

*The Coming **Spiritual** Earthquake*

is more than just the title to this book. It poignantly describes what is about to take place on this Earth in the very near future. **Great Multitudes** of believers will be astonished to find themselves in the Tribulation period if they do not wake-up in time.

*“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on **human tradition** and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.”*
Colossians 2:8

The popular Church Tradition fostered by the **Left Behind** mindset teaches that all Believers will be Raptured before the horrible Tribulation period begins. Find out where the major “fault-lines” are before this SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE arrives!

Ezekiel 33

¹“A message came to me from the Lord. He said, ²“Son of man, speak to the people of your own country. Tell them, ‘Suppose I send enemies against a land. And its people choose one of their men to stand guard. ³He sees the enemies coming against the land. He blows a trumpet to warn the people. ⁴Someone hears the trumpet. But he does not pay any attention to the warning. The enemies come and kill him. Then what happens to him will be his own fault. ⁵He heard the sound of the trumpet. But he did not pay any attention to the warning. So what happened to him was his own fault. If he had paid attention, he would have saved himself. ⁶But suppose the guard sees the enemies coming. And he does not blow the trumpet to warn the people. The enemies come and kill one of them. Then his life has been taken away from him because he sinned. But I will hold the guard accountable for his death.’ ⁷“Son of man, I have appointed you as a prophet to warn the people of Israel. So listen to my message. Give them a warning from me. ⁸“Suppose I say to a sinful person, ‘You can be sure that you will die.’ And suppose you do not try to get him to change his ways. Then he will die because he has sinned. And I will hold you accountable for his death. ⁹“But suppose you do warn that sinful person. You tell him to change his ways. But he does not do it. Then he will die because he has sinned. But you will have saved yourself.”

*“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. **Watch** ye therefore, and **pray always**, that ye **may be accounted worthy to escape** all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”* (Luke 21:34-36)



THE COMING SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE

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To receive a **printed version** of *The Coming Spiritual Earthquake*, please send \$15 (Includes Shipping & Handling) to:

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Jesus is coming back again very, very soon! Get copies to give to friends and loved ones before it is too late!

Once the Rapture takes place it will be too late! The Church needs to wake up and get ready to meet her Bridegroom!

Most in the Church will be **LEFT BEHIND** if they fail to heed the warnings given in this timely book.

Order your copy of this final edition today, while supplies last. In this 176 page **printed version** we give mathematical proof of who the anti-christ is! He is getting ready to be revealed, but the Firstfruits will be removed before he comes on the world scene.

Make sure you are really ready, before the **Tribulation** period begins!

PROLOGUE

The message of this book was born from a horrifying dream I had in which I found myself in the period the Bible describes as the Tribulation.

I seldom dream; however, this dream was so real and terrifying that it motivated me to search the Scriptures to determine who will be able to escape this dreadful time of testing, and how a person can prepare.

I believe the Lord gave me this in order to help people prepare to be "*found worthy to escape*" the Tribulation. It is my prayer it will be used by our loving, heavenly Father to touch the lives of those He wants to reach with this urgent message.

In His Love,

Jim Harman

DEDICATION

***This book is dedicated to all Overcoming,
First Fruit believers, looking for the
soon return of our loving Lord and Savior,
Jesus Christ.***

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FOREWORD

I 'm convinced no message is more exciting than the message of our Lord's Return for His Own. It is the "*Blessed Hope*" of the believer in Christ. It is the message of this book.

However, when prophecy scholars lose sight of this message and get caught up in, and devote more time to the New Age Movement or the New World Order, than to our Lord's Coming, there should be great concern.

And, there is great concern for those who believe their profession of faith in Christ is all that is needed to prepare one for the Rapture when the Lord comes for His Own. While coming to know Christ as Savior is absolutely important, there are many admonitions given to believers to "watch" and "be ready" for our Lord's Coming.

Surely revival must come to the heart of the person living in known disobedience to the will of God upon realizing their carelessness and indifference. This condition, which constitutes "*lukewarmness*," could result in their lack of being ready when our Lord returns.

If looking for our Lord's Return, will we not want to be ready for that glorious event? As we read in I John 3:2-3, "*... when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him, purify himself, even as He is pure.*"

The message presented in THE COMING SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE is greatly needed to awaken believers to the false assumptions many have when it comes to the Rapture. This book will be used by the Holy Spirit to awaken you to the nearness of our Lord's Return, along with preparing you: to the need of living daily for Christ; to be ready when He comes. May God grant it. Amen.

Ray Brubaker

God's News Behind the News

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PREFACE

One of the biggest false ideas in the church today is that all Christians will be going in the Rapture when Jesus Christ snatches His Bride up to the throne.

One of the second biggest false ideas is that no one knows when it is going to be. By not properly interpreting the Word of God, these misconceptions have greatly contributed to the lukewarm condition of the church today. Jesus Christ foresaw this current state and warned the present church in Revelation 3:16:

"So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth."

There is coming a great SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE that will shake the Church. Many will wake- up to find they are part of the multitude of believers living in the Tribulation period.

**This book is a final warning to the Church:
REPENT, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND.**

May God use this message to awaken many in our churches in order to prepare to meet the Bridegroom.

It is time for the WISE VIRGINS to trim their lamps and be ready to enter into the marriage chamber (Matthew 25).

Only those who have KEPT His Word and who are found LOOKING for Him will be counted worthy to escape the coming tribulation. All others will be tried in the time of testing to be ushered in by the COMING SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE.

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INTRODUCTION

Debate has gone on for years as to whether Jesus would return before the Tribulation period (pre-trib), in the middle of it (mid-trib) or at its end (post-trib).

This confusion has fostered an attitude that prophecy is too difficult to understand for the average Christian. As a result, the REAL truth in the Word of God has remained hidden from the believer.

CRITICAL TIME

The CHURCH is at a VERY CRITICAL POINT. Jesus is getting ready to remove His First Fruit Believers from this planet, to be followed by the horrible Tribulation period.

Revelation 7:9-17, warns of a GREAT MULTITUDE which no man could number, coming out of the great Tribulation period. It will be shown that these represent many in our churches today for whom martyrdom will be required as described in Revelation 12:11.

TIME TO PREPARE

Prior to the Rapture, all Christians are given the opportunity of preparing for that event. Those who are Overcomers, counted worthy to escape the tribulation period, will be caught up to the throne of God, while all others will be required to be Overcomers by not shrinking from death.

It is time for the Church to WAKE UP and REPENT before it is too late. The COMING SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE will be far more devastating than any economic earthquake or shaking of the earth's surface!

TIMING OF EVENTS

In an attempt to determine when the Lord is going to return, many dates have been set and many have been disappointed when those dates have come and gone.

Because of this, popular tradition has emerged that it is wrong to set dates and that we are not supposed to know when the Lord is going to return.

This presents a problem since we are rapidly approaching the COMING SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE, and many believers will be taken by surprise. The day is almost upon us, and Paul warned us in I Thessalonians 5:4:

"But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day SHOULD surprise you like a thief."

Paul is telling us that Christians SHOULD NOT be surprised. By implication, Paul was saying that some Christians will indeed be surprised, even though they should not be taken by surprise. Hosea 4:6 warns us:

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee..."

Christians need to return to the Holy Word of God to see what it says about knowing when the Lord is going to return. Instead of listening to church tradition, this book will help the believer better understand what God's Word has to say about the timing of end time events that are about to culminate in the COMING SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE.

Readers need to approach this material with an open mind, teachable spirit and heart of love. We all need to be like the Berean Christians who searched the Scriptures daily to be sure what even the Apostle Paul told them was the truth (see Acts 17:11).

If believers fail to properly divide the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15), they will be misguided and may find themselves in the horror of the Tribulation period. Jesus warned us of this in Matthew 23:13-14:

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to."

Jesus was admonishing the Church leaders! The very ones that should know the Truth are actually keeping others from finding the correct way!

One of the main purposes of this book is to help guide people back to what the Word of God actually says and to help them prepare to meet the Bridegroom.

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WISE WILL UNDERSTAND

CHAPTER 1

As the Church approaches the end of the sixth millennium it would be wise to listen to the words of Apostle Paul's companion and fellow- preacher Barnabas:

"And even in the beginning of the creation he makes mention of the Sabbath. And God made in the SIX DAYS the works of his hands; and he finished them on the seventh day, and rested the seventh day, and sanctified it."

"Consider, my children, what that signifies, he finished them in six days. The meaning of it is this; that in SIX THOUSAND YEARS the Lord God will bring all things to AN END."

"For with him ONE DAY is a THOUSAND YEARS; as himself testifieth, saying, Behold this day shall be as a thousand years. Therefore, children, in SIX DAYS, that is, in SIX THOUSAND YEARS shall all things be accomplished." (Barnabas 13:3-5)

This sounds strikingly similar to what the Apostle Peter had to say when discussing the end times:

"But DO NOT FORGET this one thing, dear friends: WITH THE LORD A DAY IS LIKE A THOUSAND YEARS, and A THOUSAND YEARS ARE LIKE A DAY..." (II Peter 3:8)

Both Barnabas and Peter were telling us how God measures time. A day in His time frame is the equivalent to 1,000 years in the life of man. Since He created the earth in 6 days and then rested on the seventh, He was giving mankind a prophecy of how long He was going to deal with the human race on this earth.

At the end of 6 days or 6,000 years, His Word will be finished and mankind will then move into the 1,000 years of rest described in the book of Revelation.

There were approximately 4,000 years from creation until Christ, giving us 2,000 years since His birth to arrive at a total of 6,000 years. In later chapters we will discuss exactly where we are in this 2,000 year time frame.

SCIENCE CONFIRMS GOD'S WORD

The theory of relativity states that as you approach the speed of light, time slows down. Let's assume that Jesus is able to travel at the speed of light. Traveling at that speed for just 2 days, by His clock, would represent nearly 2,000 years on the earth. In other words, since Jesus left this earth about 2,000 years ago, He has only been gone about 2 days in His time frame.

With this understanding, the words by the prophet Hosea bring on added importance:

"After TWO DAYS he will revive us; on the THIRD DAY he will restore us, that we may live in his presence." (Hosea 6:2)

This is a prophecy that after two days, or 2,000 years in our time frame, God will restore us to live in His presence. After the second day we will dwell with the Lord in the coming Millennium (His third day).

This time relationship is also spoken of by our Lord in several instances. One example is found in John 2:1: *"On the THIRD DAY a wedding took place..."* This was a prophecy that after the end of the second day, or on the third day the Wedding described in Revelation 19:7, will take place. 2,000 years after the first coming of Christ, the Bride will rejoice at her Wedding to the Lamb at the start of the 1,000 year millennium reign.

The Word of God is a rich and wonderful store-house for those who are diligently seeking His truth. God has a master plan for mankind that is rapidly winding to a close.

RELIGIOUS SPIRIT

Whenever a date for the Lord's return is set, the first objection that most people make is, "You can't know the DAY or the HOUR, therefore let's not even discuss it." The argument goes on to say that it is wrong to set dates and that no one knows when Jesus is going to return.

Let's be careful that we are not like the Pharisees and Sadducees who were rebuked by Jesus himself in Matthew 16:2-3(KJ):

"When it is evening ye say, 'It will be fair weather; for the sky is red.' And in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today: 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?"

The religious leaders at the time of Christ were rebuked because they could not discern the time that they were living in. As we will see in a subsequent chapter, had they read the Scripture with a proper heart, they would have known the TIME they were living in and they would have known to be LOOKING for their Messiah. In a similar manner, we are currently living at a time when the Scriptures are SHOUTING: JESUS IS COMING! Unfortunately, not everyone has the "ears to hear" or the "eyes to see" what is transpiring before them.

Because of the tradition that we can not know about the timing of end-time events, many people will be caught off guard at the COMING SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE.

DAY AND HOUR

To ensure that we are not rebuked by Jesus, let's take a better look at what the Word of God has to say about knowing the timing.

The most widely used verse people quote when they want to prove that we are not to know when Jesus is returning is found in Matthew:

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

What most people fail to remember, however, is the preceding verse:

"Heaven and earth shall PASS AWAY, but my words shall not pass away." (Matthew 24:35)

The day and hour that no one knew about when Jesus spoke those words was when heaven and earth will pass away at the end of the 1,000 year Millennium. The timing of when this will occur is found in Revelation 21:1:

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth HAD PASSED AWAY."

The reason that this time is not known is found in Revelation 20:3, which says Satan is let out of the bottomless pit at the end of 1,000 years for: *"a LITTLE SEASON."* No one but God knows how long Satan will have to deceive the nations at that time.

HOUR YOU THINK NOT

The next objection to knowing the timing of end time events is related to the following verses in Matthew 24:42-44(KJ):

"WATCH therefore: for YE KNOW NOT WHAT HOUR your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the GOODMAN of the house had known in what WATCH the THIEF would come, he would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such AN HOUR AS YE THINK NOT the Son of man cometh."

On the surface of things, it appears that the Lord is coming as a THIEF and at a time we will not know. For the answer to this, we need to turn over to the parallel passage in Luke where Peter asks the Lord a very vital question in Luke 12:39-41(KJ):

"And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at AN HOUR WHEN YE THINK NOT."

"Then Peter said unto him, LORD, SPEAKEST THOU THIS PARABLE UNTO US, OR EVEN TO ALL?"

