

Christ in Prophecy

Pre-Trib 18: "The Rapture and the Left Behinds"

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Can the Rapture of the Church be found anywhere in the book of Revelation? And if so where? And what about those who hear the Gospel before the Rapture and reject it, can they be saved during the Tribulation? Stay tuned for a discussion of these questions by 13 Bible prophecy experts.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus our Blessed Hope and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. This is the third week in our presentation of 13 Bible prophecy experts responding to questions about the book of Revelation. If you've missed our previous two programs featuring these interviews you can watch them on our website at lamblion.com. In this program we are going to seek the answers to a couple of more questions about the book of Revelation and both questions will relate to the Rapture of the Church. The first has to do with whether or not the Rapture is even mentioned in the book of Revelation, and if so where? We do not have time to present all the answers we received but here are some representative ones.

Al Gist: The Rapture is found I guess in an indirect way in chapter 4:1 the Bible says that the windows of Heaven are opened up and John hears a voice saying, "Come up hither." And next we find John in the very Throne Room of God in Heaven. I think that's a picture of the Rapture of the Church; the snatching away, the sudden calling up of God's people to Heaven to be with the Lord. So in that sense I would say that it's mentioned. Although I wouldn't say that it's a major topic of Revelation, it's certainly is mentioned in an indirect way.

August Rosado: Some would use Revelation 4:1 to teach that that is talking about the Rapture of the Church. But I see it as John being translated from earth to Heaven and he is seeing this heavenly scene. And what he is seeing are the events of Revelation chapters 4 and 5. He sees the four and twenty elders around the throne. I believe Dave that is the raptured Church. And so I do believe that Revelation 4:1 is a Rapture per-se but not directly referring to the Rapture of the Church. It is just John being transported from earth to Heaven to see the events that will happen in the not too distant future. But you can use Revelation 4:1 to prove a Pre-Tribulation Rapture because you have the four and twenty elders around the throne; that is the raptured Church. And then you have chapters 6-19 that deals with Daniel's seventieth week of prophecy the Tribulation period. And then you have Revelation 19 where He is coming back with His Church especially verse 14, and the armies which were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses clothed in fine linen white and clean. I'm convinced Dave that in verse 14 that is

referring to us, that's our cue, we are coming back with Him at His Second Coming. So Revelation 4:1 is a Rapture per-say but it's more or less John being transferred from earth to Heaven.

Daymond Duck: Well some people place the Rapture of the Church when the seventh angel blows the seventh trumpet. And others place the Rapture of the Church when the two witnesses ascend up into Heaven. And others place it and I'm one of them in Revelation 4:1-2, and we go back there and look at those verse and we see that John heard this voice in Heaven, he saw a door open and he heard this voice in Heaven it sounded like a trumpet and the voice says, "Come up hither." And he was caught up into Heaven. I believe his body was changed, he was in the spirit. And he finds himself suddenly before the throne of God. And that's a pretty good picture of what is going to happen at the Rapture of the Church. I disagree with those that say that it is when the seventh angel blows the seventh trumpet for several reasons I want to just quickly give you three reasons. (1) The rapture of the Church that is about catching believers up into Heaven. The seventh trumpet is about the judgment of unbelievers on earth. Another reason would be the Rapture of the Church is about grace, it is about an undeserving Church being caught up into Heaven. But the seventh trumpet is about wrath, it's about the judgment falling on unbelievers on earth. And then another one is that God says, "Comfort one another with these words," and we find that the seventh trumpet makes people on earth angry. Now concerning the two witnesses we see that they ascend up into Heaven before the seventh trumpet. And it really doesn't look like it's in a moment in a twinkling of an eye like the Rapture of the Church is because they stand on their feet, they walk around, the whole world sees them and then they ascend up into Heaven.

Mark Hitchcock: I don't think the Rapture is found specifically in the book of Revelation. A lot of people will look at passages like Revelation 4:1 you know where it talks about there is a trumpet and John is caught up to Heaven. That is John being caught up to Heaven; I don't really think that is a picture of the Rapture. Now in Revelation 3:10 there is a statement there that God's people the Church, it is written to the Church of Philadelphia but I think the letter to those seven churches are to all believers because he says to each one he says, "Hear what the Spirit says to the Churches." So it is for all of God's people. It does say there that God is going to keep us from the hour of testing that is coming upon the whole earth to test those who dwell on the earth. Which there is a beautiful picture, He doesn't just say, "I'm going to keep you from the testing" But He says, "I'm going to keep you from the time of the testing." Now the only way I know to be kept from the time of the test is to not be there. So I think Revelation 3:10 is a statement that certainly implies at least strongly the idea of a Pre-Trib Rapture. Another place where I think we could see the idea of the Pre-Trib Rapture in Revelation is that you have the word ecclesia or church 20 times in the book of Revelation. You have 19 times in chapters 1-3 and then all of a sudden no mention of the Church. Next time the Church is mentioned, the word ecclesia is used is Revelation 22:16. So I think you know these kind of statements we can see the idea of a Pre-Trib Rapture there. Although it's you know never just clearly spelled out or stated. There is a lot of these clues in there, therefore I think we can find that indicate Christ is going to come and take the Church out before the Tribulation begins.

