

THE RAPTURE

At the outset, I think I should summarize what I believe reflects the truth of scripture concerning end times events. I believe that there is a coming period of seven years of tribulation on earth, also known as Daniel's 70th week, in which God will refine a believing remnant of the people of Israel through whom He will fulfill His covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I also believe that this time will basically run concurrently with a period referenced in scripture as "the day of the Lord," a time in which God pours out His wrath on His enemies on planet earth.

Further, I believe that the body of true believers in Jesus, the bride of Christ, the true church, who are alive at that time will be raptured, translated to be with Jesus in incorruptible bodies, before the beginning of this seven-year period. Finally, at the end of this seven-year period, Jesus will return to earth to establish His Kingdom and rule planet earth from the throne of David in Jerusalem for a thousand years before pronouncing judgment on all who have rejected Him as Lord and Savior and condemning them to hell. He will then create new heavens and earth for the eternal enjoyment of the whole body of believers.

The purpose of this study is to reveal the thought process I followed in coming to my conclusion about the rapture. I will assume the reader possesses a general familiarity with biblical prophecy. Verse-by-verse studies that provide more detailed information are available at my website: www.momsbiblejournal.com.

Fact – According to scripture, some believers will not die. They will instantly receive their glorified body and join the believers that have gone before them to be with Jesus forever.

*1Corinthians 15:51-53 "Behold, I shew 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." The Hebrew for "sleep" is a reference to death.*

*1Thessalonians 4:16-17 "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then **we which are alive and remain** shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."*

The question becomes when? I believe it will be before the Antichrist is revealed.

*2Thessalonians 2:1-8 "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. **Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come,***

*except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And **then** shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming...."*

"letteth" = hold down, retain, withhold

(More on the restrainer, "**he** who now letteth," and why I believe it is the Holy Spirit in the Church will be addressed later.)

The question then becomes when is Antichrist revealed? In order to be able to identify him, let's see what scripture tells us about him.

- He will come from the people responsible for destroying Jerusalem and the temple—someone whose heritage is from a nation that was part of the old Roman empire.

Daniel 9:26 "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

- He will rule a kingdom of ten parts and will subdue three of the parts.

Daniel 7:24 "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings."

- He will be empowered by Satan, the great dragon.

*Revelation 13:1–2 "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy....and **the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.**"*

*Revelation 12:7–9 "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And **the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**"*

- He will appear to be wounded unto death but will be healed.

Revelation 13:3 "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast."

Revelation 13:14 "And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live."

- He will blaspheme God Most High—His name, His tabernacle, and those that dwell in heaven.

Daniel 11:36 "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done."

Revelation 13:5-6 "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."

- He will confirm a covenant (treaty, agreement) with many for one week (7 years). The word for "week" is the Hebrew word "shabuwa" which means "literal, sevens, i.e. a week (specifically, of years)."

Daniel 9:27 "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

The "many" would include a reference to the Jews since the angel is telling Daniel about what was determined upon his people, and the last half of the verse describes the halting of sacrifices and oblation in the middle of that week. This would only be pertinent to the people of Israel. It would also imply that there is a functioning temple at that time.

- He will possess overall control of the planet for the last 3.5 years of that seven-year period.

Revelation 13:5 "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months."

Daniel 7:25 "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

- He will desecrate the temple as exemplified by Antiochus Epiphanes as recorded in Daniel. Jesus clearly declared that the abomination was yet future to His time. Daniel also tells us that this will be in the middle of the seven-year period.

Matthew 24:15 "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)"

*Daniel 9:27 "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and **in the midst of the week** he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."*

- He will claim that he is God.

Daniel 11:37 "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all."

2Thessalonians 2:4 "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

- He will eventually establish Jerusalem as his base.

*Daniel 11:45 "And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in **the glorious holy mountain**; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."*

See 2Thessalonians 2:4 above.

- ALL unbelievers will worship him.

Revelation 13:8 "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

- Those who refuse to worship him will be punishable by death.

Revelation 13:15 "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

- He will control trade by requiring a mark in one's right hand or on one's forehead—the name of the beast or the number of his name—to transact business.

Revelation 13:16-17 "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

- He will seek to change “times and laws.”

Daniel 7:25 “And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws....”