In this parallel passage concerning when the Lord is going to return, Luke records a very important question that Peter asks: Is this parable for US, meaning fellow believers, or for everyone?

Before we look at the Lord's answer, let's remember why the Lord spoke in parables:

"...Why do you speak to them in parables? He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them." (Matthew 13:10&11)

"Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand." (Mark 4:11&12)

Jesus used parables, because not everyone is given knowledge to the mysteries of the kingdom. Peter's question about who Jesus meant in the parable of not knowing the timing becomes an essential point.

Now, let's see what the Lord's answer is to this crucial question:

"And the Lord said, Who then is that FAITHFUL and WISE steward, whom HIS lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season."

"Blessed is THAT servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath."

"But and if that servant say in his HEART, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will COME IN A DAY WHEN HE LOOKETH NOT for him, and at AN HOUR WHEN HE IS NOT AWARE, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." (Luke 12:42-46(KJ))

First of all, Jesus says that the FAITHFUL and WISE steward will be greatly blessed. They are dressed and READY with their lamps burning brightly WAITING and WATCHING for their Lord to return (see Luke 12:35&36 and Matthew 25:10).

But notice what the UNFAITHFUL servant is thinking in his heart: *"My lord delayeth his coming."* He is not LOOKING and WATCHING as the faithful and wise steward is. Instead, he is beating (Greek: wounding the conscience) of his brothers and sisters. He is saying: NO ONE KNOWS when the Lord is coming, so let's forget about it and talk about something else; let's concern ourselves with this present time and enjoy ourselves.

Because of the attitude of the unfaithful servant's heart, Jesus says that he comes for him: *"in a DAY when he LOOKETH NOT FOR HIM, and at an HOUR WHEN HE IS NOT AWARE."* To the unfaithful servant Jesus is coming like a thief. He is going to take him by surprise on a DAY AND HOUR that he will not expect Him.

The wise and faithful servant will be ready, waiting and watching for Jesus, while the unfaithful servant will not know and will be taken by surprise.

THIEF IN THE NIGHT

This teaching that the wise and faithful will know and the unfaithful will not know is also confirmed for us by Paul:

"Now, BROTHERS, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come LIKE A THIEF in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on THEM SUDDENLY, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape." (1Thessalonians 5:1-3)

Most people stop reading at the end of the third verse to try to prove their point that the Lord is going to come as a THIEF. He is coming like a THIEF, but to whom is He coming to as a THIEF? Notice what Paul says in the fourth verse:

"But you, BROTHERS, are not in darkness so that this DAY SHOULD SURPRISE you like a THIEF."

Paul is saying that the Lord's coming should not surprise the Christian (BROTHER). While the rest of the world will be surprised like a THIEF, the true Christian SHOULD NOT be surprised.

This confirms what Jesus was teaching us in His parables. The wise and faithful steward will be READY, WAITING and WATCHING for Him when He comes for them. The unfaithful and foolish servant will not be looking for Him and will be taken by surprise.

LOOKING FOR JESUS

Further evidence for this teaching is found in the book of Hebrews. Hebrews 10:25 shows that the faithful servant will, "SEE THE DAY APPROACHING." How could we see the day coming if we are not supposed to know? By simple implication, we should know.

Not only should we know, but more importantly we should be LOOKING for Him as taught to us in Hebrews 9:28:

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and UNTO THEM that LOOK FOR HIM shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

This makes it quite clear, Jesus is returning the second time for those who are LOOKING FOR HIM. In subsequent chapters we will review what looking for Him entails, and the fate of those who fail to heed God's Word.

Further, the book of Revelation implies the faithful will know when the Lord is coming:

"I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. WAKE UP! Strengthen what remains and is about to die...Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. BUT IF YOU DO NOT WAKE UP, I will come LIKE A THIEF, and you will NOT KNOW at WHAT TIME I will come to you." (Rev.3:2-3)

The church of Sardis was dead. The Lord rebuked it and warned it to repent and to wake up. By implication, if this church will only obey His admonition, they will not be surprised like a thief and they will KNOW the TIME.

The Word of God is very clear. The wise and faithful servant will be looking for Jesus and they will be ready, waiting and watching for Him. They will know the time and will not be taken by surprise.

The unfaithful and foolish servant will not know when Jesus returns and they will not be ready for Him. They will be taken by surprise like a thief and they will not know the day or hour when He will return.

The choice is left up to the individual. He can heed the Word of God and be looking for the soon return of Jesus, or else he can continue listening to the tradition of not knowing and be taken by surprise like a thief.

KNOW IT IS NEAR

Finally, Jesus commanded us to KNOW the timing of end time events:

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, KNOW THAT IS NEAR, EVEN AT THE DOORS." (Matthew 24:32-33 (KJ))

Just prior to telling us the fig tree parable, Jesus listed all of the signs that we would see, such as: wars and rumors of wars, nation rising against nation, famines and earthquakes in diverse places. These signs were just the beginning of birth pains, indicating that the time for delivery (Tribulation period) was just about due.

Then Jesus gives us one of the most important clues to knowing His return is near. He tells us to LEARN a parable or lesson about the FIG TREE. Most bible students agree that the Fig Tree represents the nation of Israel (See Hosea 9:10 and Joel 1:6-7).

Until this century, Israel had been scattered throughout the world with no land to call home. Then on May 14, 1948, the state of Israel was founded and on May 15, 1949, was recognized by the United Nations.

Jesus tells us that once we see the nation of Israel established again we can and SHOULD KNOW that His return is near, even at the DOOR!

When someone knocks on your door or rings the door bell, what do you do? Of course, you get up, and go to the door. Jesus was telling us that once we see all the signs converging on the world scene, AND we see Israel established as a nation, we are to KNOW that He is as close as the front door. In other words, it is time to get up, get ready, Jesus is ALMOST HERE!

WISE WILL UNDERSTAND

The book of Daniel ends with words that are prophetic for the time we now live:

"Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed UNTIL the TIME OF THE END. Many will be PURIFIED, made SPOTLESS and REFINED, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but THOSE WHO ARE WISE WILL UNDERSTAND."

May Daniel's words reverberate in the reader's ears as they continue in this book. Many will be PURIFIED and made SPOTLESS and the WISE WILL UNDERSTAND.

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ESCAPE POSSIBLE

Chapter 2

Another clear indication we are nearing the return of the Lord, is the fact that the World is crying for Peace and Safety.

On September 27, 1991, President Bush announced a NEW ERA of "PEACE AND SECURITY" with sweeping nuclear arms reductions, as he took America off alert from possible attack from Russia.

The Middle East peace process began in October of 1991, and has progressed to the point that the parties are TALKING about PEACE and SECURITY.

The Apostle Paul warned us of this time:

"For yourselves know perfectly that the DAY OF THE LORD so cometh as a thief in the night (for the ungodly). For when they shall SAY, PEACE and SAFETY, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."
(I Thessalonians 5:2-3(KJ))

Paul was telling us that there would come a time when the world was talking about PEACE and SAFETY. He was warning us that TALK is all it really is. The nations say they want peace, but we know that there will be no true peace until the "Prince of Peace," Jesus Christ returns.

Jeremiah reminds us: *"Peace, peace," they say when there is no peace.*" (Jeremiah 6:14)

The main point needs to be understood that while they are SAYING PEACE and SAFETY, THEN sudden destruction will come. At some point, everyone will believe that peace has been achieved. When that point is reached, WATCH OUT! - for the bible declares when they are saying peace and safety, then will come SUDDEN DESTRUCTION.

DAY OF THE LORD

This sudden destruction will usher in the time described in the Word of God, as the DAY of the LORD.

The Day of the Lord is a major doctrine that is referred to more than three hundred times in God's Word.

The Day of the Lord begins with the seven year Tribulation period, to be followed by the 1,000 years of peace during the reign of Christ. The Tribulation is the beginning of the Day of the Lord, and it will be one of most horrible times for the inhabitants of the earth. It will be a time of testing and great trial. Revelation 6:8, indicates that one-quarter of the people

will die. Of those remaining, Revelation 9:15, shows one-third of mankind will perish. Taken together, this tells us that one-half of the population of the earth will be destroyed during this awful time.

SHELTER POSSIBLE

While this coming period of destruction will be horrible for those left on the earth, the Word of God does indicate that there is a way of escape:

"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 trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers." (Zephaniah 1:14-15 (KJ))

"Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the DAY of the LORD'S anger come upon you."

"SEEK ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: IT MAY BE (or PERHAPS) ye SHALL BE HID IN THE DAY OF THE LORD'S ANGER." (Zephaniah 2:2-3 (KJ))

The prophet Zephaniah indicated that some of those who are seeking the Lord, may be able to be hid from the horrible day of the Lord. He says to seek the Lord and perhaps you will be able to escape.

Notice that he does not indicate that you are definitely guaranteed of escaping. He uses the words MAY BE or PERHAPS, which would mean that not everyone will be able to escape.

LORD'S SAME TEACHING

Jesus confirms this same teaching for us:

"Watch, ye therefore, and pray always, that ye MAY BE ACCOUNTED WORTHY to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36(KJ))

Jesus told us to always pray that we MAY BE able to escape. Jesus was telling this to His disciples. He is telling the Christian to pray that he is counted worthy of escaping the Tribulation period. This indicates that escape is possible, but is conditioned upon being accounted worthy in the Lord's eyes.

Both the prophet Zephaniah and the Lord show that escaping the Day of the Lord (or the Tribulation period) is possible. They both indicate that it is conditional and not something that is guaranteed or assured.

Jesus indicated that the Christian needed to pray they may be accounted worthy in order to escape. This infers that not all Christians are automatically counted worthy. If they were, then Jesus would not have told us to pray such a prayer.

If all Christians were already guaranteed that they would escape the Tribulation period, then this instruction would be meaningless.

It is important to remember that we are not talking about salvation. We are talking about escaping the Tribulation. No one is worthy of salvation. We are saved completely by the grace of God:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9 (KJ))

In the following chapter we will look further into what Jesus meant when He told us to pray that we are ACCOUNTED WORTHY of escaping the horrible Tribulation period.

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COUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE

CHAPTER 3

*"Watch, ye therefore, and pray always, that ye **MAY BE ACCOUNTED WORTHY** to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36(KJ))*

Jesus told us that we need to **WATCH** and **PRAY ALWAYS** that we are accounted **WORTHY** in order to escape the terrible Day of the Lord that will soon engulf this world. Escape is very possible, but it is also very conditional. It is not guaranteed or assured for any one. The Word of God makes it very clear that not all Christians are worthy and not all Christians will escape the Tribulation period.

WHO IS WORTHY

Revelation 3:4, tells us:

*"Thou hast a **FEW** names even in Sardis which **HAVE NOT DEFILED THEIR GARMENTS**; and they shall walk with me in white: for they **ARE WORTHY**."*

The second and third chapters of Revelation list seven churches which represent Christians. They are all believers in Christ, but only a **FEW** have the promise of escaping the Tribulation period.

In Revelation 3:4, we see that the Church of Sardis had a **FEW** members who stood out from the rest. Overall, the Church of Sardis was dead; but it did have a **FEW** who were found **WORTHY**. They were found **WORTHY** because they had not defiled their garments.

Jesus is returning for His Bride. He expects her to be without spot or wrinkle and to be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:27).

While the Church of Sardis was dead, it did have a **FEW** members who had not defiled their garments. They had kept them spotless without any wrinkle or blemish. Because of this, they were considered **WORTHY**.

Remember that Jesus told us to pray that we are counted **WORTHY** to escape the Tribulation period. This picture of the **FEW** in Sardis shows us what it takes to be **WORTHY**.

Jesus is telling His Bride not to get her wedding garment dirty by this dark and dying world. To stay away from anything that would cause her to get her dress wrinkled or spotted. To keep herself separate from the things of this world and remain Holy and pure.

By so doing the Bride of Christ will be ready and found **WORTHY** when the Lord returns for her. As a result, she will be able to escape the Tribulation hour.

KEPT FROM TRIBULATION

Revelation also gives us another Church that is given the promise of escaping the horrible Tribulation period:

"Because thou hast KEPT THE WORD of my patience, I also will KEEP THEE FROM THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION (TRIBULATION), which shall come upon the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." (Rev.3:10 (KJ))

This is the Church of Philadelphia. Because the members of this Church have KEPT GOD'S WORD, God promises to keep them out of the Tribulation period. This is also what James was trying to tell the Church:

"Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. DO WHAT IT SAYS." (James 1:22)

By keeping God's Word, the Christian is given the promise of escaping the Tribulation hour. By not defiling their garment, the believer is considered worthy. By doing what the Word of God says and not soiling or wrinkling her wedding gown, the Bride of Christ can be confident that Jesus will take her to be with Him prior to when the Tribulation hour begins.

THOSE NOT WORTHY

The Word of God also describes a group of believers who are NOT considered WORTHY:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come."

"Then he sent some more servants and said, "Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner...and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet."

"But they PAID NO ATTENTION TO IT (KJ: MADE LIGHT OF IT), and went off--one to his field, another to his business..."

"Then he said to his servants, "The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come (KJ: were NOT WORTHY)." Matthew 22:2-5, and 22:8

Because they did not pay attention to the invitation to come to the wedding banquet they missed out. The King James version says that they even made light of it. Because of their response, they are considered: NOT WORTHY.