Jack Kinsella: I believe it is yes. I believe that in Revelation 4:1 it says, "Then I looked and I heard a voice from Heaven, as it were the sound of a trumpet, and it said, 'Come up hither,'" and

instantly John says, 'I was transported in the spirit into heaven.'" If you follow the perspective that the rest of the story, the rest of the outline of the revelation from John, everything about the Church is in Heaven. Everything that has to do with what is going on earth is separate from where John is looking at it. John is look down from Heaven he is in the presence of the Lord. He is in the presence of the martyrs. He's in the presence of the Tribulation saints. And so but at no time is the Church itself present on earth. So I believe the vision that's here is between the Lord in the first three chapters speaks to the seven churches, speaks essentially to the churches of this Church Age. And then after that he says this is what is going to happen next.

Ed Hindson: That's a good question. It's there obviously by implication. Is there a clear cut, slam dunk verse that we can say that's absolutely the Rapture no matter what? I think it is a matter of accumulative evidence. Certainly the message to the church of Philadelphia is that you will escape the judgment that is coming in the future; that you will be taken out from the hour of trial that certainly sounds like the Rapture. And it's a promise to a church that's pictured as a faithful church that is doing everything right. There are no words of condemnation against that church; and then John being caught up into Heaven many see as a kind of picture or type of the Rapture. But one thing that I think a lot of people overlook is you've got a very clear Rapture in the book of Revelation in the story of the two witnesses. They're preaching the Gospel; they are executed and put to death by the beast, by the Antichrist. Their bodies lie dead in the street for 3 1/2 days and the Spirit of God enters into them resurrects them, and then says to them, "Come on up," and zap they're raptured right out of sight. Now why would God go to all the trouble to let them die, resurrect them, and rapture them presumably at the middle point of the Tribulation period? I think it was to convince people that the Rapture had occurred earlier. That this disappearance of millions of people that seems so unexplainable is now explained by God himself in a mini-rapture if you will of the two witnesses who are then a picture of the greater Rapture in the book of Revelation.

Terry James: Yes, I believe it is to be found in two places. First maybe more than that really but first in Revelation 3:10 where it says that, "Because you've kept the word of my patience I will keep you out of the hour of testing," or the Tribulation hour, we believe to be the Tribulation hour. And the Tribulation hour includes that is coming upon the whole world of course for rebellion and sin and so forth. The second place I think it's found for sure is in Revelation 4:1 where it says, "The door is open in Heaven, and John hears a voice say, 'come up hither,'" And then he is suddenly in the Throne Room of God and he sees all the things he sees there. I think also there are types of Raptures probably associated with the two witnesses as they are lifted into Heaven.

Gary Fisher: When I first started studying the book of Revelation I found a verse Revelation 3:10 and I memorized it in the old King James Version, "Because thou hast kept the word of my perseverance I will also keep thee from the hour of testing. That hour that is about to come upon the world to try them that dwell upon the earth." Is the Rapture in the book of Revelation? I don't know what else we could conclude from that verse. There is a group of people who are going to be kept from not the Tribulation but the hour of the Tribulation, the time of it. And that is a little bit different. Yes I find the Rapture there. Also in the construction of the book, we get through the first 3 chapters and the churches are mentioned. Then Revelation 4:1 John says, "Come up here." And many believe that is a symbol. John being representative of the whole churches that

the church is now gone to Heaven in Revelation 4:1 and it's very, very, conspicuous the Church is not mentioned again until we get through Revelation 19. So the Church is absent from Revelation 4-19.

Tom McCall: I believe it is. We have the promise to the Church, one of the seven churches that they will be kept from the hour of the wrath of God. And that is so important because then they have that promise that they will not go through the wrath of the Lamb which is described so fully in the later chapters. And then I think we have a type of the Rapture with John where the Lord says to John, "Come up here." And then he sees the wonders of Heaven. That's so much like what is going to happen to the Church when we are caught up to be in Heaven with the Lord. So I think that is a similarity and of course it is at the end of the Church section there the three chapters John is caught up to be in Heaven, it seems like there is where the Rapture is portrayed. It's not majored upon, it's not you know highly developed but it is there.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: I hope you are enjoying these interviews with such a variety of Bible prophecy experts. Our next question is a hotly debated one. It concerns whether or not a person who hears the Gospel before the Rapture of the Church and rejects it can still be saved during the Tribulation. We do not have time to present all 13 responses so we will show you some representative ones, and then I will present a summary at the end.

