

# Rapture Before the Great Tribulation

The Great Tribulation will be a period of seven years immediately before the second Advent of Christ (Matt.24:29-30); it is the "Day of the Lord" and the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer.30:7). The Tribulation is the 70th "week" of Israel's history before Israel is blessed in the Kingdom (Dan.9:27). It is therefore for Israel and NOT for the Church.

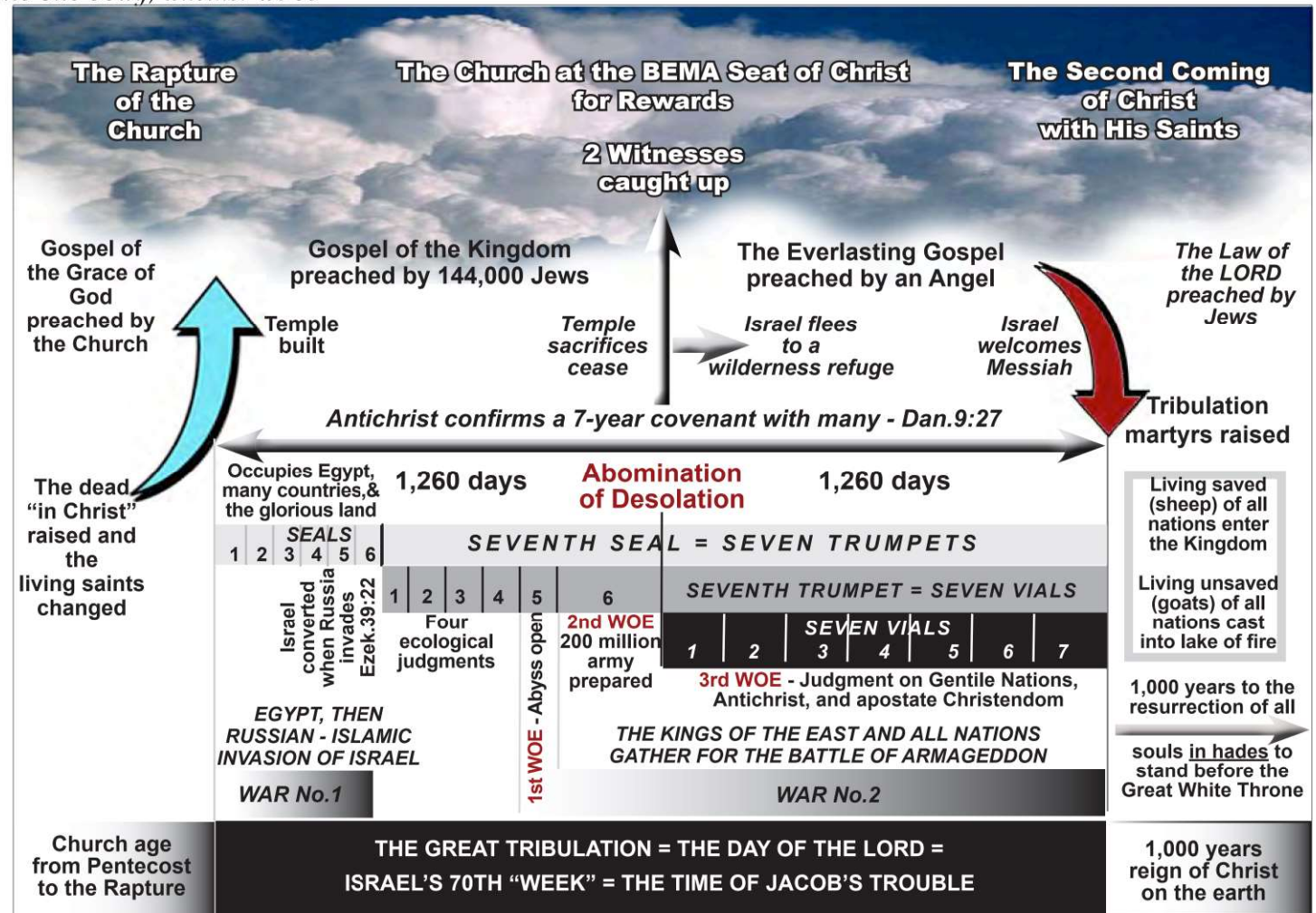
In 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, Paul described the Rapture of the Church - those "in Christ". Only the Church is "in Christ" i.e. in the body of Christ, for by "one Spirit are WE (Christians) all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles" (1Cor.12:13). At the Rapture "the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be CAUGHT UP together with them" (1Thess.4:16-17). See 1Cor.15:52.