Earlier we showed that only those who are accounted worthy by the Lord, will be able to escape the Tribulation period. Since this group makes light of the message, they will find themselves in the Tribulation hour.

This is a parable for today's Christian. When the subject of the return of Christ is brought up, many Christians make light of it or pay no attention to it. They are too caught up with

the things of this world to be concerned with thoughts of heaven. Because of their attitude, they are not considered WORTHY.

For a parallel passage to the above, the reader may want to study Luke 14:16-24. In Luke's version, everyone makes excuses on why they can not come to the wedding banquet. They were also caught up in the things of this world; and as a result, they made excuses and ended up missing the banquet.

In subsequent chapters we will discover that there are more references that show multitudes of Christians ending up in the Tribulation period. This is so unnecessary, because God does provide a way of escape. Those who are accounted worthy and who have not defiled themselves with this evil world, will be kept from the hour of testing that is coming to try this world. Escape is possible for those who are found worthy and looking for Him.

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MAKE EVERY EFFORT

CHAPTER 4

We have seen that escaping the Tribulation period is not automatic or assured for any Christian. Only those who have, "*KEPT THE WORD*" and who have "*NOT DEFILED THEIR GARMENTS*" are given the blessed assurance of ESCAPING the Tribulation and being found WORTHY.

This implies that effort is required of the believer in order to escape the hour of trial. While salvation is a free gift that can not be obtained by works (Ephesians 2:8-9), escape from the time of testing is based upon the merits of the individual believer's life.

MADE HERSELF READY

A good illustration of this is seen in the Bride of Christ:

"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His BRIDE HAS MADE HERSELF READY." (Revelation 19:6-7)

Just as any earthly bride prepares for her wedding day, the Bride of Christ has to make preparations for her wedding to the Lamb of God. Effort is required in order to be ready. Further proof of this is seen in the verse which follows:

"Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous ACTS of the saints)" (Rev.19:8)

This indicates that the righteous ACTS of the believer is what provided the spotless wedding garment. Effort is required on the part of the believer if they want to have the fine linen that the Bride of Christ is wearing.

(The above translation of Revelation 19:8, is from the New International Version (NIV). In this instance, it gives a truer rendering of the original Greek. Some will argue that the fine linen represents the righteousness that is imputed to the believer through Christ. This error helps foster the lukewarm attitude that will lead many Christians into the Tribulation period).

TEN VIRGINS

For further proof that effort is required, let's look at the parable of the ten virgins:

"At midnight the cry rang out: "Here's the Bridegroom! Come out to meet him!" Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out."

"No," they replied, "There may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves." But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins WHO WERE READY went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut." (Matthew 25:6-10)

Here we see that only the five wise virgins who were **READY** went into the wedding. The Greek for ready is: fit, prepared, or made ready.

While it appears the five foolish virgins were very busy, they were not properly prepared or ready when the bridegroom arrived. This is a picture of the Church today. Many appear to be very busy, but they are not making the proper preparations. They are not busy making themselves ready to meet their Bridegroom. We need to learn a lesson from the five wise virgins and prepare our lives to be ready to meet our Bridegroom: Jesus, when He returns for His Bride.

NECESSARY PREPARATIONS

In discussing prophecies concerning the end of time, Peter gives the Christian some very vital instruction:

"....I have written.....as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to LIVE HOLY and GODLY LIVES as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming...So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, MAKE EVERY EFFORT to be found SPOTLESS, BLAMELESS and at PEACE with HIM." (II Peter 3:1,11&14)

Peter tells us we need to **MAKE EVERY EFFORT** to be found **BLAMELESS** and to live **HOLY** and **GODLY LIVES**. This is further confirmation that effort is required by the believer. Jesus is coming for the believers who have made the necessary preparations. Those who are found **SPOTLESS, BLAMELESS** and at **PEACE** with Him will experience great joy at His return.

The Apostle Paul also taught us how we should be living when he was instructing the Church of the Thessalonians about the return of the Lord:

"You are witnesses, and so is God, of how HOLY, RIGHTEOUS and BLAMELESS we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting, and URGING you to LIVE LIVES WORTHY OF GOD, who calls you into His kingdom and glory." (I Thessalonians 2:10-12)

"May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be BLAMELESS and HOLY in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes..." (I Thessalonians 3:13)

"Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to PLEASE God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and URGE you in the Lord Jesus to do this MORE and MORE." (I Thessalonians 4:1)

"For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a HOLY LIFE." (I Thessalonians 4:7)

Paul's instruction is vital to the Christian. God wants His children HOLY, PURE, RIGHTEOUS, and BLAMELESS. This type of life is necessary in order to be considered WORTHY. Paul was concerned that the BELIEVERS in the Church might not be found WORTHY. Notice his remarks in his second letter to this church:

"All this is evidence that God's judgement is right, and as a result you will be COUNTED WORTHY of the kingdom of God.."(II Thessalonians 1:5)

"With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God MAY COUNT YOU WORTHY of His calling..." (II Thessalonians 1:11)

Paul knew the believer was not automatically COUNTED WORTHY before God. He URGED them to live their lives in such a way that God might find them properly prepared for the kingdom of God. He then relates that he constantly prayed for the believer's WORTHINESS! This sounds strikingly similar to the words the Lord told his disciples:

"Watch, ye therefore, and pray always, that ye MAY BE ACCOUNTED WORTHY to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36(KJ))

It becomes abundantly clear that WORTHINESS before the Lord is not a condition that is automatically bestowed upon the believer at the time of salvation. If it were, Jesus and Paul would not have stated prayer was needed to ensure the Christian is found WORTHY.

UPWARD CALLING

Paul realized that being counted worthy before God was of vital importance. He urged the disciples to live their lives in such a way that they may be found acceptable before God, and he prayed they may achieve this calling.

Remember that Paul was the believer who wrote the following words in Ephesians 2:8-9:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9 (KJ))

Paul knew that works played no part in his salvation. And yet, Paul also wrote the following words, which indicate he was very concerned about his own life:

"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; IF BY ANY MEANS I MIGHT attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I'm apprehended of Christ Jesus."

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended : but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the PRIZE of the HIGH CALLING of God in Christ Jesus."

(Philippians 3:10-14 (KJ))

Paul realized that his salvation did not guarantee that he would be found worthy to take part in the PRIZE of the HIGH CALLING. Paul knew that effort, on his part, was very necessary. He likened this quest to a race he was running, for which he knew had a very special prize.

He called this prize the HIGH CALLING. The meaning of the words in the original Greek is very interesting. High means UPWARD or ON THE TOP. Calling means INVITATION or calling. Paul might have been literally saying, *"I press toward the mark for the prize of the UPWARD INVITATION or the TOP CALLING of God..."*

Paul's own striving for this special prize should be an example for every Christian to apply to their own life. Living in the final days of the Church age, the believer needs to heed Paul's instruction with utmost care. If we fail to hit the mark to which Paul says we need to strive, the consequences may be very grave. In subsequent chapters, we will see that this UPWARD CALLING is the promise of escaping the Tribulation period plus much more.

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FIRSTFRUIT BELIEVERS

CHAPTER 5

Many of the parables Jesus used were founded upon agricultural pictures, since the stories presented principles that were readily known and understood.

One of the best examples of this is found in the fourteenth chapter of Revelation. It describes the harvest of the earth; but more importantly, it gives an overall outline of the entire Tribulation period.

THE LAMB AND 144,000

This outline has been obscured from most in the Church because of the assumption that the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation 7:1-8, are the same 144,000 described in Revelation 14.

Those described in Revelation 7, are clearly servants of God from the 12 tribes of Israel. Note what is put on their foreheads:

"Do not harm the land or sea or the trees until we (angels) put a SEAL on the foreheads of the servants of our God. Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel." (Revelation 7:3-4)

The 144,000 are sealed by God's angels as a protection from the wrath to come. The SEAL of protection is put in their foreheads.

Compare this to the foreheads of the 144,000 described in Revelation 14:1:

"Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had HIS NAME and HIS FATHER'S NAME written on their foreheads."

These two groups of 144,000 clearly have different details written on their foreheads. The Jewish servants have SEALS, while the 144,000 in chapter 14, have the name of Jesus and the name of God written on theirs.

There are also other characteristics which show that these are not the same 144,000. Those in chapter 14 are in Heaven:

"And I heard a sound from HEAVEN like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a new song before the THRONE and before the four living creatures and the elders..." (Revelation 14:2-3)

Those found in Revelation 14, are in Heaven BEFORE the Tribulation begins (Rev. 14:6-7), while those described in Revelation 7:1-8, are sealed for protection from the wrath to come on the EARTH (see Revelation 9:4). The 144,000, of Revelation 7, are on the earth IN the Tribulation, while the scene shown in Revelation 14, is of 144,000, before the heavenly

throne **PRIOR TO** the hour of Judgment. This setting is also what is seen in Revelation 19:6:

"After this I heard what sounded like a roar of a great multitude in HEAVEN shouting..."

"Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder shouting:

*"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His Bride has made herself ready."
(Revelation 19:1,6-7)*

Comparing Revelation 14 and 19, it is very clear the 144,000, that are described in chapter 14 are in fact in HEAVEN and not on the earth. For final proof this group is not the same as the 144,000 Jewish servants of chapter 7, notice the following:

"...No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who HAD BEEN REDEEMED FROM THE EARTH." (Revelation 14:3)

This clearly identifies this group as an earthly remnant in heaven. They are 144,000 believers in Christ who have been **TAKEN FROM** the earth **PRIOR TO** the Tribulation. They are a very special group of people:

*"These are those who did not **DEFILE** themselves with women, for they kept themselves **PURE**. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were **PURCHASED** from among men and offered as **FIRST FRUITS** to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are **BLAMELESS**." (Revelation 14:4-5)*

Notice that this group had not **DEFILED** themselves, but were found **PURE** and **BLAMELESS**. This sounds strikingly similar to the description of those individuals revealed in the last two chapters. Those found worthy of escaping the Tribulation period:

Had not DEFILED THEIR GARMENT. (Rev.3:4)

Made every effort to be found SPOTLESS, BLAMELESS, and at PEACE with Him. (II Peter 3:14)

Strengthened their hearts so they were found BLAMELESS and HOLY. (I Thess. 3:13)

From the foregoing, it shows that this group of 144,000, represent Christians who had made the necessary preparations and were found worthy before God. Those found worthy of escaping the Tribulation hour were found **BLAMELESS, SPOTLESS** and **UNDEFILED**. Because of their **PURE** condition, they were taken to heaven as a **FIRST FRUIT** offering to God.

FIRST FRUITS

This select group of Christians was purchased from the earth as a FIRST FRUITS offering. The Greek for purchased means: to go to the market. It is a picture of God coming to the earth to select His FIRST FRUITS from the entire crop.

The farmer would gather the early crop as soon as enough had become ripe. Later, after the whole fields had been ripened by the summer heat, the entire crop would be harvested. The season would then close with the vintage, and the grapes were crushed in the vineyard.

This is a remarkable picture of what God is trying to reveal to us in Revelation 14. With the understanding that this group of 144,000, is not the same as the 144,000 given in Revelation 7, the picture of the entire period of the Tribulation hour becomes clear (please see Chart I).

PRE-TRIB & POST-TRIB CORRECT

On the following page is an outline of several key events of the Tribulation period. It will be shown that both the pre-tribulation theory and the post-tribulation theory are partially correct. While both have parts that are right, they both have error that can cause the Christian great harm.

6 VISIONS OF REVELATION 14

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1) FIRST FRUIT BELIEVERS - IN HEAVEN | (verses 1-5) |
| 2) HOUR OF JUDGEMENT HAS COME | (verses 6-7) |
| 3) BABYLON THE GREAT HAS FALLEN | (verse 8) |
| 4) PERSECUTION BY THE BEAST | (verses 9-13) |
| 5) JESUS RETURNS IN CLOUDS - FINAL HARVEST | (verses 14-16) |
| 6) VINTAGE - IN WINEPRESS OF GOD'S WRATH | (verses 17-20) |

Revelation 14, gives us a panoramic view of the entire Tribulation period. God placed this chapter immediately after the one that describes the reign of the two Beasts. It is, as if, God said, "Time out, Let's look at this whole thing in perspective." And a beautiful perspective it is. Let's focus on the main points the end-time Christians need to understand.

First, God shows that prior to the Hour of Judgement, He plans to remove His FIRST FRUIT believers to Heaven. What a glorious hope this is to those living in these final days. As we have seen in previous chapters, God promises to take those believers who are accounted worthy, out of the Tribulation hour that is coming to test the whole world. After we are removed, judgement begins. This is precisely what is pictured in this summary chapter of Revelation 14.

Notice that God only removes the FIRST FRUIT believers. Not all Christians are taken at first. This is the major problem with the pre-tribulation view of the Rapture. It says that all

Christians will be Raptured. God's Word reveals that only God's FIRST FRUITS are taken before the HOUR of JUDGEMENT begins.

This picture in Revelation 14, shows what has been discovered in previous chapters of this book. Escape from the Tribulation period is possible, but is conditional. It is not guaranteed for any Christian, but based upon the worthiness of each individual believer. Only those who are found BLAMELESS, SPOTLESS, and HOLY, and who have not DEFILED themselves, will be COUNTED WORTHY to be included in the Rapture of FIRST FRUIT BELIEVERS.