Daymond Duck: Dave it is a tough teaching but I do believe that those who hear the Gospel before the Rapture and reject it won't be saved after the Rapture of the Church. Now I know that many men, women, and children will perish if that is true. But I go back and cite the example of the Ark. When God shut the door to Noah's Ark many men, women, and children perished in that instant. Verse 10 of Second Thessalonians chapter 2 reveals why people will perish in the future. It says, "The Antichrist will come with all deceivableness of unrighteousness and them that perish..." Why? "Because they receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved." Verse 11 reveals what kind of judgment will fall on those who didn't get saved. It says, "God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie." And then verse 12 reveals how many will perish it says, "that they all might be damned who believe not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Now there are people who want to water this down the way I look at it. They want to say all won't perish just some will perish, some will be saved. Part will perish; part will be saved that kind of thing. Now my answer to that is God said all. If God didn't mean all, God would have said some or part, but He said all, A-L-L. I don't believe that God is mentally challenged. I believe God says what He wants to say and He means what He says. And He will do what He says and all that kind of thing. The strong delusion reminds me of the blinding of the Jews, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, God giving gays up to a reprobate mind and that kind of thing. Remember Jesus talking about the Laodicean Church which I think is the church at the end of the age. And He says, "The lukewarm will be spewed out." He didn't say some of them. He said, "The lukewarm will be spewed out." And so I believe all of them will be spewed out. He told us that there is a straight gate and a narrow way, and I believe that and I believe people need to get on it.

AI Gist: I know there is a lot of debate about that. And I have heard that question asked a lot of times. So I took time to go back and read 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 and to really come to a firm conclusion. My conclusion is that yes, people who have heard the Gospel prior to the Rapture and rejected the offer of salvation will still be able to be saved after the Rapture of the Church. Now I know that some people would try to say that is Second Change Theology. Second Change Theology is not that at all. Second Change Theology is trying to say that people can be saved after they die. I don't believe that. But I am glad that God gave me more than one chance. He gave me many chances to be saved until I finally accepted what He was offering to me. But yes I do believe that people will have that opportunity even though they may have rejected it. And I know that God will send a strong delusion. Like I said I am familiar with that passage in 2 Thessalonians. But a careful study of that for me personally says that everything that is being talked about there has to do with the Antichrist and the things that are going on during the Tribulation. And so those people who will reject the truth I believe is a reference to people who are living in the Tribulation and so again it's a long answer, it would take some time to go through it. But yes I do believe that people will have that opportunity. In fact I believe immediately after the Rapture people who have heard the Gospel and rejected it will immediately fall on their face before God and cry out for the mercies of God. And our God whose mercies are infinite will hear their cry and they will be saved.

August Rosado: That's a real popular question. We get this a lot during the prophecy conferences that I preach at around the country. How I interpret 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 is that during the Church Age that we are in right now because the Rapture hasn't taken place yet, if someone hears and understands the Gospel and they willfully and outright rejected it would probably not have the opportunity during the Tribulation period to get saved. The Bible says that God will send a strong delusion that they would believe the lie, the lie of the Antichrist when He comes on the scene, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth but have pleasure in unrighteousness. However on the flip side of the coin I believe those during the Church Age who have not heard the Gospel and have not understood it would probably have that opportunity during the Tribulation period to get saved simply by the preaching of the 144,000, the two witnesses and the angel preaching the everlasting Gospel.

Don McGee: That's an interesting question and the answer that I have is yes they will. The way I see that is this, the passage in question that Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians has to do with the Tribulation period. Where there will be people who will hear the Gospel and their hearts will be hardened against it and they simply will not want to have anything to do with it. But if you look at things you see that what he also said in Romans 1 is basically the same thing. He said that there are people who simply don't want to believe, their hearts are hardened and God is going to give them their ultimate judgment which is He is going to give them exactly what they asked for. Now if you look at this carefully you'll see that both Romans 1 and the passage in 2 Thessalonians are actually saying the same thing it's just at two different times. The heart of men can be very wicked and evil and there will be hatred of God and a hatred of God's Word. And you see that today, and you are going to see it during the Tribulation period. And at the same time there are people whose hearts are permeable. I believe that there will be people during the Tribulation who have heard the Gospel earlier in their lives or they will see it maybe in a new light. Though they rejected the Gospel yet their hearts were not so hardened as we see in

Romans 1. And they I believe will hear it again and this time perhaps because of events that are happening around them will accept Jesus as their Savior.

