

Second Coming of Christ

A recent study at church in which the teacher proclaims that the church will be raptured out at the beginning of the tribulation got me thinking about what I believe the scriptures say about this subject, and now I'm am going over this once again so that I can explain hopefully not my opinion but what the word says about the second coming of Christ.

Is a pre-tribulation rapture something we hope is true or is it what the word of the Lord is showing us through the scriptures? As hard as I try to understand and find scriptures that will back up a pre-tribulation rapture, I cannot! I have found only scriptures that point to Christ return being at the end of the Tribulation period and at that point in time the "rapture" or our gathering up to meet him in the air.

When others teach or say they believe in a pre-tribulation rapture; I ask, why would God allow Christians to be persecuted and put to death for 2000 years right up to the time of the rapture? And then as probably millions are saved during the seven years of tribulation, allow them to be persecuted and put to death for not taking the mark of the beast?

What makes the saved that are alive at the moment between two thousand years of the church and the seven-year tribulation, worthy to be taken home? What makes them so special that they don't go through the tribulation? Doesn't the scripture teach us that being persecuted for Christ sake a blessing? Matthew 5:10-12, Luke 6:22-23, 1 Peter 4:13-17,

Revelations 6:

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled

Acts. 7: 57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, 58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep

Just like Stephen millions of Christians from the time of Christ until now have been persecuted and put to death. Just a few weeks ago I saw a gruesome post online of a man being beheaded for his being accused of being a Christian. Rev 6:9-11 tells us about all of those that have given their lives for Christ before the Tribulation period begins. These were all given white robes and a special place before God.

Revelations 7: 9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb

Probably millions even billions a number which no man can number, I would have a hard time counting even a million. These are those which give their lives for Christ during the tribulation

Revelations 20:

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years

Beheading will be one of the major ways in which the followers of Christ will die during the tribulation... The preferred way of Muslims to kill followers of Christ is beheading? Many are coming to believe that Satan will use the Muslim faith to deceive many, right now Muslim's are the fastest growing religion in the world.

Matthew 24: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened

Matthew 24: 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows. 9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake

The Scriptures clearly teach and no one that I've heard will dispute the fact that there will be probably millions who will accept Christ during the end times and many or even most will give their lives for their belief in Christ and rejection of the Anti-Christ and his mark that he will impose on the world.

So then why? Would a few who are alive at this moment in time that marks the beginning of the tribulation be raptured out of the mess that is about to happen to the world? And all those who will then accept Christ as their savior be tortured or killed?

During the tribulation period if the Church is gone, who will tell them about Christ?

Romans 10:

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent

If the Church is still here warning the world about who has really come to deceive the world and tell them about the one true savior then this question is answered. I know that there are some that believe this time is only for Israel and the 144,000 will be here to tell the world about Christ. And then there are the two witnesses. But even if these are proclaiming the word without the help of the Church, where are the scriptures that say the Church will be raptured out?

The problem I have is the lack of Scripture to show a progressive or split Rapture, because again the scripture is clear that Christ will return at the end of the Tribulation and his angels will gather his elect to him, or Rapture/ gather them unto Him at the end and no where does it say the church is raptured out sooner.

Revelations 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen

If every eye sees him then it can't be a secret coming!

Matthew 24: 27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. 29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he shall

send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other

Mark 13: 24 But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, 25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. 26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven

Both sets of scripture above clearly state that Christ returns at the end of the tribulation and gathers his elect at that time

For me 2 Thessalonians is key to understanding when Christ returns and when we will be raptured.

Starting with the reason for the letter to those in Thessalonica in chapter 1

2 Thessalonians 1:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day

Most believe that the reason for Paul's letter was to reassure the church that Christ hadn't already come. There were those teaching that Christ had come and these church members were in the tribulation period. These verses, just like those in Matthew and Mark that Jesus will be "revealed" (they shall see the Son) "with his mighty angels" (he send his angels) vs 10 also indicating Christ coming to set up his kingdom.

Chapter 1: 6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

There were some that were troubling them about Christ return vs. 7-10 So this leads us into the 2nd chapter knowing that Paul's desire is to help them understand what they needed to know about when Christ would return.

Chapter two verse one and two sets the tone for the entire second chapter This letter was written to the church so these are saved baptized believers and members of the Church in Thessalonica. Two thousand years ago they were thinking the coming of the Lord was at hand or had already happened. There are several things here that catch my eye. A. "the coming of our Lord" B. "our gathering together unto him" C. "the day of Christ is at hand"

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 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

Verse one and two setting the tone for the chapter and indicating that he would let us know when the coming, our gathering (rapture) the day of the Lord will be.

The beginning of our answer is found in verse 3 & 4 but this is not the total answer just the first part.

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; 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.

Vs 3 "that day shall not come" what day? Well going back to vs 1&2 tells us it the day that Christ returns and when our rapture takes place
So if that day shall not come until some things first happen what has to happen? A. first there must be a falling away B. the man of sin is revealed "satan" Vs. 4 telling us that the abomination of desolation must take place first. See Isaiah 14:12-17, Matthew 24"15 Daniel 11:31 Daniel 12:11

Matthew 24:12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

First comes the falling away or the love of many waxing cold... followers of Christ who grow cold and aren't following Him any longer and fewer and fewer are accepting Him as their savior. Then the abomination (according to Daniel doesn't take place until the middle of the tribulation period)
So just taking these first 4 verses into account the Rapture for the church cannot happen until at a minimum time period being the middle of the week and cannot be pre-tribulation.