After God removes His select group, He then allows Judgement to begin. Revelation 14, then reviews the two main episodes: the destruction of Babylon the Great, and the persecution by the Beast. Then the last two visions of Revelation 14, review the final gathering of the HARVEST and the VINTAGE.

HARVEST

When the Tribulation period is about over, the Lord Jesus Christ will return in the clouds:

"I looked, and there before me was a white CLOUD. And seated on the CLOUD was one "like a son of man" with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the CLOUD, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the HARVEST of the earth is ripe." (Revelation 14:14-15)

The Lord will return for the final HARVEST after the hour of Judgement has come to a close. This also agrees with the agricultural picture discussed earlier. The farmer gathered in his First Fruits from the early crop and then waited for the rest of the field to ripen at the end of the summer. When the summer was over, he would HARVEST the remainder of the crop.

VINTAGE

The final VINTAGE of the grape season is when the grapes are trodden down in the winepress. This is remarkably pictured as the final scene of Revelation 14:

"The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia. (180 miles)." (Revelation 14:19-20)

This sounds very similar to that final battle before the Millennium:

"...He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty." (Revelation 19:15)

Revelation 14, ends with the final battle of Armageddon. The chapter thus provides a very good summary or outline of the major events that are scheduled to occur during the period of the Tribulation. The Rapture of FIRST FRUIT believers is clearly indicated as the event

that must precede this Tribulation hour. We will now discover just how these FIRST FRUIT believers arrived in heaven.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD

The traditional verses used to show the Rapture are found in I Corinthians 15:51-52, and I Thessalonians 4:15-18. Later in this book, we will show that these verses will actually occur at the very end of the Tribulation period.

For all Pre-Tribulation followers, don't panic. There is still an escape before the Tribulation period begins. It has been there all along, but has been hidden. Remember that Paul taught us in II Timothy 2:15 (KJ):

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Most of the confusion over when the Rapture is to take place has resulted from the fact that we have not properly divided the Word of truth; and that includes this author, who asks for forgiveness. By following the various traditions that have been developed, we have all been lead astray from what God's wonderful Word has for us.

SNATCHED UP TO GOD

Chapter 12 of the book of Revelation tells us the story of a woman who gives birth to a male child. Most have incorrectly divided this section of the Word of truth, and said that this male child is Christ. By so doing, we have MISSED a vital KEY that reveals WHEN the Rapture takes place and WHO is actually taken in the Rapture. Let's see what we have been missing all along:

"A great & wondrous sign appeared in heaven:

"a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born."

"She gave birth to a SON, a MALE CHILD, WHO WILL RULE ALL THE NATIONS WITH AN IRON SCEPTER."

"And her child was SNATCHED UP to God and to HIS THRONE ." (Revelation 12:1-5)

This male child has been interpreted to be Jesus Christ. This is based upon Scriptures which do show that Jesus will rule the nations with a iron scepter:

"You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery." (Psalm 2:8)

"Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." (Rev.19:15)

It is clear that Jesus Christ will rule the nations with an iron scepter. But this is not enough evidence that the male child is in fact Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ was born, then He DIED, and then He rose from the dead. This story of the male child shows him being born and THEN SNATCHED UP to the throne of God. If this child were Jesus Christ, it would have said that the dragon killed the child, and then the child was taken to the throne of God. It can be seen, from this, that the male child could not possibly be Jesus Christ. If it is not Jesus Christ, then who could it be?

The Word of God beautifully answers this question for us, as we will see below.

OVERCOMERS

The book of Revelation gives many descriptions of those Christians that live exemplary lives before God. Jesus called them: **OVERCOMERS**:

"To him who OVERCOMES, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." (Rev.2:7)

"...He who OVERCOMES will not be hurt at the second death." (Rev.2:11)

"To him who OVERCOMES, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him..." (Rev 2:17)

"To him who OVERCOMES will, like them (those few in Sardis who have not defiled their garments), be dressed in white..." (Rev.3:5)

"Him who OVERCOMES I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name ." (Rev.3:12)

"To him who OVERCOMES, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on His throne." (Rev.3:21)

"To him who OVERCOMES and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations--He WILL RULE THEM WITH AN IRON SCEPTER; HE WILL DASH THEM TO PIECES LIKE POTTERY." (Rev. 2:26&27)

As Christians, we are called to be **OVERCOMERS**. Not all Christians, however, are **OVERCOMERS**. Notice the description of the overcomers who are shown in the last listing: They will rule with Jesus Christ, *"with AN IRON SCEPTER..."*

This is the precise description of the **MALE CHILD**, given in Revelation 12:5:

"She gave birth to a SON, a MALE CHILD, WHO WILL RULE ALL THE NATIONS WITH AN IRON SCEPTER."

"And her child was SNATCHED UP to God and to HIS THRONE."

The MALE CHILD will rule the nations with Jesus Christ with an IRON SCEPTER. This MALE CHILD is the Christian who is an OVERCOMER when Jesus returns to SNATCH him AWAY. He is the FIRST FRUIT believer that God will gather before His THRONE in heaven before the final harvest.

This male child is a select group of believers who will be taken to the throne of God in heaven before the dragon has a chance to kill him. The Christian who is an OVERCOMER and a FIRST FRUIT believer will be taken off of the earth to be with God before the devil has a chance to hurt him.

Notice how the Word of God beautifully connects the OVERCOMER with those believers who are assured of missing the Tribulation:

"To him who OVERCOMES and DOES MY WILL TO THE END..." (Rev.2:26)
COMPARED TO:

"Because thou hast KEPT THE WORD of my patience, I also will KEEP THEE FROM THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION..."(Revelation 3:10 (KJ))

Those overcomers who DO God's WILL TO THE END or WHO KEEP God's WORD, are given the blessed promise of being kept from going into the hour of testing.

Also, remember the OVERCOMER (Revelation 3:12) has the name of God and Jesus written on him. This harmonizes perfectly with the FIRST FRUIT believers described in Revelation 14:1. The FIRST FRUIT believer is the OVERCOMER who has the glorious assurance of not going into the Tribulation period. He is the MALE CHILD who is SNATCHED UP to the throne of God before the dragon can harm him (see **Chart II for summary**).

TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY

The above teaching is confirmed for us by Paul in his second letter to the Thessalonians. In this chapter, Paul discusses the timing of the Day of the Lord. He tells us:

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that DAY (Day of the Lord) SHALL NOT COME, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin (Anti-christ) be revealed, the son of perdition." (II Thess. 2:3 (KJ))

He says that the falling away will precede the Day of the Lord. He also says that the Antichrist will be revealed before that day comes. Notice, however, what is holding back the revelation of the Antichrist:

"And now you know the thing holding back, for him to be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness already works, only HE holding back now, until it comes out of the midst; and then the Lawless One will be revealed..." (II Thes.2:7- Inter-linear translation)

This might be paraphrased: "He is holding the Anti-christ (who is already at work) from being revealed. When He is taken out of (or abundantly above) their midst, then the Antichrist will be revealed."

Most have interpreted the "He" in the above verses to represent the Holy Spirit. The theory states that the Holy Spirit is taken out through the Rapture of all Christians, and then the Anti-christ is revealed.

The problem with this theory, is the fact that the book of Revelation indicates that many people will be saved during the period of the Tribulation. If the Holy Spirit is taken out of their midst, it would be impossible for anyone to be saved after that.

The only possible explanation of who the "HE" is in the above verse, is the MALE CHILD that is found in Revelation 12:5. This fits in perfectly with what we have already learned. Once the MALE CHILD is taken out of the way (Greek: ABUNDANTLY ABOVE) then the Anti-christ is revealed. The MALE CHILD is SNATCHED UP to heaven, abundantly above, the reach of the dragon. Both are beautiful pictures of how God plans to keep this select group from the hands of Satan. Only after He has removed His select overcoming first fruit believers, will He allow the Anti-christ on stage.

Chart 1		
	144,000 JEWISH SERVANTS	144,000 FIRST FRUIT BELIEVERS
DIFFERENT FOREHEADS	Seal of Protection (Revelation 7:3)	Identification Mark (Revelation 14:1)
DIFFERENT LOCATIONS	On the Earth during the Tribulation (Rev. 7:3-4 & 9:4)	In Heaven before the Tribulation (Rev.14:1 & 14:7)
DIFFERENT PEOPLE	Tribes of Israel (Revelation 7:4)	Redeemed from the Earth (Rev. 14:3)
DIFFERENT ASSOCIATIONS	Living with Demon Locusts (Rev.9:3-4)	Living with the Lamb Jesus (Rev. 14:1)

Chart 2			
	OVERCOMER	MALE CHILD	FIRST FRUIT BELIEVER
NAME ON FOREHEAD	"...I will write on him the NAME of MY GOD and... MY NEW NAME." (Rev. 3:12)		"...144,000 who had HIS NAME and HIS FATHER'S NAME written on their foreheads." (Rev.14:1)
IRON SCEPTER	"To him who OVERCOMES... he will RULE THEM with AN IRON SCEPTER." (Rev2:27)	"She gave birth to a MALE CHILD, who will RULE THEM with AN IRON SCEPTER." (Rev12:5)	
PRE-TRIB RAPTURE		"he was SNATCHED UP to God and to HIS THRONE." (Rev12:5)	"...144,000...before the THRONE ...were redeemed from the earth." (Rev. 14:1-5)
UNDEFILED	"...a few names... who have not DEFILED their garments ...they are worthy." (Rev.3:4)		"...144,000these are they which were not DEFILED..." (Rev.14:3&4)

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SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE

CHAPTER 6

The stage is being set for one of the most devastating earthquakes mankind could ever imagine. This is not an earthquake that will shake the earth's crust or even the economy. The earthquake that is coming is going to be a SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE.

Earthquakes are generally felt in one area of the world at any given point. The spiritual earthquake that is coming, will be felt around the world at the same time. It will be one of the most horrifying events in history.

The majority of Christians believe in the pre-tribulation theory of the Rapture. This theory states that ALL born-again believers will be taken in the Rapture, to be with the Lord, before the Tribulation period begins. Let's look at some of the major "fault-lines" in this widely accepted theory.

LAST TRUMPET

I Corinthians 15:51-52, are some of the main verses to show the pre-tribulation Rapture:

"Behold, I show 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 TRUMPET : for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

First of all, notice that Paul says the dead will be raised and the living changed at the LAST TRUMPET. When does the Word of God say the last trumpet will sound?

The book of Revelation answers this question for us. There are seven angels whose job it will be, to sound seven trumpets. The angels begin in Revelation 8:6, and continue until the last one is sounded in Revelation 11. Notice the events surrounding the sounding of the seventh or LAST TRUMPET:

"The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever." (Christ's reign of the world begins.)

"And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and HAVE BEGUN TO REIGN. The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The TIME HAS COME for JUDGING the dead, and REWARDING your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name..." (Revelation 11:15-18)

The timing of the seventh trumpet or the LAST TRUMPET occurs when Jesus returns to the kingdom of the world to begin His reign. It is at this time that He will begin His judgement. This time was also prophesied by Enoch in Jude 14-15(KJ):

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgement upon all..."

Notice, it is at this time that Jesus returns with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgement. This is the return of the Lord at the very end of the Tribulation period. For further proof the reader may want to read the description of Jesus Christ returning to the earth in Revelation 19:11-21.

The strong adherents to the pre-tribulation theory will argue that Paul said the last trumpet, but that it does not necessarily mean the last trumpet in the book of Revelation. While this argument has little basis, let's not argue; but let's look further into the words Paul used:

"Behold, I show 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 trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the DEAD SHALL BE RAISED incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

(I Corinthians 15:51-52 (KJ))

Notice that Paul says the **DEAD SHALL BE RAISED** at the sounding of the last trumpet. When will the dead be raised? The Word of God gives us a very clear answer with Daniel:

*"As for you (Daniel), go your way till the end. You will rest, and then **AT THE END OF THE DAYS** you **WILL RISE** to receive your allotted inheritance." (Daniel 12:12)*

It is very clear that the dead will not rise until the very end of the days. The last trumpet will sound when the dead rise from their graves. This clearly places the last trumpet at the end of the Tribulation period. To argue that the last trumpet will sound before the end of the days is completely unfounded.

IN THE AIR

The other key verses that are used to show the pre-tribulation view are found in I Thessalonians 4:15-17:

*"According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, **WHO ARE LEFT** till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and **WHO ARE LEFT** will be caught up with them **IN THE CLOUDS** to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."*

Notice where the above event takes place. It says **IN THE CLOUDS**. This is the exact same place that was described in the previous chapter when the earth is **HARVESTED**:

*"I looked, and there before me was a white **CLOUD**. And seated on the **CLOUD** was one "like a son of man" with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the **CLOUD**,*

"Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the HARVEST of the earth is ripe."(Revelation 14:14-15)

This meeting in the CLOUDS takes place near the very end of the Tribulation period. Jesus is coming in the CLOUDS to gather in the whole HARVEST. This is the precise picture Paul was discussing in I Thessalonians 4. For further proof that this is so, notice the strong hint that Paul gave us in verses 15 and 17:

*"...we tell you that we who are still alive, WHO ARE LEFT till the coming of the Lord..."
"...After that, we who are still alive and WHO ARE LEFT will be caught up..."*

In both of these verses, Paul added the phrase: WHO ARE LEFT, or who remain. He could have just as easily left this out in both places. Unless...unless he was trying to convey something very important.

