians have the Holy Spirit in them; Therefore, the Holy Spirit (“He”) is spread throughout the world “restraining” (see [2nd Thessalonians 2:7] above) the anti-christ from coming to power.

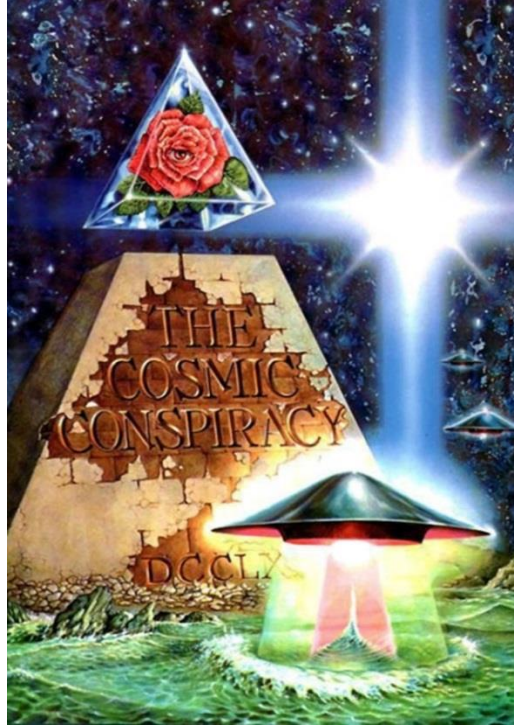
When Satan manipulates non-believers to implement a new law, regulation, or system that is sinful or immoral, Christians stand up (as God wills) and fight the change and in many cases keeps it from occurring. Once the rapture occurs and the Holy Spirit is removed from the entire world, there will be no one left to stand up for what is righteous and moral. Evil laws and systems will be established and the morality of civilization will decay extremely fast. This will be a scary time to be on the planet earth.



Immediately After The Rapture

When the rapture occurs, it is not clear whether all Christians will instantly disappear or whether their bodies will drop dead as our souls are taken to be with Christ. If you look back at [2nd Thessalonians 2:11] it tells us that something incredible is going to happen. Immediately after the rapture occurs, Satan is going to need to have an explanation to tell the rest of the world what happened...this will be “the lie” Paul is referring to. God is going to send a “strong delusion” so that all the unrighteous remaining on the earth will believe the lie Satan tells them.

The
Big
Lie



Based on my own knowledge, I am going to speculate for a moment as to what I believe the lie might be. There are many seemingly different agendas (UFO's, aliens, robots, evolution, witchcraft, magic, advanced technology, DNA Splicing for bettering the species, etc) that are being aggressively promoted today that can all support a similar conclusion.



All of the false religions (Mormons, Hindus, Buddhists, Catholics, etc.) have a form of self betterment or evolution at their core; Therefore, a greater being from outer space can easily be fit to support and fulfill the doctrines of these groups.

The lie may involve an explanation that says the people that disappeared or died were inferior and not able to evolve to the next level due to their closed minds so they were eliminated. Or it could be that the people were genetically inferior so they died due to an environmental issue. Whatever it is, it will be accepted and supported by seemingly valid evidence.



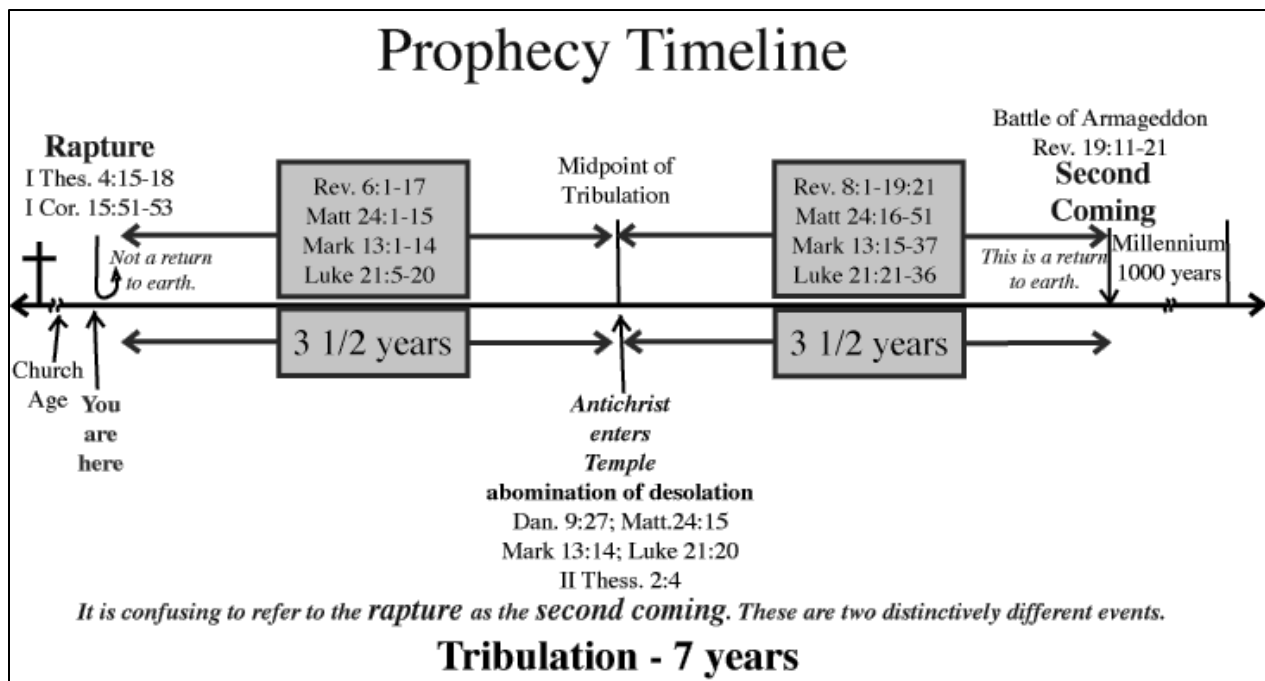
I believe the “lie” will involve an incredible show of technology, horrific creatures created by DNA splicing, and a supposed evolved set of “super” beings that will seem like “gods” to normal people. This will be shown on every media outlet and blown to proportions that have never been seen before. This show will be orchestrated to point to the ultimate example of evolution or the “god of gods” that will be the anti-christ. Again, this is just speculation on my part but there is abundant information available to back this type of scenario.

