

Rapture

I have been asked why I teach there will be a Rapture before the Tribulation Period, since many of our fellow Messianic and other Torah Observant Believers do not. Their reasons for not holding to a Pretribulational view vary, but here are a few.

- a. Many believe the old rumor that the Pretribulational Rapture doctrine started with a fever dream by a young girl named Margaret Macdonald. Supposedly she told the dream to John Nelson Darby, who then began preaching the doctrine. That rumor is completely false. See, Ice, Thomas D., "Why the Doctrine of the Pretribulational Rapture did not Begin with Margaret Macdonald" (1990). *SOR Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 102. https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/sor_fac_pubs/102
- b. Others say that wherever Darby got his inspiration, the Pretribulational Rapture doctrine is a recent doctrine not held or taught in the early days of the Christian Church.

Attachment 1 is an excerpt from [What Did Ancient Church Fathers Believe About The Rapture? | Beginning And End](#) describing the teachings of Irenaeus on the rapture.

Attachment 2 is an excerpt from [What Did Ancient Church Fathers Believe About The Rapture? | Beginning And End](#) describing the teachings of Cyprian on the rapture.

Attachment 3 is an excerpt from [What Did Ancient Church Fathers Believe About The Rapture? | Beginning And End](#) describing the teachings of Ephraim The Syrian on the rapture.

This should be sufficient to demonstrate that the Pretribulational Rapture doctrine was taught in the early days of the Christian Church.

- c. Yet others say that the Pretribulational Rapture doctrine is simply not found in the Scriptures, either directly or indirectly. Let us examine the Scriptures to see that this is not a correct statement.

Point 1. In Revelation 3:10, the Lord promised – “Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”

The Lord did not promise to keep us “through” the hour of trial – the Tribulation Period. Rather He promised to keep us “from” it.

Yeshua refers to two historical events to help us understand.

First, in Luke 17:26-27, Yeshua says, “And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.” God did not destroy the world with a flood until He had safely

removed Noah and his family from the danger by taking them onto the ark. Only once Noah and his family was safe did the rains begin to fall – seven days later.

Next, Yeshua refers to the days of Lot. In Luke 17:28-29, He says, “Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.” The angels were not permitted to rain fire and brimstone down upon Sodom and Gomorrah until Lot and his family had been removed to safety. The angel said in Genesis 19:22, “Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there.”

Just as the Lord kept Noah and Lot, with their families, from those great judgments, so Yeshua promises to keep His children from the hour of trial – the Tribulation Period.

Further, 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 says, “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.” God’s wrath is not for Believers.

Isaiah 13:9 tells us against whom will the Lord pour out His wrath. “Behold, the day of the Lord comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it.” So, the Lord’s wrath is directed against sinners, not His children.

Point 2. Isaiah 26:19-21 describes the resurrection as follows:

“19 Your dead shall live;
Together with my dead body they shall arise.
Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;
For your dew is like the dew of herbs,
And the earth shall cast out the dead.

20 Come, my people, enter your chambers,
And shut your doors behind you;
Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment,
Until the indignation is past.

21 For behold, the Lord comes out of His place
To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;
The earth will also disclose her blood,
And will no more cover her slain.”

Beyond contradiction, verse 19 clearly describes the resurrection of the dead.

Verse 20 contains a call to “my people”. When the Lord calls for “my people” to come, they will come whether previously dead or those who remained alive. We will discuss this further below.

The “chambers” in verse 20 are the bridal chambers that the Bridegroom has prepared for His bride – the Believers. These are the same chambers referred to in John 14 :1-4 as mansions. ““Let not your heart be troubled; you 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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.”” The Greek word *monai* [Strong’s Greek word 3438] translated in my Bible as “mansions” literally means “dwelling places” or “abodes”. It refers to the bridal chambers Messiah is preparing.

Isaiah 26:20 goes on to tell us that “my people” will remain in the bridal chambers, which we now know are in heaven – My Father’s house – until the “indignation” is past. The Hebrew word for indignation there is *za’am* [Strong’s Hebrew word 2194], which means the outpouring of God’s wrath. See Isaiah 66:14-17:

“14 When you see this, your heart shall rejoice,
And your bones shall flourish like grass;
The hand of the Lord shall be known to His servants,
And His indignation to His enemies.