The Greek for this phrase is: to leave all around, survive, or remain. By adding this phrase in both places, Paul was trying to convey: some will remain, some will survive, some will be left all around. Paul was implying that some would be taken previously to the time mentioned, and that those who had not been taken, but WHO REMAIN will be taken at this time.

Through the Holy Spirit, Paul is implying that some will be taken earlier; and then those who were not taken earlier (but who remain) will be taken into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

This is precisely the scenario that has been developed thus far in this book. Some are taken in the Rapture of the First Fruit believers at first, followed by the final harvest of all who remain at the very end.

The First Fruits are taken to the throne of God in HEAVEN, while the general harvest is gathered in by the Lord when He returns on the CLOUDS at the very end.

CRACKS IN THEORY

The pre-tribulation theory is largely based upon the scriptures that were outlined above. The pre-tribulation theory is believed by the majority of the Christian church and the majority of prophecy teachers and students.

We now see that there are some major cracks showing in this theory. These cracks can either be disregarded and ignored as utterly ridiculous, or they can be heeded by the leaders of the Church.

The severity of the COMING SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE will be determined by the spiritual condition of each individual believer. The leaders of the Church will be held responsible for their condition.

When the Rapture of the First Fruit believers takes place; many Christians, who believed in the pre-tribulation Rapture, will be utterly devastated. The grief will be overwhelming. The horror of having to face the testing of the Tribulation period will be dreadful.

GREAT MULTITUDE

Most WHO REMAIN will be required to become martyrs for Christ. Some will be able to escape the wrath of the Anti-christ, but the majority will have to give up their life in order to reach heaven.

These facts are dramatically revealed to us in two places in Revelation:

"After this I looked and there before me was a GREAT MULTITUDE that NO ONE COULD COUNT, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb."

"...These are they who have COME OUT of the great tribulation; they have WASHED their ROBES and MADE them WHITE in the blood of the Lamb." (Revelation 7:9&14)

AND

"They OVERCAME him (Anti-christ) by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death."(Revelation 12:11)

Notice the book of Revelation shows there will be a GREAT MULTITUDE from every nation around the world. It will be a large group of people, too numerous to count. In all probability, this great multitude of born-again believers will be comprised of many of the Christians in our Churches today.

SOILED ROBES

Notice that this group of Christians had to WASH their ROBES in order to make them WHITE. This tells us a great deal about them. First of all, it tells us that they had white robes at one time, which means that they were indeed Christians (Isaiah 61:10). Second, it tells us they somehow had gotten their robes dirty. This is a picture of the Christian too caught up with the things of this world. They had soiled their garments by not living the blameless, holy life they had been called to.

Remember those few in Sardis had not defiled their garments, and were able to walk with the Lord dressed in white because they were worthy. Had the great multitude heeded the Word of God, they would not have found them-selves in the Tribulation period. They did not keep God's Word, and were not kept from the time of testing.

OVERCOMERS

Also notice this great multitude is finally required to become OVERCOMERS. In the last chapter, we saw that all Christians are called to be OVERCOMERS. Some were OVERCOMERS prior to the Tribulation period beginning. They were the First Fruit believers who had kept God's Word and kept themselves undefiled. They were found blameless, holy and worthy before God; thereby proving to be OVERCOMERS in God's sight.

The great multitude, on the other hand, will enter into the Tribulation period because they have not been true OVERCOMERS prior to when it begins. They will finally become OVERCOMERS when they are required to STAND UP for Christ during the Tribulation hour. Their only hope at that point will be to die for Christ. They will have to refuse the mark of the beast and be martyred for Jesus.

SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE

Once the Rapture of First Fruit believers occurs, the Christians remaining will be completely surprised. Most had been taught all Christians are taken when the Rapture takes place. The horror of being left behind will be devastating. Blame, guilt and remorse will initially fill every believer's heart. The true Church that remains will need to come together like it has never done before.

Until the SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE occurs, the believer still has time to prepare. This message is an exhortation to ALL born-again believers to repent and prepare to meet the Bridegroom. There is still time to be included in the First Fruits Rapture. There is still time to keep God's Word and be found holy, blameless, and worthy before God. Remember our Lord's instructions:

"Watch...and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape..." (Luke 21:36)

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UPWARD CALLING

CHAPTER 7

In the fourth chapter we saw how the Apostle Paul was constantly striving for the PRIZE of the HIGH CALLING. This was seen in the verses which follow:

"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; IF BY ANY MEANS I MIGHT attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I'm apprehended of Christ Jesus."

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the PRIZE of the HIGH CALLING of God in Christ Jesus."

(Philippians 3:10-14 (KJ))

Paul knew that he was saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. And yet, he knew that there was this HIGH CALLING to which he was not guaranteed.

As we have seen, the Greek for this high calling means: HIGH = UPWARD or ON THE TOP, and CALLING= INVITATION or CALLING. Paul was seeking to obtain the upward invitation, or the top calling of God. He saw this as a prize to be won.

This is analogous to a runner in a race. Every participant strives to do their best in the hope of winning the top prize. No one is assured of that prize, and everyone strives to be the winner. In a race, there is always the possibility of stumbling or falling. The runner may not even be able to finish the race.

Paul recognized these possibilities, and tried to relay his sense of urgency to others. Notice his comments after talking about winning the prize:

"All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you." (Philippians 3:15)

Paul realized not everyone would understand the meaning of this upward calling; but he knew that they SHOULD if they were mature. He is saying that the mature Christian should understand this upward calling. If they don't understand, they should ask God to make it clear to them.

Just what is this upward calling which Paul so eagerly sought?

WORTHY OF THE KINGDOM

In an earlier chapter, we saw where Paul constantly prayed for the worthiness of his disciples. This was shown in the following scriptures:

*"Which is the manifest token of the righteous judgement of God, that ye **MAY BE COUNTED WORTHY** of the **KINGDOM OF GOD**, for which ye also suffer." (II Thess. 1:5 (KJ))*

*"Wherefore also we **PRAY ALWAYS** for you, that our God **WOULD COUNT YOU WORTHY** of this **CALLING...**"(II Thessalonians 1:11 (KJ))*

Paul knew that these disciples were indeed Christians. In fact, they were an exemplary Church (See I Thess. 1 and II Thess. 1:1-4). And yet, Paul constantly prayed that they may be counted worthy of the **CALLING** into the **KINGDOM OF GOD**. Although they were Christians, Paul constantly prayed that God might find them worthy of this calling.

Notice, Paul was also concerned about himself:

*"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; **IF BY ANY MEANS I MIGHT attain unto the resurrection of the dead.**" (Philippians 3:10 KJ)*

Paul knew he was saved, and that his eternal destiny was secure. And yet, he indicates his own doubt about attaining to this resurrection of the dead. (The Interlinear translation reads: resurrection **OUT OF** the dead).

Paul realized that his salvation did not assure him this. Because he was not sure, he pressed on, as if in a race, to win the prize. Paul knew there was a very special resurrection **OUT OF** the dead which he wanted to be counted worthy enough to participate in:

*"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I **PRESS TOWARD THE MARK** for the **PRIZE** of the **HIGH CALLING** of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13-14 (KJ))*

Jesus also taught that there would be those who would be **WORTHY** of this special calling which Paul so eagerly sought. This is found in Luke 20:35:

*"But those who are considered **WORTHY** of taking part in **THAT AGE** and in the resurrection from the dead..."*

Jesus indicated that there would be a special group that would be considered **WORTHY** enough to participate in this resurrection from the dead. But notice He also indicated they would take part in a certain **AGE**. The Greek shows that this is a Messianic period or an age.

1,000 YEAR REIGN

The first resurrection begins a period of 1,000 years. This is described in the book of Revelation:

"BLESSED and HOLY is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Revelation 20:6 (KJ))

This indicates that those who take part in the first resurrection are considered BLESSED and HOLY. This shows it is for a special group of people. Could it be those who are considered WORTHY in God's sight? Let's see who is included in this first resurrection from the dead:

"I saw (1)thrones on which WERE SEATED those who had been given authority to JUDGE. AND I saw (2)the SOULS of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the Word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years." (Revelation 20:4)

Notice there are two groups in view here. The second group John saw were the SOULS who had been martyred for Jesus. Notice that only the SOULS were seen at first, and THEN they came to life to reign with Christ for 1,000 years. This places the first resurrection near the very beginning of the Millennium.

This second group represents those who died for Jesus during the Tribulation period. They are given the honor of reigning with Christ during the Millennium because of this.

The first group consists of those who were seated on thrones with the authority to judge. We know from I Corinthians 6:2, the saints are the ones who will judge the world. In the above scene, however, notice where this group is located. It says: seated on thrones .

We saw earlier in this book, the OVERCOMERS are the ones who are seated on the throne with God:

"To him who OVERCOMES, I will give the right to SIT with me on my THRONE, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on His throne." (Revelation 3:21)

Only the OVERCOMERS are given the right to sit on the throne of God. The group in view at the first resurrection includes those who were overcomers prior to when the Tribulation period began, plus those who through martyrdom became overcomers by the word of their own testimony (Rev. 12:11).

The timing and purpose of this scene is also verified by Jude 14:

"And Enoch also...prophesied of these, saying Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgement upon all..." (Jude 14 (KJ))

The first group mentioned as part of the first resurrection, represent the overcoming saints of God who will be given thrones from which they will have the authority to judge. While all saints are called to judge the world, only those who were overcomers are seen as part of the first resurrection.

BOOK OF LIFE

If all saints are to judge the world, and only the overcomers and martyrs are included in the first resurrection, then when are the rest of the saints raised?

The only possible explanation is that they are resurrected at the end of the 1,000 year Millennium. This is described for us in Revelation 20:7, 11-15 (KJ). Pay particular attention to the last verse:

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison..."

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the BOOK OF LIFE: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works:

"And WHOSOEVER was not found written in the BOOK OF LIFE was cast into the lake of fire."

The last verse indicates that WHOSOEVER was not included in the book of life, was thrown into the lake of fire. This implies that there will be some at the end of the 1,000 years who will be present whose names ARE *"found written in the BOOK OF LIFE"*.

This group of people must represent all those true born-again believers who were not found part of the first resurrection. Although they missed the 1,000 year reign with Christ, their names were found written in the book of life, and they were not thrown into the lake of fire.

These Christians were indeed saved, and their names could never be erased from the book of life. They missed the Rapture of First Fruit believers because they were not considered worthy. Once they entered into the Tribulation period they could have participated in the first resurrection by becoming martyrs. The fact they did not become martyrs indicates they must have died before they had a chance to be martyred. This is highly probable, knowing that over 3 billion people will die during the Tribulation period.

EXCLUDED FROM THE KINGDOM

The Word of God does indicate that there will be Christians who do not enter into this 1,000 year reign with Christ:

"Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21)

The fact these people called Jesus, "Lord" indicates that they were Christians (please see I Corinthians 12:3). This indicates that there will be Christians who will not enter into the 1,000 year reign with Christ, known as the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. This is that HIGH or UPWARD calling which Paul so fervently sought.

Many of the other parables Jesus taught also indicate there will be some Christians who are excluded from reigning with Christ during the Kingdom. The reader may want to read:

Matthew 25:1-30, & Luke 13:22-30, for examples of this teaching. Please keep in mind that exclusion from the Kingdom does not mean exclusion from Heaven.

WORTHY OF UPWARD CALLING

Remember that Jesus taught there are those who are considered worthy of participating in the kingdom age:

"But those who are considered WORTHY of taking part in THAT AGE and in the resurrection from the dead..."(Luke 20:35)

There is a group of believers God considers worthy of participating in the future kingdom during the Millennium. This is a select group of Born-again believers who please God.

Also remember those who take part in this resurrection are called: "BLESSED and HOLY" (See Revelation 20:6). These words were written by the Apostle John. One of his disciples was named Polycarp, who contributed the following to this subject:

"If we please Him in this present age, we shall also receive the Age to Come; and if we walk worthy of Him, we shall also reign together with Him."

Polycarp's insight seems to parallel what has been brought out in this book. Those who please God by living holy and blameless lives in this present time will be found worthy of the wonderful privilege of reigning with Christ during the 1,000 year Millennium.

UPWARD CALLING

Those first fruit believers who are overcomers will be considered blessed and holy and worthy to take part in the first resurrection and the 1,000 year reign with Christ.

While the first resurrection will include both the first fruit overcomers and the martyrs of the Tribulation period, the HIGH CALLING is to be included in the first fruit group, and thereby escape the Tribulation entirely. Both are included in the first resurrection, but the former group represents the UPWARD CALLING which Paul so fervently sought.

The value of praying the way Jesus taught us to pray brings on added importance:

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36)

By praying the above prayer, with a heartfelt desire, God will provide a way for those who are truly sincere and committed to His Word. By the power of His Spirit, they will be able to escape the Tribulation and be automatically included in the first resurrection. To be included is truly the UPWARD CALLING all should earnestly strive and pray.

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FINAL PREPARATIONS

CHAPTER 8

We have seen that a potentially devastating SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE is about to hit! Once it arrives, there will be no turning back. People will not be given another chance. God will remove the First Fruit believers who are prepared and ready to meet Him. Those found walking with Him and worthy in His sight will have the glorious privilege of being with Him.