When Paul described the Rapture of those "in Christ" he also discussed when it would occur. He warned that "the day of the Lord (the Tribulation) so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But YE, brethren, are NOT in darkness, that that day should overtake YOU as a thief" (1Thess.5:2-4).

Because...  
 "God hath not appointed US to wrath, (of the Day of the Lord) but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him" (1Thess.5:9-10).

Jesus told the Philadelphian Church:  
 "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from THE HOUR of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev.3:10-11).

The Tribulation is Israel's time when 144,000 Jewish men (Rev.7:1-8) will preach the Gospel of the kingdom "in all the world for a witness and then shall the end come" (Matt.24:14). Jewish Temple worship will recommence at Jerusalem and when "one shall be taken and the other left" it will be a sign to Israel that the end of the age has come. Jesus told Jewish disciples that He would "return from the wedding" (Luke 12:36). The Bride is therefore at the wedding in heaven BEFORE the 2nd Advent - the marriage supper is on earth (Rev.19:7-9; Luke 12:37).



# The First Resurrection or the Resurrection of Life

There is a common view throughout much of Christendom that there will be a General Resurrection at the end of the age when Christ returns and that all men, saved and unsaved, will be judged at that time. Such a view immediately rules out any possibility of an earthly kingdom for 1,000 years. It also rules out any future for Israel in the prophetic Scriptures and is known as Amillennialism, Replacement Theology, or Reformed Theology.

Jesus plainly stated that there is a **separate resurrection** for saved and unsaved souls. In John 5:28-29 we read:

*“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”*

When Jesus rose from the dead the **Old Testament saints** from Adam to Christ, were also raised. Matthew wrote:

*“And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many”* (Matt.27:51-53).

Before Christ rose, the **souls** of the saved went to the paradise section of “*sheol*”. The **souls** of all unsaved also went to “*sheol*”, but to the torment part of “*sheol*” (Luke 16:19-31).

Jesus told the repentant thief on the cross, “*Today shalt thou be with me in paradise*” (Luke 23:43).

Nobody could rise from the dead before Christ rose because He was the “*firstfruits of them that slept*” (1Cor.15:20,23). The Old Testament saints came out of their graves “*after His resurrection*” and Jesus took Paradise into heaven. Today, the souls of believers go to Christ in heaven at the moment of death (Phil.1:23).

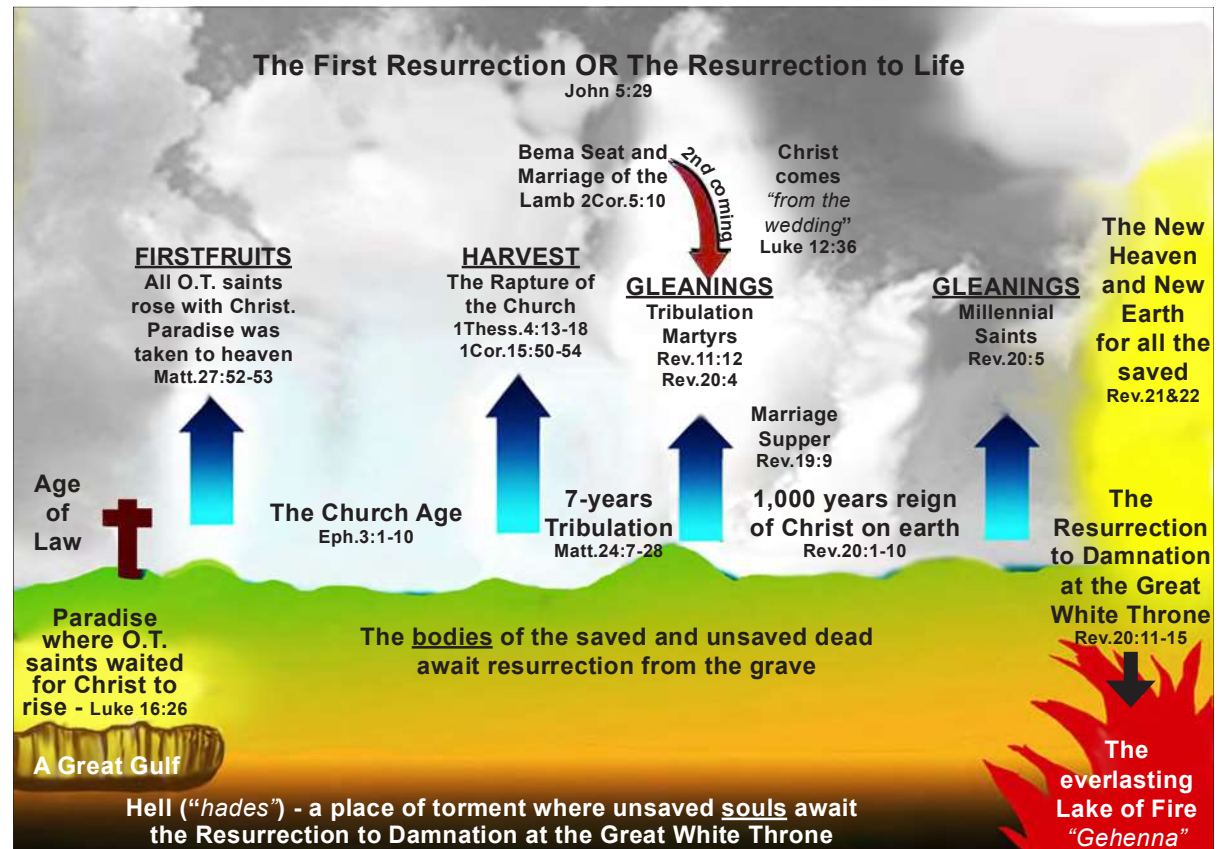
At the Rapture, the deceased **Church age saints** (those “*in Christ*”) will be raised first, and the living saints are “*changed*” and receive a resurrection body (1Thess.4:13-18; 1Cor.15:51-56).

When Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation, the **Tribulation saints** who were martyred will be raised to reign with Christ 1,000 years (Rev.20:4).

At the end of the 1,000 years of Christ’s kingdom on earth the “*rest of the dead*” (Rev.20:5), the **Millennial saints**, will be raised in resurrection power before the earth is renovated by fire and there is a new heaven and new earth.

The souls of the unsaved await the **resurrection to damnation** at the Great White Throne judgment at the end of time; they are cast into the lake of fire (Rev.20:14).

When Christ returns, Antichrist and all who follow him, will receive resurrection bodies before being cast into the lake of fire (Rev.19:20; Dan.12:2; Matt.25:41). Only unsaved resurrected persons go to the “lake of fire”.



# Understanding the Book of the Revelation

*“Write the things which thou **HAST SEEN**, and the things which **ARE**, and the things which shall be **HEREAFTER**” (Rev.1:19).*

The Book of the Revelation concludes Divine revelation and brings together in chronological order, prophecies scattered throughout the Old and New Testaments. John was exiled on the Isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea and wrote the Apocalypse (Revelation) about AD96 at the end of the reign of Domitian (according to Irenaeus who lived in the second century). John wrote his Epistles and Gospel about the same time.

There are three divisions in the Book of Revelation:

- 1) The things John **SAW** on Patmos (ch.1);
- 2) The things which **ARE** i.e. the things existing in this present Church age as described in the letters to the seven churches of Asia (chs. 2 and 3);
- 3) The things which shall be **HEREAFTER** this present Church age as described in chapters 4 through 22.

Having seen the vision of Christ, John was given messages to write to seven churches in Asia. These messages were appropriate to each of the Churches existing in John’s day and also prophetic of **seven stages of Christendom** from Pentecost to the Rapture of the Church.

The last stage of Christendom before the Rapture is described by the letter to the church at Laodicea. In chapter 4 John saw a door opened in heaven and he heard a voice like the sound of a trumpet saying:  
*“Come up hither and I will show you things which must be **HEREAFTER**” (Rev.4:1).*

John foresaw his own future **Rapture** into heaven which he described in chs. 4 and 5.

The **Great Tribulation** is described in chapters 6 to 18: the **first half** of the 7 years is in chapters 6 to 9; the events occurring at the **mid-point** of the 7 years are recorded in chapters 10 to 14 and events of the **second half** of the 7-year Tribulation are recorded in chapters 15 to 18.

The **second coming of Christ** is followed by the marriage supper of the Lamb as described in Revelation 19:7-9. Antichrist is judged at the coming of the Lord.

The **1,000-year millennial kingdom** of Christ is seen in chapter 20 concluding with the resurrection to damnation of the lost.

Revelation concludes with the eternal state in **the new heavens and new earth** in chs. 21 and 22. The Church will occupy the New Jerusalem, Israel will be located around the New Jerusalem, and the saved Gentiles will occupy the new Earth.