15 For behold, the Lord will come with fire
And with His chariots, like a whirlwind,
To render His anger with fury,
And His rebuke with flames of fire.

16 For by fire and by His sword
The Lord will judge all flesh;
And the slain of the Lord shall be many.

17 “Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves,
To go to the gardens
After an idol in the midst,
Eating swine’s flesh and the abomination and the mouse,
Shall be consumed together,” says the Lord.”

Verse 14 tells us clearly that the Lord’s indignation – *za’am* – is poured out on His enemies at the time when the Lord will judge all flesh. This is the Tribulation Period. So, if “my people” are hidden away in the bridal chambers in heaven while the Lord judges the Earth, then we will not be here to suffer through His wrath.

Point 3. When the Lord returns in Revelation 19 to end the Tribulation Period, He destroys the forces of the False Messiah and establishes His kingdom on the Earth.

Verses 19-21 describe the Battle of Armageddon, “And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse

and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”

Revelation 20:1-3 describes Satan being bound. “Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.”

Verse 4 describes the resurrection of those Saints who got saved during the Tribulation Period and were martyred for their faith. They missed the rapture/resurrection before the Tribulation Period as they were not yet saved at that point. They will help Yeshua rule over His kingdom on earth, “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”

How do we know that this is not the Rapture? After Armageddon, Messiah’s kingdom is on earth. Remember John 14:1-3? The raptured Believers are taken to His Father’s house in heaven where Messiah has been since His ascension.

Point 4. We know the rapture takes place at the same time as the resurrection described in Isaiah 26 by studying 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

“13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 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. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

As verse 17 emphasizes, we will meet the resurrected Believers in the air as we go together to meet the Lord.

Point 5. 1 Corinthians 15:50-52 also describe the rapture and the resurrection occurring together.

“50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

So, whether we are raised from the dead or are caught up alive, it happens in the twinkling of an eye at the “last trumpet” – a term for the Feast of Trumpets. Some people mistakenly believe that the Last Trumpet refers to the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15 –

“Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!””

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 15:50-52 at least forty years before John wrote Revelation 11:15.

Point 6. Revelation ties all the other prophecies together.

In Revelation 4:1, we find that the rapture takes place at the end of the church age. “After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.””

“After these things” follows the seven letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor or Turkey. The door standing open in heaven is an ancient theme of the Feast of Trumpets as discussed above in 1 Corinthians 15:52. The trumpet sounding calls the Believers to meet the Lord in the air, as discussed above in 1 Thessalonians 4:16. This is the rapture of the Believers with the resurrected Saints.

These Believers sing a new song in Revelation 5:9-10.

“9 And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

10 And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth.””

Those singing are not angels. There is nothing in Scripture that suggests angels could be redeemed. And these verses specifically describe the redeemed as being from “every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” They are to be kings and priests as promised in Revelation 1:6, “and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” They are wearing crowns and robes – rewards received at the Bema seat judgment. Messiah promised us rewards at His coming. Revelation 22:12 says, ““And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”

This Bema seat judgment, as it has come to be known, is a judgment for Believers to receive their rewards. It is further described for us in 1 Corinthians 3:11:15 –

“11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

These people singing a new song are the raptured and resurrected Believers. We will be singing praises unto the Lord before the first seal is opened in Revelation 6:1-2, “Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.” And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.”

Remember in Isaiah 26:19 as those being raised to enter the bridal chambers were singing. Revelation 5 gives the words to the song.

The call to come up to heaven in Isaiah 26:20 is the shout of 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Revelation 4:1.

The trumpet call that accompanies the shout in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is the trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15:52 and Revelation 4:1.

In Revelation 5:6-7, they are looking for someone worthy to open the scroll and loose its seven seals. No one is found worthy in heaven above or in the earth beneath – until they look upon Yeshua our Messiah! “And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.”

They find the One who is worthy and sing to Him the new song. The next thing that happens is Yeshua our Messiah opens the first seal to begin the Tribulation Period.

How did the redeemed get to heaven to sing the new song? They were part of the Pretribulational Rapture.

Point 7. The Apostle Paul wrote his first epistle to the Thessalonians. It precedes all other Pauline epistles. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-19, Paul taught the Rapture to the church at Thessalonica. After that, someone seems to have sent them a letter pretending to be Paul and letting them know that they had missed the Rapture and were now in the Tribulation Period.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, Paul reminds them that he taught them about the Rapture and the coming Day of the Lord --

“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?”

