

THE CHURCH AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Revelation 3:10

Before proceeding into Revelation 6 I want to address a common question in regards to the end time. Will the church go through the Great Tribulation? The Bible describes the last seven years of human history as a time of unprecedented tribulation (Matt. 24:21). This horrible time is described in Revelation 6-19. I believe that the rapture of the church will take place before the beginning of the Great Tribulation and the church will not go through any part of that terrible period. I believe that for the following reasons.

I. THE PROMISE OF REVELATION 3:10.

A. The Significance of the Church.

* The church of Philadelphia represents the church of revival and evangelism. That church was prominent in the 19th and 20th centuries, but will exist until the end of the age. *

B. The Promise to the Church.

1. The promise to keep them out of the hour of trial.
2. The promise relates to a time of worldwide suffering.

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH. 2 Thess. 2:1-8.

A. The Tribulation Begins with the Antichrist's Covenant with Israel. Dan. 9:27.

B. The Holy Spirit in the Church Restrains Revelation of the Antichrist. 2 Thess. 2:7.

* We will not know the identity of the antichrist. *

C. The Holy Spirit Cannot be Removed until the Rapture of the Church. Eph. 2:22; John 14:16.

D. The Tribulation Cannot Begin until the Rapture of the Church.

III. THE CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF REVELATION.

A. Revelation 4:1 marks the Rapture of the Church.

B. The Church is in Heaven in Revelation 4 and 5.

1. The twenty-four elders. Rev. 4:4.
2. The coronation of the king. Rev. 5.

C. The Tribulation Begins in Revelation 6.

1. The opening of the seals begins the process of restoring the earth to God's rule.
2. The opening of the seals begins the judgment of God on an unbelieving world.
3. The opening of the seals begins the process of Israel's final chastisement and restoration to God. Rev. 12.

IV. THE IMMINENT RETURN OF CHRIST.

A. Christian's are Taught to Look for the Return of Christ. 1 Thess. 1:9,10; Phil. 3:20;
Titus 2:13.

* We are looking for the Christ, not the antichrist. *

B. The Imminent Return of Christ Demands a Pretribulation Rapture.

* If the church is going through the tribulation, Jesus could not return to rapture the church at any time. The revelation of the antichrist, the mark of the beast, the restoration of Israel and the judgments of the tribulation would have to come first. We are not looking for signs. We are looking for the savior!! *

All of these things mean that Jesus could return at any moment. Are you ready for him to come? If not, what do you need to do to be ready?