

PERFECT ENDING

WHY YOUR ETERNAL FUTURE
MATTERS TODAY

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MAKING SURE YOU'RE NOT LEFT BEHIND

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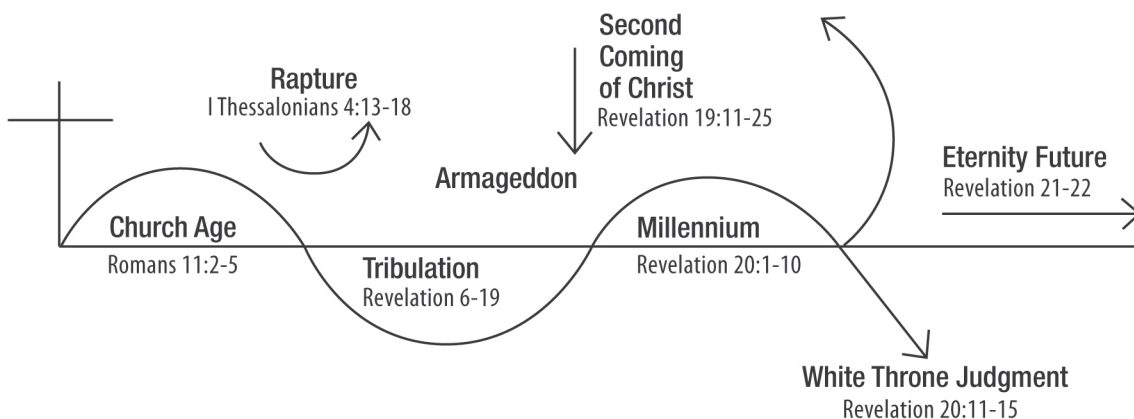
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Introduction: Today we are going to look at the next event on God's prophetic timetable and discover four reasons Christians don't need to fear the Great Tribulation.

I. The Rapture In Perspective

A. Definition: "The Rapture is the **snatching** away to heaven of all Christians before the **beginning** of the Tribulation."

B. By Context



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Romans 11:25 "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in."

II. The Rapture Described (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

A. The **Descent** of Christ

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

B. The Resurrection of the **Dead** in Christ

1 Thessalonians 4:16b "...and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

C. The **Removal** of All Living Christians

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."

D. The Transformation of Our **Bodies**

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 ⁵¹ "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 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 imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality."

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III. Different Views Of The Rapture

A. The Post-Tribulation Rapture View

Definition: "The church will **endure** the seven years of the Tribulation which will **precede** the Second Coming of Christ."

Revelation 19:14 "And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses."

B. The Mid-Tribulation Rapture View

Definition: "The Rapture will occur **after** the first three and one-half years of the seven-year Tribulation."

Problems with this viewpoint:

1. Revelation 5-6 teaches that these beginning seal judgments are God's judgment against the earth, and it is the Lamb of God (Jesus Christ) who breaks open the seals (Revelation 6:2).
2. If the church is present on earth to experience these seal judgments, why is the Church not mentioned in Revelation 6?
3. Daniel 9 views the entire Tribulation as lasting seven years, not just three and one-half years.

C. The Pre-Tribulation Rapture View

Definition: "The Rapture will occur **before** the beginning of the seven-year Tribulation period."

IV. Four Reasons For A Pre-Tribulation Rapture

A. The **Purpose** of the Tribulation

B. The Lack of Reference to the **Church** in Revelation 6-18

C. The Teaching of Revelation 3:10

Revelation 3:10 "Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth."

D. The Promise of God That Believers Will Be Spared His Condemnation

Hebrews 11:37-38 ³⁷ "They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill treated ³⁸ (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground."

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Romans 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Hebrews 9:27 "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,"

Conclusion