Paul comforts them with the knowledge that if the False Messiah has not been revealed, then they are not in the Tribulation Period and they have not missed the Rapture.

Point 8. While some say that Matthew 24 describes a Posttribulational Rapture, close examination reveals that Matthew 24 does not mention the Rapture at all.

Matthew 24:29-31 prophesies a gathering together that will happen after the Tribulation Period. “29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.””

To examine this text, let us begin with the context in which it arose.

In Matthew 23:37-39, Yeshua laments over Jerusalem and prophesies that He will not return until Jerusalem calls out for Him. “37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 38 See! Your house is left to you desolate; 39 for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’””

Yeshua then tells his disciples that every stone of the Temple will be thrown down. His disciples are horrified at this prophesy and ask Him these questions --

“Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”” Matthew 24:3.

By “these things” they mean the destruction of the Temple. Matthew does not record Yeshua’s answer to this question.

Then they inquire what will signal Messiah’s return as the King and the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom on earth.

Notice they do not ask about the rapture of the church. Perhaps because they do not even know at this point that there will be a church.

But Yeshua begins to explain the signs that will signal His physical return to earth after the Tribulation. He begins by explaining what will become known as the seal judgments of Revelation.

“4 And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.”” Matthew 24:4-8.

Verse 5 corresponds to the first seal described in Revelation 6 as the rider on the white horse. Verse 6 corresponds to the second seal described in Revelation 6 as the rider on the red horse. Verse 7 corresponds to the third and fourth seals described in Revelation 6 as the riders on the black and pale horses.

The Greek word translated as “sorrows” is *odinon* [Strong’s Greek word 5604] which means birth pangs. The same word is used in 1 Thessalonians 5:3. “For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.” This word refers to the Tribulation period.

Since the disciples did not ask about the Rapture, and indeed did not have the knowledge to ask about it, Yeshua began with the seals of Revelation 6 which will be opened after the Rapture.

When He gets to verse 29, Yeshua describes the regathering of Israel that will happen after He returns to establish the Messianic Kingdom on earth. This regathering is further described in Isaiah 11 –

“10 “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse,
Who shall stand as a banner to the people;
For the Gentiles shall seek Him,
And His resting place shall be glorious.”

11 It shall come to pass in that day
That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time
To recover the remnant of His people who are left,
From Assyria and Egypt,
From Pathros and Cush,
From Elam and Shinar,
From Hamath and the islands of the sea.

12 He will set up a banner for the nations,
And will assemble the outcasts of Israel,
And gather together the dispersed of Judah
From the four corners of the earth.”

Matthew 24:31 describes the trumpet which announces this regathering of Israel as a “great sound of a trumpet”. In Hebrew, this trumpet is called the Shofar HaGadol or Great Trumpet. It is not the same as the Last Trumpet mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15.

There are three trumpets in the Bible that have been named by the Jewish sages.

In Exodus 19:5-6, the Lord invites Israel to enter a special relationship with Him. “5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”” After Israel accepted the Lord’s invitation, the first trumpet sounded at Mount Sinai in Exodus 19:16, “Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.” The first trumpet sounded to announce the betrothal of Israel to the Lord.

The Last Trumpet calls the Lord’s bride to the bridal chamber for the wedding ceremony before the start of the Tribulation Period. This reminds us of the ancient Jewish wedding ceremony. After the betrothal, the bridegroom returns to his father’s house to build the bridal chamber. Remember Yeshua’s words in John 14:2-3, “2 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. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” When the bridal chamber is ready, the bridegroom goes with a witness toward the bride’s house. They stop a short distance from the bride’s house and shout while sounding a trumpet. The bride who has made herself ready comes to meet the bridegroom and together they go to the bridegroom’s

father's house for the marriage ceremony. Once the marriage ceremony has been performed, the happy couple go into the bridal chamber. For more information on how the ancient wedding ceremony is a picture of the Pretribulational Rapture, I recommend watching the movie titled, "Before the Wrath."

Jewish Sages say the first trumpet and last trumpet are the two horns of the ram sacrificed by Abraham in place of his son Isaac. In *Pirkei Avot* (the sayings of the fathers), Rabbi Eliezer tells us that the left horn (first trumpet) was blown on Mount Sinai, and its right horn (the last trumpet) will be blown to herald the coming of the Messiah. Were they really the two horns of the ram Abraham sacrificed? Time will tell.