Considering all the facts we know about Antichrist, what will first identify him? It would seem to me that the signing of the seven-year covenant with Israel specifically marks his rise to power to mark the beginning of the tribulation. The next most specific clue would be the desecration of the temple at the mid-point of the tribulation. If the abomination of desolation were the identifying factor:

- that would lend credence to a mid-trib rapture since the abomination occurs in the middle of the tribulation.
- It would also negate the treaty with Israel as something universally significant.

*Daniel 9:25-27 “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, **And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.**”*

The first 69 weeks were for a specified period of time, and the only way to identify the beginning of the 70th week scripturally is by the signing of the covenant with Israel. Therefore, I believe the “confirming of the covenant” with Israel is the identifying factor that is to be recognized as the beginning of the 70th week and key to identifying the man of sin.

God puts information in the Bible for us to know and understand His will and His plan. Jesus expressed great consternation that the Pharisees didn’t recognize Him as the Messiah from the signs of the times as given by the prophets of old. I believe He expects the same from us. He was specific in identifying the first 69 weeks, and I believe has given us the specifics to identify the 70th week. The Bible will still be here after the church is gone. It will be important for the people who are left to have access to His Word to learn the truth about what is happening and understand the events that are occurring with the hope that it will lead them to saving faith in Jesus. Fulfillment of prophecy will continue to be an affirmation from God that He is God.

The next question—Does anything have to happen before the Antichrist is revealed?

- There will be a “falling away” in connection with the church.

2Thessalonians 2:3 "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition...."

Is this a falling away from faith or a physical departure, i.e., the rapture? The following explanation comes from Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice and makes a lot of sense to me.

The words "falling away" were translated departure in the first 7 Bible translations. In 11 out of 15 uses the root word for departure in the New Testament is used to reference departing from another person or place, a physical departure. The one time it is used to reference a departing from the faith is 1Timothy 4:1, which uses the qualifying words "from the faith."

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith...."

The other uses are:

Luke 8:13 "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away."

Acts 5:37-38 "After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men."

John Sweigert adds this information: "The history of translations of "apostasia" varied little for the first 15 centuries. Jerome's Latin Vulgate contains the word "discessio" in 2Thessalonians 2:3, meaning simply "departure." Other translations up to the KJV of 1611 use variations of "departure."

Though I am convinced the "falling away" is a physical departure, I believe the truth of a departure from the faith is also true as I observe how "Christian" leaders are putting their own spin on biblical truth, saying that the Bible doesn't really mean what it says (e.g., homosexuality, etc.).

In listening to J. Vernon McGee one day I thought he made a good connection of both understandings of the "apostasy." He, too, sees it as a departure or rapture of the true church that will result in the complete departure from faith of the "church" that is left behind composed of people who professed but did not possess true faith.

- The withholder or restrainer will be removed before the wicked [one] is revealed.

2Thessalonians 2:6-8 "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming...."

The question now becomes—Who is the restrainer that prevents “the Wicked” from being identified?

Who is the wicked one that Paul is referencing? The man of sin.

*2 Thessalonians 2:3 “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and **that man of sin be revealed**, the son of perdition....”*

The context indicates that something or someone is keeping his identity secret until the time of God’s choosing. This man of sin has an appointment with destiny, a “set time” (from the Greek). Since we know that the “man of sin” will get his power from Satan, this withholding force evidently has the authority to limit the power and authority of Satan. Since Satan is a supernatural entity, the force that limits him must be a supernatural entity of greater power and authority. According to Paul, the Thessalonians knew the identity of this being (see 2Thessalonians 2:6 above)—the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit can’t be taken away without the true body of believers being taken away since He indwells each believer. We are the salt of the earth. Salt is a preservative; it keeps things from spoiling, from going bad. This also makes a more perfect fit for the 70th week as stated in Daniel. Seventy weeks were determined upon Daniel’s people, the Jews, and the holy city, Jerusalem—not the church.

*Daniel 9:24 “Seventy weeks are determined upon **thy** people and upon **thy** holy city....”*

There was no church in the first 69 weeks, lending credence to there being no church in the 70th week. The Holy Spirit didn’t indwell every person of faith during the first 69 weeks, but He was at work in the lives of men and women of faith as God directed. My first thoughts are that He will function in the 70th week the same as He did in the first 69. On the other hand, God’s word stands forever, and the Bible (including the New Testament) will still be available during the 70th week. I still need to do more study in this area.