Ed Hindson: I think ultimately only the Lord knows that for sure. The debate there is really over how one interprets the passage in 2 Thessalonians 2. That they will all believe a lie and be condemned does that mean everybody who rejects the Lord and continues to reject the Lord before the Rapture; after the Rapture tends to believe the lie and will not be converted. Or does he mean if they had an opportunity to hear the truth and they willfully deliberately rejected the truth. Now technically in the text in that passage it doesn't say they heard the truth and willfully rejected it. It simply says they didn't believe it and instead they believed the lie. Did they ever hear it may be a matter of debate. Now I was saved as a young person and grew up in a church that preached very strongly that if you don't get saved before the Rapture you will not have a chance after the Rapture. There are many good people who teach Bible prophecy that believe you will have another chance after the Rapture; that it's almost impossible to think the grace of God has limited itself to only speaking to you once and if you've made a rejection at one point you'll never have another opportunity. So I believe that yes people will have an opportunity to be saved after the Rapture. But the tragedy is very few will. Most will not. Constantly through the book of Revelation it says, "And they did not repent. And they did not repent. And they did not repent." I remind people all the time if you're not going to accept Christ in an age of peace, and prosperity for the most part. Why in the world do you think you would accept Him after the Rapture when you are going to get your head cut off for your faith in Christ? Why would you even take that chance? Plus you don't even know if you are going to live until the Rapture comes. So if you can't say yes to Jesus and live for Him now, why do you think you are going to be willing to say yes and die for Him later? You better not take any chances; you need to come to Christ right now.

Mark Hitchcock: There is a question that often gets asked. You know these people who've heard the Gospel clearly before the Rapture and they reject it and then the Rapture comes are these people going to be doomed and not have an opportunity to be saved. And it is based on 2 Thessalonians 2 where it talks about those who reject the love of God there so it is to not receive the truth and they believe the lie. So many say you know people who rejected the Gospel clearly you know they are finished, you know they are done for. The difficulty I have with that view is if one read 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 in the context of that chapter I believe it's talking about people during the Tribulation period who reject the truth of the Gospel and believe the lie that is the lie that the Antichrist is God. So in other words they rejected the Gospel, they've not accepted Christ they've turned to Antichrist. And I think what he is saying is the people who do that during the Tribulation period God then is going to send upon them it says "strong delusion." So it's kind of like once they've made their choice during the Tribulation for Antichrist God is going to say you've made your choice now and He's going to drive them even further into that delusion. Now it is true I think if someone doesn't accept Christ now in this time it's certainly not going to get any easier to accept Christ after the Rapture. So it maybe that many who reject Him now will continue to do so. But I wouldn't use 2 Thessalonians 2 to prove that point.

Ken Humphries: No. If my understanding of 2 Thessalonians 2 is correct I don't think that can be the case. In 2 Thessalonians 2 we read in verse 8, "Then shall that wicked one be revealed whom the Lord consume with the spirit of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His

coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause..." That is those who have rejected Christ. Those who have refused to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul writing to the church of Thessalonica says, "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie," as it is in other translations. And to me the following verse says it all in verse 12, "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." So those who have come through this period of grace, these days of grace; and having heard the Gospel preached to them very powerfully and very forcefully, and rejected and rebelled the call of God. When that day of grace is over, when the Rapture comes and the Church is taken home they will be left to face this amazing punishment; this delusion that will come even from God and will bring damnation to their souls.

Closing

Dr. Reagan: Let me give you a quick summary of how our experts responded to the question concerning whether or not a person can be saved during the Tribulation who heard the Gospel before the Rapture and rejected it. Six answered Yes and 4 No. Two were not sure. My own personal answer is no, because I believe that 2 Thessalonians 2 teaches that such a person will continue to reject the Gospel during the Tribulation.

Next week, the Lord willing, we will present another program in this series as we ask our Bible prophecy experts two questions about the Tribulation as it is portrayed in the book of Revelation.

One of those questions will relate to the fact that the book of Revelation says that many people will be saved during the Tribulation. How can that happen if the Church has been raptured out of the world? The second question will relate to the Babylon the Great mentioned in Revelation 17 and 18. Specifically, we will ask "Could this be the United States of America?" Well that's our program for this week. I hope it has been a blessing to you. Until next week, the Lord willing, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries, saying, "Look up, be watchful, for your Redemption is drawing near."

End of Program