Pre-Tribulation Rapture Support

Because the tribulation period is the last seven years of the prophesy recorded by Daniel (referred to as Daniel’s 70th week), it is meant mainly for Jews; however, non-believers will experience it as well.

THE 70TH WEEK OF DANIEL

[Daniel 9:27] Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."



The "one week" referred to here is a period of "7", which is seven years. This verse tells us that "he" (the anti-christ) will make a covenant with many (the Jews) for seven years. He will allow them to return to Israel, to re-build the temple, and to start making sacrifices again just like in the old testament. In the middle of the week (after 3 1/2 years), the anti-christ will break the covenant and start killing the Jews. The last 3 1/2 years is known as the "Great Tribulation" or the "Time of Jacob's Trouble".

The following verses support the view that Christians will not go through the tribulation period which will be packed full of God's wrath that is meant for the Jews (and non-believers).

[Romans 5:9] Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

[1 Thessalonians 1:10] and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

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

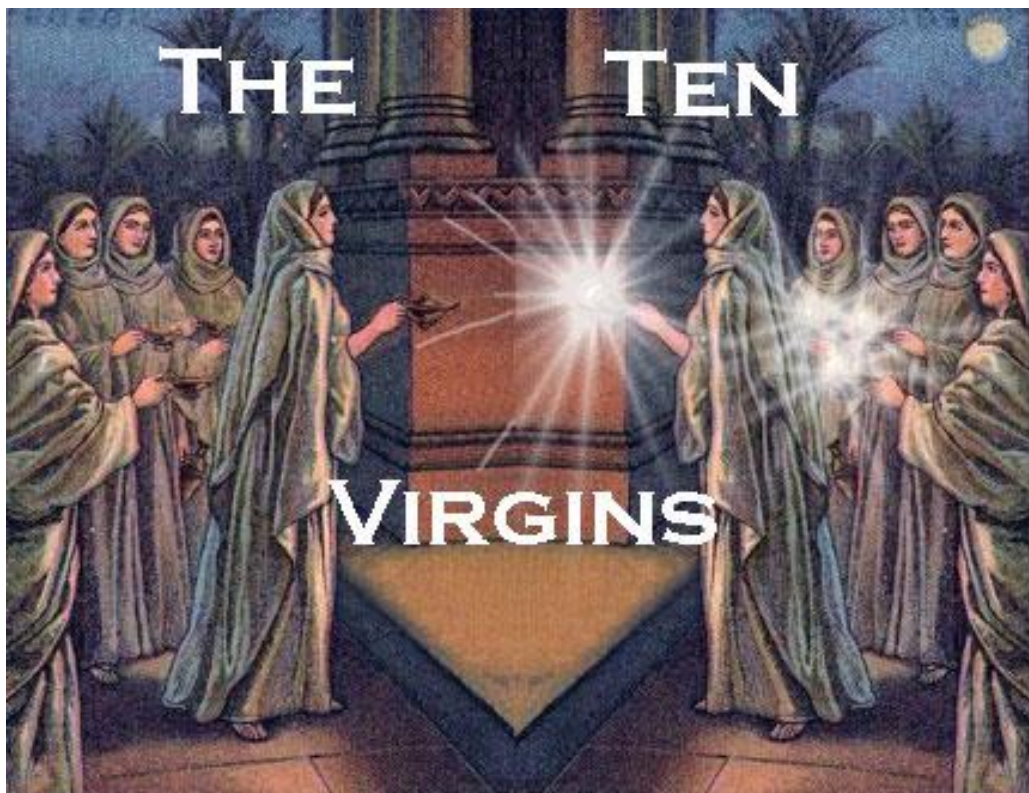
[Revelation 3:10] Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

| Scripture | Supports | | |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | Pre-Trib | Mid-Trib | Post-Trib |
| Romans 5:9 | Yes | No | No |
| 1st Thessalonians 1:10 | Yes | No | No |
| 1st Thessalonians 5:9 | Yes | No | No |
| 2nd Thessalonians 2:1-12 | Yes | No | No |
| Revelation 3:10 | Yes | No | No |