The last trumpet sounds when the Day of the Lord is at hand in Joel 2:1 –

"Blow 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 is coming, For it is at hand:"

The other named trumpet is the Great Trumpet which announces the physical return of Messiah at the end of the Tribulation Period. In addition to Matthew 24, we read about the Great Trumpet in Joel 2:15-16 –

"15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; 16 Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and nursing babes; Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, And the bride from her dressing room."

The reference to the "fast" indicates this takes place on the Day of Atonement. It is parallel to Revelation 19 which describes Messiah's return for the Battle of Armageddon at the end of the Tribulation. The bride, that is the raptured and resurrected Saints, goes out from the bridal chamber with the bridegroom, Yeshua, as He returns to the earth. Remember how Paul said, "And thus we shall always be with the Lord." He meant it.

Attachment 1

Irenaeus (130 A.D. – 202 AD) was a bishop of the church in Lyons, France. He was an eyewitness to the Apostle John (who wrote the Book of Revelation) and a disciple of Polycarp, the first of the Apostle John's disciples. Irenaeus is most-known for his five-volume treatise, *Against Heresies* in which he exposed the false religions and cults of his day along with advice for how to share the Gospel with those were a part of them.

In his writings on Bible prophecy, he acknowledged the phrase “a time, times and dividing of times” in Daniel 7 to signify the 3 ½ year reign of the Antichrist as ruler of the world before the Second Coming of Christ. He also believed in a literal Millennial reign of Christ on earth following the Second Coming and the resurrection of the just.

On the subject of the Rapture, in *Against Heresies* 5.29, he wrote:

“Those nations however, who did not of themselves raise up their eyes unto heaven, nor returned thanks to their Maker, nor wished to behold the light of truth, but who were like blind mice concealed in the depths of ignorance, the word justly reckons “as waste water from a sink, and as the turning-weight of a balance — in fact, as nothing;”(1) so far useful and serviceable to the just, as stubble conduces towards the growth of the wheat, and its straw, by means of combustion, serves for working gold. And therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, “There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be.”(2) For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption.”

Irenaeus in this passage describes the church leaving the sinful world just before unprecedented disasters. Note his use of the term “caught up” which is Rapture terminology as that is the meaning of *harpazo*, the term for “caught up” in the King James Bible describing the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4. He then quotes Matthew 24:21 where The Lord Jesus Christ says: “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” And it is during this time that those who convert to Christianity during the final years will receive the incorruptible crown mentioned by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:25. In Irenaeus' belief, the Rapture took place prior to the end times Great Tribulation.

Attachment 2

Cyprian (200 AD – 258 AD) – Cyprian was Bishop of the church in Carthage. During his short stint as leader of the church, he guided the flock through intense persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire. In 258 AD after spending seven months of confinement to his home by order of Roman authorities, he was beheaded for his faith. Several of his works still exist today.

In Treatises of Cyprian he wrote in describing the end times Great Tribulation:

“We who see that terrible things have begun, and know that still more terrible things are imminent, may regard it as the greatest advantage to depart from it as quickly as possible. Do you not give God thanks, do you not congratulate yourself, that by an early departure you are taken away, and delivered from the shipwrecks and disasters that are imminent? Let us greet the day which assigns each of us to his own home, which snatches us hence, and sets us free from the snares of the world and restores us to paradise and the kingdom.”

Again we see use of language commonly found in reference to the Rapture as Cyprian describes the judgments of the end times as “imminent.” And he makes his belief on the timing of the Rapture when he wrote that Christians will have an “early departure” and be “delivered” from the devastating global judgments that come during the Day of The Lord. In line with the Apostle Paul who wrote that “God has not appointed us to wrath, but salvation.” Cyprian expressed joy and encourages the believing reader to rejoice that the Church will be “taken away” before the disastrous Great Tribulation. Just as The Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 24 used the same language of one “taken away” and the other “left.” Additionally Cyprian references the mansions which The Lord Jesus Christ promises to come back and take His believers to in John 14.

“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.” – John 14:1-3.