All others will be faced with the horrors of the Tribulation. After the Rapture of First Fruit believers takes place, the Anti-christ will be revealed (II Thes.2:7-8), and he will perform all kinds of counterfeit miracles with great signs and wonders. He will appear to be Christ, but he will be a counterfeit.

Many PROFESSING or NOMINAL Christians will follow him. Notice why:

*"The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because **THEY REFUSED TO LOVE THE TRUTH AND BE SAVED.**"*

*"For this reason God sends them a **POWERFUL DELUSION** so that they will **BELIEVE the LIE** and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness." (II Thessalonians 2:9-12)*

Those who do not truly LOVE THE TRUTH will be sent a very strong delusion from God!

CHURCH SHAKEN

God will truly shake the Church after His First Fruit believers are taken from this planet. Those merely professing to be Christians will follow the lie.

However, there will be a great multitude of real Christians remaining. These will be truly born-again believers who failed to prepare to meet the Bridegroom. They will recognize the Anti-christ for who he really is, and they will not follow him.

After the shattering EARTHQUAKE, the greatest AFTERSHOCKS to follow will be when these very Christians realize they were misled. They were not taken in the Rapture because their Pastors and Teachers (who should have known) failed in their duties as Watchmen and taught false doc-trine. That is why Jesus urged His disciples not be led astray by ANY man (Matthew 24:4).

Their anger, remorse and regret will need to be put behind them quickly. The Church will need to come together to help and encourage one another. They will now be faced with the reality that martyrdom will probably be required of them. Those days will be some of the

most perilous times one could imagine. If they are not killed by war first, they will become those described in Revelation 12:11:

"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death."

People will be required to receive a mark on their right hand or forehead. The only other alternative will be death. The true Christian will stand up for Jesus and refuse to receive the mark. They will be killed, but they will be assured of going to be with the Lord. If they receive the mark, they seal their fate in hell:

"If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb." (Revelation 14:9-10)

TIME TO PREPARE

If you are reading this book prior to when the Rapture takes place, you still have time to prepare to take part in it. You are probably in one of the following categories:

- 1) Unrighteous and lost.
- 2) Professing or Nominal Christian.
- 3) Born-again with defiled garments.
- 4) First Fruit prepared believer.

UNRIGHTEOUS & LOST

If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and you are reading this book, you need to come to a personal relationship with Him now. Jesus came and died for your sins, that you might not have to pay the penalty. He not only died for your sins, but He also rose from the dead. He conquered death so that you might live. You need to ask Jesus to come into your heart as your own personal Savior and Lord. Why not pray a prayer like the one below right now:

"Dear God in Heaven, I don't fully understand everything about this, but I know that I am a sinner and that I need a Savior. Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus to die for my sins and pay the penalty. I humbly ask Jesus to come into my heart and live to be my personal Lord and Savior. Help me to live the remainder of my life for you, being led by your Holy Spirit. Please count me worthy to escape all that is about to happen on this earth. In the precious name of Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen."

If you sincerely prayed this prayer, praise the Lord! He has saved your soul, and you are now Born-again. You will want to make sure that you follow through with the above prayer by reading His Word and praying to Him every day. Find a church where the Word of God is preached, and be sure to tell others about your new faith in Jesus Christ and the fact that He is coming back again very soon!

PROFESSING OR NOMINAL CHRISTIAN

If you profess Jesus Christ, are you living the way Christ tells you to? Are you living as Christ did?

"Someone may say, "I am a Christian; I am on my way to heaven; I belong to Christ." But if he doesn't do what Christ tells him to, he is a liar. But those who do what Christ tells them to will learn to love God more and more. That is the way to know whether or not you are a Christian. Anyone who says he is a Christian should live as Christ did." (I John 2:4-5 (LB))

There are many people who profess to be born-again believers. Only Christ knows their hearts and whether or not they truly love Him. If upon examining your heart, in all honesty, you realize you are not truly a Christian, humbly repent right now. Pray the same prayer given above with true sincerity. Completely yield your life to Him and ask Him to be your Master and Savior. God does love you, and He wants to be your everything!

BORN-AGAIN WITH DEFILED GARMENTS

The book of Revelation indicates that there will be a great multitude of believers who will be required to become martyrs (please see Revelation 7:9-17). This portion of the Word of God tells us that there will be many Born-again believers who will enter the horror of the Tribulation period. They were Christians before it began because they had their robes. The reason they were required to go into the Tribulation period is shown in verse 14:

"They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

These Born-again believers had soiled their garments and needed to wash them to make them white again. They were not as careful as the few found in the church of Sardis:

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." (Revelation 3:4 (KJ))

These few in Sardis had kept their garments white and were found worthy. These are the First Fruit believers that made the necessary preparations by walking with the Lord in obedience to His Word. They are the overcomers who pleased God and were found looking for Him when the Rapture took place.

For those readers who are Born-again with de-filed garments, let's look at the preparations that are required in order to be found worthy; and some attributes of First Fruit believers.

KEEP GOD'S WORD

Revelation 3:10, reminds us:

"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."

The believer who is obedient to God's Word is given the wonderful promise of escaping the Tribulation period.

WALK IN LIGHT

I John 1:7, instructs us: *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."*

The believer needs to walk in the light as opposed to walking in darkness. This means that the believer should separate themselves from any sin. If there is any sin in the life of the believer, they should REPENT (turn away from it) and ask for forgiveness from the Lord:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9)

PLEASE GOD

As we have seen, the First Fruit believers are protégé's of Enoch. Remember what was said of him in Hebrews 11:5:

"...For before he was taken (Raptured), he was commended as one who PLEASED GOD."

The believer will want to please the Lord by the life that they live. The motives of the First Fruit believer will always be to please God.

WITNESS

One other big lesson that can be learned from Enoch is that the believer should be actively witnessing to others that Jesus is getting ready to return. Notice what is said of Enoch in Jude 14:

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, BEHOLD, THE LORD COMETH with ten thousands of his saints."

Telling others to come to the Lord and the fact that JESUS IS COMING very soon is a very important part in the life of the believer. The Word of God says very little about Enoch. What is does say should be listened to very carefully. Telling others the Lord is coming, is VERY important.

PERSEVERE

The believer needs to remember the example of Paul who always, "pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling." Paul was diligent and he persevered until the end of his life. The believer worthy of this prize will heed the Lord's words in Luke 9:62:

"Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

By not looking back the Lord means living their lives the way they used to live before they were saved. Many Born-Again believers have returned to living their lives the way they were before salvation. The church has gotten SO Lukewarm, that there is very little difference between the world and the church.

The believer will want to remember the story of Lot's wife. She had grown too attached to the place she was leaving. She didn't really want to leave it. She looked back, and was destroyed. The believer should not grow too attached to this world. Their real home is in heaven, but too many believers are looking back. They need to REPENT and stop being friends with this world. Remember Lot's wife and remember the words of James:

"Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God." (James 4:4)

BE HUMBLE

The believer will want to remember that true humility is something to be highly valued:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3 (KJ))

The humble believer is given the wonderful assurance by our Lord, that their inheritance is the Kingdom.

BE HOLY

Holiness is a major ingredient that is missing from the Church today. The believer should make sure they are living a holy life:

" MAKE EVERY EFFORT to live in peace with all men and TO BE HOLY; without holiness no one will see the Lord." (Hebrews 12:14)

It is the responsibility of every believer to heed these words. For those believers who have not been living holy lives, they should REPENT and begin leading holy lives from here on, until the Lord returns.

BE BLAMELESS

In line with holiness, the believer needs to make every effort to be blameless and pure:

"So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, MAKE EVERY EFFORT to be found SPOTLESS, BLAMELESS and at PEACE with him." (II Peter 3:14)

While the believer will not reach spotless perfection until the Lord returns, the Born-again believer should be making every effort to be blameless and pure. It is the attitude and the motive of the heart that will determine if a person is making the effort required to have them found blameless. God knows those who are trying to please Him by looking into their heart.

BE WATCHFUL

The Word of God is filled with examples that teach the believer to be looking for and eagerly expecting the return of the Lord. A few of these are outlined below:

"...You ought to live holy and godly lives as you LOOK FORWARD to the day of God..." "So then, dear friends, since you are LOOKING FORWARD to this..." (II Peter 3:11&14)

"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we EAGERLY AWAIT a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ..." (Philippians 3:20)

"LOOKING FOR that Blessed Hope." (Titus 2:13)

"Be always on the WATCH..." (Luke 21:36)

"...and unto them that LOOK FOR HIM shall he appear the second time..." (Hebrews 9:28)

The above is only a very small sample of some of the Scriptures telling the believer to be alert and watching for the Lord to return. The Lord commanded the believer to always be on the watch. He is returning for those believers who are eagerly waiting and looking for Him.

BE PRAYERFUL

Finally, the believer will realize that being found worthy to be included as part of the First Fruit group rests in the hands of the Lord. Because of this, Jesus instructed His humble followers to pray:

"Watch ye therefore, and PRAY ALWAYS, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36(KJ))

The believer realizes that being found worthy to escape the Tribulation depends upon the grace and mercy of the Lord. The believer will make every effort to be obedient to Him, and will humbly pray to be considered worthy.

FINAL PREPARATIONS

Until the cataclysmic SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE occurs, the reader can be included in the select group of First Fruit believers.

Remember the story of the thief dying on the cross next to Jesus:

"And he said unto Jesus, LORD, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:42-43(KJ))

This story is a beautiful example of the love and mercy of our Lord. Right up until the very time that this thief was about to die, this thief was lost. Then, he realized who Jesus was. He

humbly asked Jesus to remember him. He called Him Lord. He was saved at the very last moment, and given the assurance of being with Jesus.

In a similar manner, the person reading this book has the chance to humbly turn to Jesus and ask Him to count him worthy of escaping the horrible times ahead. Why not pray the following prayer right now:

"Dear God in Heaven, please help me to live my life in such a way that it is pleasing to you. Please consider me worthy to escape the time that is coming to test this world. In the name of Jesus, my Lord, I pray. Amen."

If you prayed the above prayer with a humble heart, you have made the most essential preparations to meet Him. Now, CONTINUE living for Him in holiness and looking for Him until He returns (I John 2:28).

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SALVATION OF THE SOUL

CHAPTER 9

SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY

Man is made up with a threefold nature: spirit, soul, and body. This truth is brought out by Paul in I Thessalonians 5:23:

"...and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul prayed for each of the three natures of man. Each is distinct, and each has its own destiny.

SPIRIT

Once a person is born again, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the believer. The Holy Spirit comes and resides in every person who has been saved. The person's spirit is saved and guaranteed a place in heaven. The salvation of a person's spirit is completely free and can not be earned:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 3:8-9(KJ))

The salvation of the spirit is 100% free. There is nothing anyone can do in order to earn it, and nothing anyone can do in order to lose it. Once a person is saved, his spirit can never be lost again because it is saved by the gracious gift of God. It's guaranteed a place in heaven.

SOUL

After a person's spirit is saved, a battle begins for that person's soul. God wants to see the soul saved, but Satan and the person's flesh will try to see it destroyed. The Holy Spirit wants to save the person's soul, and the whole goal of one's faith should be the salvation of the soul:

"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (I Peter 1:9(KJ))

Unfortunately, this teaching has been all but lost in the current modern day Church. Christ's teaching on the salvation of the soul and the coming millennial Kingdom have been disregarded by the Lukewarm 20th century body of Christ. False doctrines, materialism, and other forms of idols have taken pre eminence in the average believer's heart.

Our Lord's words in Matthew 16:26, are quite pertinent for today:

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

The context of this verse is to believers since he was speaking to his disciples. Jesus is telling us it is possible for believers to lose their own soul.

The body of the carnal man is in a war with the spirit man for the soul. The spirit wants to save the soul, but the body wants to gratify itself. If the flesh wins the battle, then the soul is lost!

The answer to the war that is going on within every true believer was given to us by Jesus:

"...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Matthew 16:24-25(KJ))

In order for the soul to be saved, the believer is required to deny himself and lose his own life for Christ's sake. In other words, the person who wants to save his soul must be willing to die to himself and take up the cross Christ gives him to bear. If the believer is unwilling to give up his own life for Christ's sake, he will treasure up worldly riches in exchange for his own soul.

Remember, the salvation of the spirit is 100% free and impossible to earn by works. In the above teaching, however, Jesus is instructing the believer on how to save the soul. To save the soul, the believer has to perform certain works: deny self, take up his cross, and then follow Jesus. This could not be the salvation of the spirit because works are involved. Jesus was teaching on the salvation of the soul, and he wants to make sure the believer does save his soul.

NOT WORTHY OF ME

This same teaching was also brought out by the Lord in Matthew 10:38-39:

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

Here again, Jesus is teaching on the salvation of the soul. He calls it being worthy of Him, and it requires something of the believer. This could not be the salvation of the spirit, since works are involved. In view here then, is the salvation of the soul. In order to save the soul and to be considered worthy, the believer must give up his right to everything and to everybody. Yes, even close relatives must not come before one's love and devotion to Jesus.