The first 69 weeks ended when Messiah was cut off (crucified).

Daniel 9:25-26 “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off....”

Although God is accomplishing His purpose for and through Israel during this 70th week, it will also run basically concurrent to the time that His wrath is poured out on the wicked, those who are His enemies, on planet earth. It is a specific time, yet future; and Paul reminded the Thessalonians that believers are not destined to experience His wrath.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ...."

In the letter to the church at Philadelphia as recorded by John in the Revelation, Jesus encouraged the body of believers with that same truth.

Revelation 3:10 "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."

Because the believers in Philadelphia have held fast to and guarded the truth of the words of Jesus with steadfastness and cheerful endurance, Jesus will keep them from ("ek"—out of) the hour of temptation (putting to proof) which shall (future tense from John's perspective) come upon ALL the world, to try (put to the test) them that dwell on earth. Obviously, this time of testing will be appointed for a specific time, of specific duration, to a specific generation.

*Revelation 6:17 "For **the great day** of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"*

*Zephaniah 1:14-17 "**The great day** of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung."*

*Isaiah 13:9-13 "Behold, **the day of the LORD cometh**, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. **And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity**; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger."*

To whom is this wrath directed?

- God's enemies/adversaries

Nahum 1:2 "God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies."

Jeremiah 46:10 "For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries...."

- The children of disobedience

Ephesians 5:6 "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

Colossians 3:6 "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience...."

- The wicked

Job 21:30 "That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath."

Isaiah 13:11 "And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible."

- Those who don't believe on the Son

John 3:36 "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

- The ungodly / unrighteous

Romans 1:18 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness...."

- Sinners

Isaiah 13:9 "Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it."

The "day of the Lord" is also a term used concerning God's wrath.

Isaiah 2:12 "For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low...."

Ezekiel 30:3 "For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen."

Obadiah 1:15 "For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head."

These passages all reference the kind of people who will suffer the wrath of God whenever He chooses to exercise that wrath. His character never changes.

Malachi 3:6 "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

TYPES THAT GIVE SUPPORT TO PEOPLE OF FAITH NOT EXPERIENCING GOD'S WRATH

Lot, a righteous man, was removed from Sodom and Gomorrah before those cities were destroyed by God's wrath.

*Genesis 18:23-26 "And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? **That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked:** and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."*

Genesis 19:15-16 "And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city."

*2Peter 2:7-9 "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) **The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished...."***

Observations:

- Abraham expected God not to punish the righteous with the unrighteous. God did not reprimand him for or refute that expectation.
- God physically removed the righteous from the place of judgment.
- Punishment is reserved for the unjust.
- If Lot is a type of the church, then Luke 17:29 would indicate that the 70th week starts after the rapture. If 7 weeks = 7 years, then a day would equal a part of that year. We might conclude, then, that the rapture and covenant identifying the antichrist would happen in the same year. The removal of the church identifies the time that God will again begin to provide a witness to the world through the Jews. The end of one dispensation leads into another. God won't leave the world without a witness—i.e., the two prophets and the 144,000 Jews.

*Luke 17:29 "But **the same day** that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all."*

An excerpt from my journal in Genesis applies here.

Genesis 19:29 and following: "I think you could say that Abraham is a type of Christ in this situation. Just as God remembered Abraham and delivered his brethren, so too will He remember Christ and deliver His brethren from coming judgment."

I once thought of Noah and his family as another type of the rapture. I now think it is better to consider them a type of the Jewish remnant being preserved through the judgment to enter Messiah's kingdom.

The Jewish wedding also has some wonderful parallels to the church and the coming of Christ for His bride. The information below is from an article by William Risk, with added notes from Mayim Hayim and a few additions/corrections of my own.

Shiddukhin = *The Match*

- Initiated by the father of the groom
- Agent may be used
- Consent of the bride

Parallel to Church

The Father chooses the bride.

John 6:37 "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me."

Holy Spirit acts as agent of Father in the world today.

1Corinthians 2:12 "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

We respond to Christ's love and accept Him.

1John 4:19 "We love him, because he first loved us."

Mohar = *The Bride Price*

- Required by law
- Paid by the father of the groom
- Reflects the value of the bride

Parallel to Church

Our mohar was the life of the Son.