As Beginning and End detailed in our article “The Red Moon Rapture – The Biblical Timing of The Rapture”, in both the Matthew 24 passages (“one taken, the other left”) and in John 14 (“..receive you unto myself..”) the Greek work *paralambanō* is used for taken and receive. The meaning of that word is “join to one’s self” indicating that Jesus is coming to fully unify with His church – which takes place at the Rapture. Clearly Cyprian believed and taught that the Rapture takes place before the Great Tribulation.

Attachment 3

Ephraim (306 AD – 373 AD) was made a deacon in the church in Syria in 338 and later became the bishop of Nisibis. Although he was made a “saint” in the Roman Catholic Church, he was not involved in Catholicism and did not even live in the Roman Empire until the final years of his life. The book Pseudo Ephraim was one of his still existing works. It was called “Pseudo” because of later dispute over authorship. However the book’s one reference to the rapture is very compelling:

In his work, *On The Last Times 2*, he wrote:

“We ought to understand thoroughly therefore, my brothers, what is imminent or overhanging. Already there have been hunger and plagues, violent movements of nations and signs, which have been predicted by the Lord, they have already been fulfilled (consummated), and there is not other which remains, except the advent of the wicked one in the completion of the Roman kingdom. Why therefore are we occupied with worldly business, and why is our mind held fixed on the lusts of the world or on the anxieties of the ages? Why therefore do we not reject every care of worldly business, and why is our mind held fixed on the lusts of the world or on the anxieties of the ages? Why therefore do we not reject every care of earthly actions and prepare ourselves for the meeting of the Lord Christ, so that he may draw us from the confusion, which overwhelms all the world? Believe you me, dearest brother, because the coming (advent) of the Lord is nigh, believe you me, because the end of the world is at hand, believe me, because it is the very last time.

Or do you not believe unless you see with your eyes? See to it that this sentence be not fulfilled among you of the prophet who declares: “Woe to those who desire to see the day of the Lord!” For all the saints and elect of God are gathered, prior to the tribulation that is to come, and are taken to the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to overwhelm the world because of our sins. And so, brothers most dear to me, it is the eleventh hour, and the end of the world comes to the harvest, and angels, armed and prepared, hold sickles in their hands, awaiting the empire of the Lord. And we think that the earth exists with blind infidelity, arriving at its downfall early. Commotions are brought forth, wars of diverse peoples and battles and incursions of the barbarians threaten, and our regions shall be desolated, and we neither become very much afraid of the report nor of the appearance, in order that we may at least do penance; because they hurl fear at us, and we do not wish to be changed, although we at least stand in need of penance for our actions!”

With a sense of urgency and strong warning, Ephraim writes that the end times are upon this world and could start at any moment. This text very clearly states the saints and elect of God, all born again believers in The Lord Jesus Christ, will be “taken to the Lord” before the Great Tribulation. Ephraim also identifies the Old Testament “Day of The Lord” and the end times Great tribulation as the same event (in line with the teachings of the Beginning and End Rapture Series). Ephraim quotes Amos 5:18 which says: “Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light.”

The point he makes is that a Christian should know the Day of The Lord is coming. In the first part of the passage Ephraim notes that:

“We ought to understand thoroughly therefore, my brothers, what is imminent or overhanging. Already there have been hunger and plagues, violent movements of nations and signs, which have been predicted by the Lord, they have already been fulfilled (consummated)” And not only that but that true Christians will be taken away before it starts. Here he is describing the first 3 of the first 4 seals of Revelation 6 – wars, famines and plagues. These are the same end times signs Jesus Christ describes in Matthew 24:

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. – Matthew 24:3-8.

Jesus describes these events as “the beginning of sorrows.” He also says that when these things come to pass “the end is not yet.” Ephraim’s writing agrees with this interpretation as he says those same events have been “fulfilled (consummated)” in his day, but it was still not the actual Great Tribulation. This also falls in line with Beginning and End’s Rapture series as explained in our article Who Are The Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse? (The first four seals of Revelation 6 were opened at the time Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven. And the rapture itself does not occur until the opening of the 6th Seal.)

Ephraim in very strong language warns the reader not to be consumed with the cares of the world because the world in its current form, is coming to an end. As the Second Advent or Coming of The Lord Jesus Christ grows near, believers are to look to Heaven and set their hearts on pleasing God. It is clear that Ephraim distinguishes the Second Coming of Christ from the rapture, placing the Rapture before the Great Tribulation to come.