In order to save one's soul, the believer's life must be lost for His sake. For the soul to be saved, the desires of the flesh (body) must be given up to the desires of the spirit. Taking up one's cross is to crucify the desires of the flesh and to allow the Spirit to control the believer's life. By forsaking one's life for Christ's sake, the believer allows the Spirit to rule, thus saving the soul.

CARNAL VS. SPIRITUAL

This teaching on the salvation of the soul is critical to the well being of the believer. If the flesh (body) is allowed to control the life of the believer, their soul will be lost. The carnal believer allows the flesh to rule over the spirit. While the carnal Christian has a saved spirit, their soul is in danger of perishing.

The carnal believer wants to keep their worldly viewpoints of power, wealth, and success in order to gratify self. By keeping or saving this life, they will end up losing their soul.

The carnal believer is pictured in the Old Testament story of Esau who for one morsel of food sold his birthright (Hebrews 12:16-17). The carnal Christian is more concerned with the here and now than with the future Kingdom. By being as shortsighted as Esau, the carnal Christian will be very disappointed if they don't wake up and repent before it is too late.

The spiritual believer, on the other hand, is concerned with the salvation of their own soul.

The spiritual believer gives up all claim to worldly interests and is more interested in following Jesus. They allow their spirit to overcome the flesh through the Holy Spirit's help; thereby saving their own soul.

The salvation of the soul is the goal of one's faith, and it should be the priority of every born again believer.

DO YOU HAVE YOUR OIL?

The parable of the wise and foolish virgins is one of the most misunderstood passages. Many use it to show the separation that is coming between the saved and the lost. This is not what Christ was teaching. Let's look at this parable found in Matthew 25:1-10(KJ):

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept."

"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."

Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves."

"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut."

We need to remember Jesus spoke in parables because knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven is not for everyone. Only those who have spiritual eyes to "see" or ears to "hear" will understand (please see Matthew 13:10-11, and Mark 4:11-12).

The main difference between the wise and the foolish virgins in the above parable is the fact the wise had oil in their lamps, plus they took an extra supply of oil. The foolish on the other hand only had oil in their lamps with no extra oil.

The oil in the above parable is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Notice both the wise and foolish had oil in their lamps. In verse 8, we can see the foolish virgin's lamps are going out. This shows they had oil (Holy Spirit), but they did not have that extra measure of oil the wise virgins had.

From this we can see that both the wise and the foolish virgins were born again believers. They both had oil which represents the Holy Spirit, because when a person is saved the Holy Spirit comes to reside in that person's heart.

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

But now notice the critical difference between the two. The foolish had their oil in their lamps, but that was all. They were not like the wise who were astute enough to take an extra supply of oil. This is a perfect picture of the command found in Ephesians 5:18:

"...be FILLED with the Spirit."

While all true believers have the Holy Spirit upon conversion, they must also be filled with the Holy Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is to be directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit of God. To be filled with the Spirit is to *"hunger and thirst after righteousness"* (see Matthew 5:6). To be filled with the Spirit is to be led by the Spirit and not by the flesh.

The wise virgins took the extra supply of oil along which shows they were indeed wise. They realized that they could not keep their lamps burning by themselves. They knew they needed to be filled with the Spirit, or else they could not make it on their own.

READY FOR THE RAPTURE

And notice how wise these virgins truly were. When the bridegroom came (Jesus returned), the wise were ready and able to go with him. The foolish, on the other hand, ran out of oil. Because they had not been filled with the Holy Spirit, the foolish virgins were turned away when Jesus returned. This is a picture of the foolish virgins missing the First Fruit Rapture when Christ returns!

Because the foolish believers have not prepared properly and been obedient to the Word of God by being filled with the Spirit, they will be turned away by the Lord.

All Christians have oil in their lamps because the Holy Spirit was given to everyone upon conversion. The wise are prepared for the Lord's return because they truly allow the Spirit of God to direct and empower their life. The foolish have the Holy Spirit, but they do not allow Him full reign and control. Because the foolish virgins are not filled with the Spirit, they allow their flesh to take charge and they will not be ready when Christ returns. The foolish believers need to be filled with the Spirit before Jesus returns and the door is shut. Time is quickly running out!

SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM

As is described in other parts of this book, the Kingdom is the 1,000 year Millennium when Jesus will rule and reign upon the earth.

The Kingdom is rapidly approaching and the vast majority of the Church is completely unaware of the ramifications. Let's look at another text which is highly misunderstood:

"...seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33(KJ)).

Notice Jesus says, *"seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."* Many leave this part of the verse out in their interpretations. So many have used this verse to motivate other Christians to either give to their organization or to require them to get active in their "Christian" program. This is not the purpose Jesus spoke these words.

ENTRANCE INTO KINGDOM

Jesus is telling the Christian the number one priority should be seeking His Kingdom and His righteousness. To seek this means to seek entrance into the coming Kingdom. The first priority for every Christian should be their own entrance into the Kingdom!

Sadly, the majority of Christians are too preoccupied with man's agenda on this present earthly kingdom to be concerned with the coming Millennial Kingdom. While they pray the words, "Thy Kingdom come..." how many understand what they are praying, and how many really mean it and really want the Kingdom of God to come?

The reason for this misunderstanding and the current lukewarmness that pervades the Church lies with the false teaching fostered by our spiritual leaders! Just as in the time of Christ, the modern day teachers are leading the people off of the correct path:

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to." (Matthew 23:13)

Our spiritual leaders of today are doing the exact same thing the Pharisees did at the time Jesus spoke these words. They are not entering into the coming Kingdom, and they are keeping the vast majority of believers from entering also. If Jesus were here today, He would even call most of the PROPHECY teachers and leaders: HYPOCRITES! It is time to wake up and repent before it is too late!

SEEK RIGHTEOUSNESS

As discussed in Question M, of Appendix B, some Christians will miss the kingdom of God when Jesus comes to reign upon the earth. Let's look at what is required in order to gain our entrance. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus says to seek first the Kingdom and his righteousness. Now notice what Jesus had said earlier in His sermon on the Mount:

"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."
(Matthew 5:20(KJ))

Yes, Jesus is telling the Christian that their righteousness must exceed the righteousness of even the spiritual leaders of the day. We need to remember that the Christian's righteousness is based upon the imputed righteousness of Christ that is obtained by faith:

"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe..." (Romans 3:23(KJ))

Faith in Jesus Christ is the only thing which will justify a person before God. The believer receives the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ + nothing.

But remember we learned earlier that the whole goal of our faith is the salvation of our soul. After a person receives the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, they must also *"hunger and thirst after righteousness"* if they are to be filled with God's Spirit. Only after the believer receives God's righteousness can they live righteously as God requires:

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." (Romans 8:4-5(KJ))

While the Christian is justified through faith in the sight of God, the believer is required to continue to walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. The believer must earnestly seek God's righteousness by being led by the Spirit of God and not by the flesh. Only in this way will the Christian's righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, and thereby gain them entrance into the Kingdom of heaven.

This truth is also seen in the description of the Bride of Christ:

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints." (Revelation 19:6-8)

The righteous act or deeds of the saints is the thing that sets the Bride of Christ apart. She made herself ready for the wedding by her righteous works after she was saved.

Entrance into the coming Kingdom will only be obtained by those who are truly seeking that entrance during the present time and by those who are truly seeking his righteousness. As we will see in the Appendix, some Christians will indeed not gain entrance into the Kingdom.

RACE FOR THE CROWN

The Apostle Paul knew that the salvation of his spirit was secure. He wrote the following to the Ephesians:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 3:8-9(KJ))

He knew there was nothing anyone could do in order to earn their salvation. It is a free gift of God with no works necessary.

And yet, notice what Paul said in another letter to the Corinthians:

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."

"Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize " (I Corinthians 9:24-27).

Here we see another side of Paul. While he was sure his spirit was saved, he knew he had to work at saving his soul. He knew that even though he preached to others, he could be disqualified for the prize if he didn't measure up. He knew he had to work at saving his soul as a runner in a race for a prize. The prize the believer is racing for is a crown that will last forever.

The Appendix outlined five different crowns. It is highly possible that these are the crowns Paul was referring to as the prize. He knew he could be disqualified for the prize, and Jesus warned us in Revelation 3:11:

"I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown."

The prize Paul referred to and the crown Jesus talked about are obtained by works after a person is saved. They represent the rewards faithful and wise believers will receive for their obedience to the Word of God and their devotion to Jesus. They also represent the salvation of the soul and entrance into the Kingdom as outlined in this book and seen in the following verses also:

"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God " (Acts 14:22(KJ)).

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ." Philippians 2:12(KJ)

Yes, the prize for winning the race is the salvation of the soul which will be represented by the crowns that are given as a reward for faithful service. They will be gained only after the trials and tribulations of life are overcome and the righteousness of God has won over the lusts of this dying earthly kingdom.

MEAT IN DUE SEASON

Once a person is saved, the number one priority should be seeking entrance into the Kingdom through the salvation of the believer's soul. It is pictured by a runner in a race seeking a prize represented by a crown which will last forever.

Very few Christians know and understand the strong meat that has been presented in this book. They have been accustomed to drinking milk for so long they have a hard time digesting this choice meat.

And yet, time is very short, and the nourishing food brought out in this study is greatly needed by the vast majority of the Church. If they do not receive this information in time, they will lose their own souls and be left out in the coming Kingdom.

Jesus foresaw the current situation and Luke recorded a most important point:

"And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season ?"

"Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath" (Luke 12:42-44(KJ)).

FAITHFUL & WISE SERVANT

It is the responsibility of every faithful and wise servant of Jesus Christ to give all other born again believers this information. Every Christian must receive this portion of meat NOW before it is too late.

Those faithful and wise believers who take this duty seriously will be richly rewarded in the coming Kingdom. But more important than these rewards, the motivation for this should be to please the Lord and to save the souls of all the Christians who are asleep and unaware of the peril that lies ahead.

Notice the context of our Lord's instruction to the faithful and wise steward. He says it is just before He is to return. The faithful and wise followers of Jesus will be distributing their portion of meat just prior to the time of Christ's return. Jesus is getting ready to come for His faithful Bride, and those who take our Lord's words seriously, will be found dispersing this vital nourishment to those who so desperately need it.

There are very few writers and teachers who have taught on the subjects outlined in this book. While the bookstores are filled with popular subjects that sell well, almost none contain the strong meat the Christian diet has lacked for so long.

While the Church is content to drink its milk, the wise and faithful servants must rise up and wake up their brothers and sisters in Christ before it is too late.

DUE SEASON

The due season (appointed time) then, is the time just before Jesus comes to Rapture his wise and faithful followers who are ready for Him. They have been filled with the Spirit, they are saving their own souls, and they will be actively distributing this strong meat in order to help them save other believer's souls and gain their entrance into the Kingdom. Since the Church has been on a diet of milk for so long, they will not want to receive this, but they must eat and digest it prior to the time Christ returns. If they don't save their soul prior to the Tribulation, they will be required to experience the horror of that time in order to gain their entrance:

"... we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God " (Acts 14:22(KJ)).

If they fail to prepare prior to the Rapture of First Fruit believers, they will be required to give up their life for Jesus in the Tribulation through martyrdom. By remaining faithful to Jesus and not loving their lives, they will not shrink from death (Revelation 12:11); and, as a result, they will finally save their souls. But instead of dying to self now, they will literally be required to die at the hands of the anti-christ and false prophet.

"And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be" (Revelation 22:12(KJ)).

"..Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of... one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. "
Matthew 3:2-3(KJ)

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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QUESTION A:

Revelation 14, shows only 144,000 First Fruit believers. How many people are included in the Rapture of First Fruit believers?

ANSWER:

A literal interpretation of the Greek in Revelation 14:1, would mean 144,000. The question then becomes: should this passage be taken literally, or should it be considered symbolic?

Since Greek rules of grammar dictate that symbolic and literal elements are not mixed within the same verse, the 144,000 should properly be interpreted as being symbolic since Mount Zion is properly interpreted as symbolic of the heavenly Jerusalem.

The number of 144,000 was used to show that the number of First Fruit believers is in fact limited. While the number is limited, the total number in the Rapture is open, and will hopefully be a great multitude.

QUESTION B:

Jude 14, shows only 10,000 saints returning with Jesus. Is that all who will be Raptured?

ANSWER:

First, let's review what Jude 14 says:

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam prophesied of these, saying, behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, "(Jude 14 (KJ))

The above quote was taken from the King James version. The New International version says, *"with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones."* Let's look at the Interlinear Bible which is a more literal translation of the original Greek:

"And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, also prophesied to these men, saying, Behold, the Lord came with myriads of His saints."

The Greek uses the word: *urias* (#3611) which means: ten thousand or a myriad number or indefinite number.

This same word (3611) is used in Acts 19:19, and Revelation 9:16. In both of these cases, it means a literal 10,000.

However, in Hebrews 12:22, this same word is used to mean "myriads" or an indefinite number.

After studying all of the various places the word: *urias* is used, it is determined that we can not be 100% certain whether Enoch saw 10,000 Saints or an indefinite number of Saints returning with the Lord. It could be only 10,000, but it also could be an indefinite number.

We hope and pray that it is indeed a myriad of Saints returning with the Lord and not just 10,000.

May the Lord reach myriads of Saints with the message of this book to help sway this issue in favor of there being an untold great number of Saints returning with Him.

QUESTION C:

What is the "falling away" in II Thessalonians 2:3?