2Corinthians 5:21 "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

The price was required by the Law

Romans 8:3-4 "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

The mohar was paid, as required.

1Corinthians 6:20 "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

The value placed on the bride was high.

Matthew 13:45-46 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

Ketubah = *The Marriage Contract*

Written document stating the mohar, the Rights of the bride, the promises of the groom.

Parallel to Church

Our written contract stating the mohar, the rights of the Bride, and the promises of the Groom is the New Testament.

Kiddushin = *The Betrothal*

- Sealed with the 'cup of acceptance'
- Groom: Preparation of huppah (According to many authorities the *huppah* was the groom's house, or at any rate an actual room or building other than the bride's parental home.)
- Bride: Purification (Mikveh – a ritual bath of immersion used for purification)
- Undistracted devotion
- Anticipation

Parallel to Church

Cup of the New Covenant

Matthew 26:27-29 "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Christ goes to prepare a place for us.

John 14:1-3 "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. 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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

We are "set apart."

2Corinthians 11:2 "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

We are purified by "washing."

1Corinthians 6:11 "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

We are not to be distracted by:

- **False Teachers**
2John 7-11 "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
- **Worldly Things**
1John 2:15 "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

We anticipate Christ's return.

Luke 12:37 "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

2Timothy 4:8 "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Titus 2:13 "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Nissuin = *The Nuptials*

- Groom's father decides when he may return for the bride.
- Time of Arrival surprise to the bride
- Abduction of the bride.
- Finely dressed and crowned.
- Marriage Feast
- Bride and Groom dwell together in happiness

Parallel to Church

Only the Father knows when the Son will return.

Matthew 24:36 "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

Mark 13:32 "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

We will be “abducted.”

*1Thessalonians 4:16-18 “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: **Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:** and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

We will be crowned.

1Peter 5:4 “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

James 1:12 “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

He will be crowned.

Revelation 19:12 “His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns.”

Note: The huppah is the wedding room, the location of the 7-day honeymoon. The marriage feast takes place after this. The seven years of tribulation on earth would appear to correspond as the honeymoon time for the church in heaven.

We will take part in the marriage feast of the Lamb.

Revelation 19:7-9 “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”

We will dwell forever with the Groom in happiness.

*1Thessalonians 4 :17 “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: **and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”***

Revelation 21:3 “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

REASONS TO BELIEVE THE RAPTURE IS NEAR

Although no signs are given relating to the rapture, there are many signs given regarding the Second Coming of Jesus to planet earth. If the signs of the Second Coming are becoming evident, how much closer must be the rapture.

One of the main signs is the rebirth of the nation of Israel.

Ezekiel 37:12-14 “Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD,

when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD."

Ezekiel 37:21-22 "And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all...."

Other signs that are mentioned in Matthew, Mark and Luke are: people claiming to be Christ, wars and rumors of wars, ethnic conflicts, famine, pestilence, earthquakes. Although these things have existed through history, they are described as the "beginnings of sorrows."

Matthew 24:8 "All these are the beginning of sorrows."

Mark 13:8 "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows."

The word "sorrows" in the Greek has a direct reference to the pains of childbirth. Birth pains continue to increase in frequency and intensity as the time for "birth" approaches. Just by paying attention to the news headlines, I am convinced that the "birth pains" are active. Yes, I am eager for the Lord's return, but I don't think one can deny the signs of the times. Jesus criticized the religious leaders of His day for not recognizing the signs of the times.

Matthew 16:3 "And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

They were expected to recognize Him from the "signs" given by the prophets, but they didn't. If He didn't expect us to look for and recognize these signs, He wouldn't have given them.

OTHER THOUGHTS CONCERNING THE RAPTURE

Regarding a post-trib rapture - Even if you ignore all the thoughts presented above, the post-tribulation cannot be right simply because of logic—Who would be left to populate the millennium?

Henry Morris, [The Revelation Record](#), made an astute observation concerning post-tribulationists who contend "there is no reason why Christians in the last generation deserve to escape the great tribulation. The fact is, however, that Christians in every other generation have escaped the great tribulation, so there is no reason why the last should be singled out for going through it."

Regarding the difference in coming with Jesus and His coming for us - A quote from Thomas Ice regarding John 14:1-3: "This passage, taken literally, indicates that the believer is going to go to heaven at the time of Christ's coming for Him."