To me, the Post-trib rapture makes no sense because Jesus is coming to earth at that time so why would Christians want to leave? A final thought on the mid-tribulation and post-tribulation views is that we are not supposed to know when the rapture is going to occur. If either of these views are correct, the time of the rapture could be estimated fairly accurately due to scriptures that describe the start and length of the tribulation period.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

The parable of the ten virgins, told to the apostles by Jesus, is a picture of the rapture. The main point of the parable is for Christians to be truly prepared in their hearts and ready for the coming of Christ. Live righteously now and don't put off giving your life to Christ until tomorrow.



[Matthew 25:1] "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

[Matthew 25:2] Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

[Matthew 25:3] Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,

[Matthew 25:4] but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

[Matthew 25:5] But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

[Matthew 25:6] "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'

[Matthew 25:7] Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

[Matthew 25:8] And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

[Matthew 25:9] But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'

[Matthew 25:10] And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

[Matthew 25:11] "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!'

[Matthew 25:12] But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

[Matthew 25:13] "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

The ten virgins are ten professing Christians while the five wise virgins are truly saved and the five foolish virgins are not truly saved. The oil for the lamps is the Holy Spirit. The Bridegroom is Jesus Christ.

Enoch as a Shadow of The Rapture

A very interesting story of note is the account of Enoch. This story is said to be a shadow or “type” of the rapture because Enoch was taken away (raptured) before the great flood of Noah (a “type” of tribulation period).

[Genesis 5:23] So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years.

[Genesis 5:24] And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

[Hebrews 11:5] By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "AND WAS NOT FOUND, BECAUSE GOD HAD TAKEN HIM"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.



This may or may not be an accurate representation of the rapture but it is interesting. It is also very thought-provoking that Enoch lived 365 years which is the same number of days in a year.

If You Are Left Behind

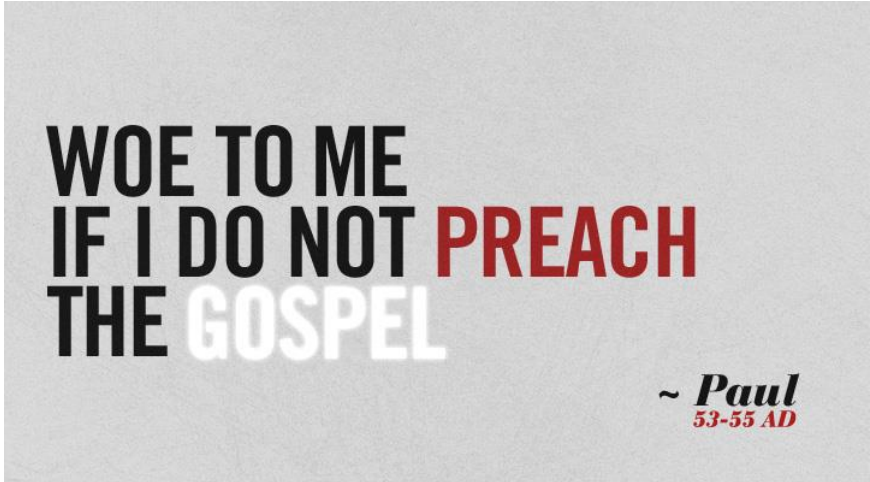


Fortunately, many people will be saved during the tribulation period; however, nearly all of them will be killed. If suddenly millions of people disappear or die and a “god-like” man arises, you may have to act quickly.

- Immediately ask Jesus to forgive you for your sins and ask Him to become your Lord and Savior (this must be done from the heart).
- Do not allow a chip to be placed into your body in order that you can buy and sell things. This is the mark of the beast referred to in Revelation (13:17).
- Do not worship any person or image on the earth.
- Try to find other “believers” and help support each other.
- Hide from anyone that has accepted the chip.
- Don’t believe anything...The world is all lies.
- If you are captured and being forced to take a chip or bow down to a false god, allow them to kill you rather than giving in!

Conclusion

I hope this has shed some light on the mystery surrounding the rapture of the Church of Jesus Christ. It is important that we do not get all tied up waiting for this to happen. We need to assume it will not happen during our lifetime and we need to continue spreading the gospel.



**WOE TO ME
IF I DO NOT PREACH
THE GOSPEL**

~ Paul
53-55 AD

If you are a non-believer, please believe that Jesus Christ is real, He is God, He gave His life for your sins, and He is the only way to heaven. Ask Jesus to forgive you for your sins and to come into your heart and life to be your Lord and Savior. Are you ready if Jesus came back today?