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

Of course we'll go on to see what else Paul has to tell us.

Vs. 5 reminding them of what he taught them in their presence, they shouldn't have been deceived.

Vs 6-7 is telling us that Satan is held at bay by God until it is his time. But even then he can only go as far as God lets him. See Job 1:6-12 Satan can only do what God allows him to do.

As for He who now letteth will let, and until he be taken out of the way. This is regarding satan and his works. He is now working and in the end he will be given power to do much more. But in the end he will be taken out of the way and cast for a thousand years into the lake of fire. Rev 20:1-2 Ephesians 2:1,2 tell us that Satan is hard at work just as he has been for 6000 years and will do until God stops him.

Vs. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work:only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way

Ok so verse 8 is a key verse, as we stay in context of this chapter starting with vs.1 and it's setting the stage for questions that needed answering. When is Christ return and our gathering unto him take place? Well this is the first vs. in which Christ return is mentioned. We have to have a falling away of the faithful and the man of sin must be revealed and stand in the temple declaring himself to be god. Christ returns to destroy Satan and according to all scripture this doesn't take place until the end of the 70th week or the tribulation period.

Hence Christ returns and our gathering unto him cannot take place until the end of the 70th week.

Several verses in the scriptures indicate that Christ return does not take place until the end. Matthew 28:20 a key verse in the great commission that is given to his church. "and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" If Christ return or the rapture takes place at the beginning of the week shouldn't he have said and lo I am with you until the beginning of the tribulation instead of the end of the world?

Vs. 8 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:

Vs. 9 has me a little perplexed only because after recently talking with someone and seeing what their version said. What threw me for a loop was "Even him" I know that in the KJV it is italicized which means that the words were put there by the translators and the actual words are not found in the greek. I see the "Even him" as being in context with vs 8 which flows right into vs 9 Christ returns with all power and the even him if it is Christ further locks in the fact that Christ return is at the end of the week. Other versions change this "even him" to a meaning of the anti-christ coming? When looking at the strong's for all of the words in vs 9 I'm not seeing two persons mentioned and no reason to change the meaning of the verse? I still believe after my study that the use of "even him" makes more sense but in either case and

regardless of how this is interpreted it doesn't change the the fact that vs. 8 shows Christ coming at the end of the week.

Satan comes on the seen with great power and signs that he might deceive even the elect. Matt. 24:24 In the other versions it refers to the man of sin who's coming corallates to satan's coming. And in the KJV it refers to even him as coming after the working of Satan? Why the total change of the meaning of this verse? And if you make even him refer to that wicked one, then why is his work after the work of Satan?

Let's remove "Even him," If you read Vs.8 and 9 together with this removed it is still clear that It's referring to Christ "whose coming is after the working of Satan"

Vs. 8 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:
9 whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

Even him, just clarifies that it's Christ who's coming is after the works of Satan

9 *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

Vs. 10 tells us who is deceived by Satan, it's the one's who have chosen to ignore the greatest gift ever given to us in His son Jesus Christ.

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved

Vs. 11 & 12 because these have rejected Christ God allows them to be duped by Satan. These are those that will have a part in the second death Rev. 20:14-15

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Vs. 13-17 and Chapter 3:1-5 finish the thought and reason for Paul's encouragement and reminding of the truths that they already new but had allowed themselves to be deceived by others. He gives thanks for them and reminds them of the precious gift that Christ has given us and encourages them to stand fast to the truth and the traditions of truth that they had been taught and to strengthen their hope in our eternal life through Christ. He reminds them to pray for them as they face the evils of this world as we ought to pray for one another and for those that have been granted their place as shepherds.

Many will say that “we are not appointed to wrath” so we cannot go through any part of the tribulation. 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 2:16 and 5:9 are used to justify this teaching?

If you look at these and examine the context of each you will find that they are referring to the wrath associated with not accepting Christ as your savior. By accepting the free gift of salvation we are exempt from this wrath. Eph. 2:8-10. The 3 chapter of John is clear that there is a condemnation or wrath associated with the rejection of the free gift of God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

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.

Clearly there is a punishment for those who do not accept this gift and that punishment is hell and not the vials that poured out spoken of in the book of Revelations. Those that go through this wrath that is poured out by God have also rejected God and his free gift and will ultimately also end up in a devils hell.

1 Thessalonian's 5:1-11 also has a statement often used “He will come as a thief” this statement is then clarified in Vs 4 which is often omitted, by this teaching

Vs 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

Vs 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

Which is it? “We” are to expect him to come as a thief or we should not be surprised when he comes as a thief upon the world?

In Revelations 16, God is pouring out the vials upon those who have rejected God and His Son. As the 6th vial is being poured out we find this verse.

Revelations 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

This sounds very similar to Paul's warning in 1 Thessalonians that we are to watch and be ready, that we are not to be surprised when he comes. We may not know the day or the hour but we should know that His coming is imminent when these things are happening all around us. And therefore if He is coming on the world as a thief at this point in time (the end of the tribulation period) then just maybe the scriptures in 1 Thessalonians is also referring to Christ return being at the end?

There is tons more to explore and from time to time I'll be adding to this, and I hope that in some way this helps others to see the possibility that what is prominently taught just might be not be correct. I do not want to prove others wrong, but I think that we should be prepared to go through this terrible time if we are still alive at His coming and during this terrible tribulation described in God's word.