This will not occur at the Second Advent because that will be a time in which Christ comes *with* His saints, who are already in heaven, not *for* His saints as John 14:1-3 requires."

*John 14:1-3 "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. **In my Father's house** are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. 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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.**"*

When Jesus comes to earth the second time, we will be **with** him.

*Zechariah 14:5 "And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, **and all the saints with thee.**"*

*1Thessalonians 3:13 "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ **with all his saints.**"*

The following verse in Revelation describes the armies of heaven coming with Jesus. Although argument could be made that He would not take His bride to war with Him, I don't think it carries much weight since the battle is His alone. The bride will be there only as witness to His complete victory over Satan and the forces of evil. At what other time could the prophecies from Zechariah and 1Thessalonians be fulfilled?

Colossians 3:4 "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Revelation 19:14 "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

Regarding "knowing" the time of His coming: The Lord told his disciples that no one except the Father knows the time of His coming; yet, in Daniel we are given a specific number of days from the time of the abomination of desolation and the Second Coming. Just as with His first coming—the prophecies imply two parts. He will first come without warning for His saints, the body of believers, to take them home to the Father; then, He will return on schedule to rule as King of kings.

Matthew 24:36 "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

Mark 13:32-33 "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."

First, Antichrist makes the covenant for a week of years—7 years. Then he breaks the covenant in the middle of the week. A remnant of the children of Israel will be given special protection in a wilderness location during the time of his rule—1,260 days, the last 3.5 years.

Daniel 7:25 "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." (3.5 years = 42 months x 30 days per month = 1260 days)

Daniel 12:7 "And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."

Revelation 13:5 "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months."

Revelation 12:6 "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

Who is the one that defeats the Antichrist? JESUS

Revelation 19:11 "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."

Revelation 19:16 "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Revelation 19:19-20 "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

In connection with the "last trump" and the "trump of God":

*1Corinthians 15:51-52 "Behold, I shew 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 trump**: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."*

*1Thessalonians 4:16-17 "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and **with the trump of God**: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."*

As I started researching the use of trumpets, these are some of the things I found.

- The sound of the trumpet has a specific purpose.

1Corinthians 14:8 "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

- The trumpet was used to call the people to assembly.

Jeremiah 4:5 "Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem; and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities."

Joel 2:15 "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly."

- The sound of the trumpet is associated with the voice of the Lord.

Revelation 1:10-11 "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last...."

- It is an alarm of war.

Jeremiah 4:19 "My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war."

Ezekiel 33:3 "If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people...."

- It is a call to get ready.

Ezekiel 7:14 "They have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready; but none goeth to the battle: for my wrath is upon all the multitude thereof."

- It is to be used as an alarm that the day of the Lord is at hand.

Joel 2:1 "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand...."

- In Revelation, the trumpets are a signal that the wrath of God is being poured out.

Revelation 8:6 "And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound."

- Renald Showers gave some other insights in the area of trumpets:

1Corinthians 14 talks about the trumpet from a military perspective, so it would appear that thought would be continued in chapter 15. In Bible times, "when they went to war, they had a "last trump" that would be blown that would tell the fighting men, 'Your time of fighting is over. It is time for you to go home and rest.' A 'last trump' ended their time in the warfare." Obviously, Christians are participating in spiritual warfare. "When the rapture takes place and the trumpet is blown at that time, that will be a signal to them that their part in the warfare is over...It is time for them to go home to be with the Lord and rest together with Him in heaven."

There were also two trumpets related to guard duty. "They had a first trump that signaled when a man was to start his watch...then they had a 'last trump' which signaled that his time on guard duty was over and it was time for him to go home." The comparison to the Christian is obvious.

"The fact that Paul, when he mentions the last trump, doesn't explain to the Corinthians what he meant by that indicates that they understood what he meant by 'the last trump.' They were very familiar...with that terminology of 'the last trump' signals used for Roman soldiers, whether their fighting is done or their tour of duty on the watch is over for that day."

Referencing Hosea 6:2

Hosea 6:1-2 "Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

Using the formula "1 day = 1000 years" seems to indicate that Christ will heal His people Israel after 2000 years of spiritual sickness. This leaves a lot of leeway regarding the timeframe, but we are definitely in the third day.