ANSWER:

II Thessalonians 2:3(KJ), says:

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day (Day of the Lord) shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition (Anti-christ),"

This is saying that the falling away and the revelation of the Anti-christ will occur before the Day of the Lord begins.

However, before the Anti-christ is revealed, remember that "He" must be taken out of the way. From chapter 5, we saw that this "He" is the MALE CHILD of Revelation 12:5, or the Overcoming First Fruit believers. Only after they are Raptured, may the Anti-christ be revealed. (See II Thessalonians 2:6-8)

But what about the "falling away," what is Paul referring to? The Greek word that is used is: apostasia (#646). This means defection, falling away, or to forsake. From this, many have felt Paul was referring to a falling away from the faith. This is also talked about in I Timothy 4:1. If this falling away from the faith is what Paul meant, it appears that it has begun and is continuing. Sound doctrine is no longer upheld by many and various "doctrines of devils" have permeated the church.

While the above interpretation may be right, there is another possibility. In seven of the first English translations before the King James Version, the word: apostasia is translated as: "departyng". This would mean that Paul was saying that the departure must occur first. Or that the Rapture must happen before the Day of the Lord begins. This is in line with what has been shown in this book, and probably is a better exegesis of this passage.

QUESTION D:

In Revelation 12, who is the "Woman"? and the "rest of her offspring" (v.17)?

ANSWER:

The "Woman" of Revelation 12:1, appears to be Israel (please see Genesis 37:9-10). She is the one responsible for the birth of the Church. Through Israel, Christ was born, and Christ is the head of the Church (also read Romans 9:4-5 and Colossians 1:18).

In chapter 5, we saw that the MALE CHILD the woman gave birth to is the overcoming First Fruit believer. For further proof of this, notice who "the rest of her offspring" are:

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the REMNANT of HER SEED, which keep the commandments of God, and HAVE the TESTIMONY of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 12:17(KJ))

In this story, Satan goes after Israel, but is unable to harm her (see verse 14). He then goes after the woman's offspring. In verse 17, we see that her offspring are the remnant of Christians remaining. This ties the "offspring" with the MALE CHILD. They were both born from the same mother: the "woman" described earlier. The "offspring" are pictured as believers which means that they could not be a Jewish remnant. They are Christians being pursued by the Antichrist during the Tribulation. They were directly related to the MALE CHILD, having the same mother: the "woman".

The above explanation further enhances the argument that the MALE CHILD is the First Fruit believer. He is pictured as one of the offsprings from the "woman" which means he is directly related to the "other offspring". The First Fruit believers are directly related to the Christians who will enter the Tribulation to be pursued by the Anti-christ.

QUESTION E:

What is the "*Mystery of God*" described in Revelation 10:7?

ANSWER:

Revelation 10:7, says:

"But in the days when the seventh angel is about to SOUND his TRUMPET, the MYSTERY of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets."

This occurs when the seventh trumpet or the "last trumpet" is about to sound. In context with Revelation 11:15-19, this is at the very end of the Tribulation. Notice that it says the "mystery of God" is accomplished as told to God's servants. This mystery was hidden, but then revealed:

"...according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; Even the MYSTERY which hath been hid from ages & from generations but now is made manifest to his saints."

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this MYSTERY among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:" (Colossians 1:25-27(KJ))

This MYSTERY is the mystery of God working in the Gentiles, reconciling men to Himself. Paul also spoke of it in Ephesians 3:3-6:

"...the MYSTERY made known to me by revelation...you will be able to understand my insight into the MYSTERY of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit of God's holy apostles and prophets."

"This MYSTERY is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise of Christ Jesus."

This MYSTERY is clearly the mystery of God working in history, bringing both Jews and Gentiles together in Christ. Revelation 10, says when the seventh trumpet sounds, this mystery will be finished. This final dispensation of God will be over, and the Millennium will begin.

One other reference that Paul made to this MYSTERY is found in I Corinthians 15:51-52:

"Behold, I show you a MYSTERY, We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of eye, at the LAST TRUMP; for the TRUMPET shall SOUND, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

This traditional pre-tribulation verse ties in perfectly with Revelation 10:7. Both indicate the last trumpet will sound and both speak of the MYSTERY of God.

From the foregoing, the MYSTERY of God will be accomplished when the Tribulation period comes to an end at the sounding of the last trumpet. The MYSTERY of God bringing Jews and Gentiles together in Christ will be complete.

QUESTION F:

Explain the difference between the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ.

ANSWER:

The Body of Christ is made up of all truly Born-again believers. It is mentioned in several places in the Word of God:

"Now you (Christian) are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."
(I Corinthians 12:27)

"...so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."
(Romans 12:5)

Now, let's compare this description of the Body of Christ with the Bride of Christ:

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His BRIDE has MADE HERSELF READY."

The distinguishing characteristic of the Bride, is that she took action once she was saved and made herself ready. As a result, she is clothed in fine linen:

"Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. Fine linen stands for the righteous ACTS of the saints."(Rev.19:8)

The righteous ACTS of the saints are what set the Bride apart.

There are two ways that the Christian can receive the *"fine linen, bright and clean"*. They can live their lives in such a way that their good works are duly rewarded, at the Judgement Seat of Christ, or they can *"wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb"* (Revelation 7:14).

The Christian can either prepare before the Tribulation begins through their righteous acts, or they can stand up for Jesus through martyrdom. Either way, they will receive the proper dress for their wedding.

But notice that some Christians will not be given these wedding garments. They will not be part of the Bride, and will miss the 1,000 year Millennium Kingdom (Matthew 22):

"But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. "Friend," he asked, "How did you get in here without wedding clothes?" The man was speechless. Then the king told the attendants, "Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are invited, but few are chosen."

The above parable teaches us that some will be kept from the wedding and the 1,000 year reign with Christ. The man without the proper wedding garments, represents those Born-again believers who did not make the necessary preparations as described in the last chapter of this book. They will miss the Rapture and they will miss the Millennial Kingdom. They are not part of the Bride, but they are part of the Body of Christ. They will be joined with the rest of the Body at the end of the Millennium.

Some might argue, how can you separate the Body of Christ like that? Well, isn't the Body of Christ separated now? Hasn't the Body of Christ been separated for almost 1,960 years? What is an additional 1,000 years by God's timetable? Remember 1,000 years is only a day to God.

QUESTION G:

When do the martyred saints in Revelation 7, get resurrected?

ANSWER:

The resurrection of the martyred saints is recorded in Revelation 20:4-5:

"I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the SOULS of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. THEY CAME TO LIFE and reigned with Christ a thousand years... ..This is the first resurrection..."

Notice that at first, John only saw the First Fruit believers seated on their thrones along with the SOULS of the martyred saints. This tells us that the First Fruit believers had previously risen. Then John saw the martyred saints come to life. This is called the first resurrection. This occurs at the end of man's 6,000 years and right before the 1,000 year Kingdom reign.

QUESTION H:

How can you say Christians will enter the Tribulation period when I Thess.5:9, says they are not appointed to suffer wrath?

ANSWER:

I Thessalonians 5:9(KJ) says:

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."

The word for appointed (#5087), can mean: commit, conceive, make, ordain, purpose, put, set or sink.

The same word is also used in the following verses:

"...I have chosen you, and ordained (5087) you, that you should go and bring forth fruit." (John 15:16)

"...hath made (5087) you overseers to feed the church of God." (Acts 20:28)

God has ordained that the Christian should bring forth fruit. Is every Christian fruitful? The answer is no. While God has purposed ALL to be fruitful, not all will be.

In the same manner, God has purposed the overseers to feed the church. Do all who have been called to feed, do so? Here again, the answer is no. Not all are feeding the church as they have been called to do.

From these two examples, we can apply this to the "appointed" in I Thessalonians 5:9.

It is not God's purpose for Christians to have to suffer wrath. While He has not ordained that they SHOULD have to suffer wrath, the Word of God clearly indicates that some will:

"...These are they who have come out of the great tribulation..." (Rev.7:14)

"Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring--those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus." (Revelation 12:17)

"This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus." (Revelation 14:12)

God did not make it so Christians should have to suffer wrath. In His plan of things, He did not "appoint" them to have to suffer. While He has not purposed that Christians SHOULD suffer, this does not mean that ALL Christians will escape the wrath that is coming. The word Paul uses does not mean that every Christian will escape the wrath. Only those found "worthy" to escape, will escape.

QUESTION I:

What about the Mid-Tribulation theory of the Rapture? Please discuss it in light of the concept of a First Fruits Rapture.

ANSWER:

The Mid-Tribulation theory says that the Rapture takes place in the middle of the Tribulation. This is completely different from what Revelation 14 teaches (see the fifth

chapter of this book). The First Fruit believers are taken to Heaven before the hour of Judgement arrives.

The Mid-Tribulationists and those adhering to the Pre-Wrath view are not truly LOOKING for the BLESSED HOPE, but are looking for the appearance of the Anti-christ. This is clearly in contradiction to Scripture (see Titus 1:9 and Titus 2:1-15). Remember that obedience to God's Word is what matters:

"Because thou hast KEPT THE WORD of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation.."(Revelation 3:10(KJ))

Ironically, by adhering to these false teachings, it may prove to be self fulfilling for their followers.

QUESTION J:

How can a person be assured of taking part in the Rapture?

ANSWER:

First of all, the individual needs to be 100% certain they are indeed Born-again. Being Born-again means to have come to the cross of Jesus Christ in all humility and asking Him to come into their heart and life. By completely surrendering one's life and committing it to Him, the person dies to self and thus becomes, "born-again".

Once a person is Born-again, they should begin to show evidence of this experience. They will have a desire to read God's Word and pray to the Lord. In this new life as a Christian, the person will seek to be led by the Holy Spirit in obedience to God's Word. Additional evidence of obedience should include:

Baptism
Witnessing
Tithing
Worshiping

The Word of God indicates that only those who have KEPT GOD'S WORD and who have NOT DEFILED THEIR GARMENTS are counted worthy of escaping the Tribulation period. Some Born-again believers are given the chance of escape because they heeded the Word of God and did what it says. They separated themselves from this world and pleased God by their righteous walk with Him as King.

To be assured of taking part in the Rapture of First Fruit believers, the person should continue living a sanctified life that will be pleasing to Him. They should make every effort to be found blameless in the Lord's eyes. Finally, they should:

"WATCH ye therefore, and PRAY ALWAYS, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36(KJ))

QUESTION K:

How can a Christian be excluded from the Kingdom? Aren't all Christians assured of going to Heaven?

ANSWER:

The distinction needs to be made between Heaven and the Kingdom. All truly Born again believers are assured of going to Heaven because their names are written in the Lamb's book of life:

".....You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN HEAVEN." (Hebrews 12:22-23)

Only those whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life will go to hell:

"If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." (Revelation 20:15)

Entrance into the Kingdom is another matter. The Kingdom refers to the 1,000 year reign with Christ known as the Millennium. Not all Born-again believers are assured of taking part in this Kingdom:

"Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21)

These are our Lord's own words that not all Christians will enter the Kingdom, or the 1,000 year reign with Him. In addition to other parables referred to in Chapter 7, the Lord also taught this concept in Luke 20:35:

"But THOSE who are considered WORTHY of taking part in THAT AGE and in the resurrection from the dead..."

Jesus said only those who are considered WORTHY will take part in THAT AGE or the Kingdom age, which begins at the first resurrection.

At the end of the Millennium, all Christians who missed the Kingdom reign, will be raised to life. Since their names are written in the book of life, they are assured of going to Heaven at that time.

While all Christians will not participate in the 1,000 year Kingdom reign, ALL true Christians will go to Heaven.

QUESTION L:

Why hasn't the Church been taught about the partial Rapture and the concept of the Kingdom?

ANSWER:

Remember, Ecclesiastes 3:15 tells us everything that is, has been before:

"Whatever is has already been, and what will be has been before..."

When Jesus observed the condition of the church and its leaders notice what He had to say in Matthew 23:13-14:

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to."

Nothing has really changed from the time of Jesus. The religious leaders at that time were not teaching what the people needed to know. They were really hypocrites keeping others from the correct path.

Today, the same thing is happening again. Teachings about a partial or phased Rapture and the Kingdom are not being taught because it is the truth. The current day Pastors and Teachers are, once again, keeping the people from entering the Kingdom, by not *"rightly dividing"* the Word of truth.

Instead, much of the church is guilty of allowing incorrect teachings to prevail. No longer is sound doctrine encouraged as it should be (Titus 1:9 & 2:1), but the church has fulfilled yet another Scripture:

"For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a GREAT NUMBER of teachers to say what their ITCHY EARS want to hear." (II Timothy 4:3)

The religious leaders of today need to re-evaluate what is being taught. The church members need to insist upon the return to sound doctrine.

QUESTION M:

Is there other evidence the Middle East war will start-up again soon?

ANSWER:

Besides the fact that we know the Middle East is being armed for war, the Word of God also tells us that another great war is about to take place. The prophet Jeremiah also indicated the following:

"And lest your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumor that shall be heard in the land; a rumor shall both come one year, and after that in another year shall come a rumor, and violence in the land, ruler against ruler." (Jeremiah 51:46(KJ))

This indicates that a war will occur in one year, and that it will start-up again in another year. In a previous verse, the prophet gives us an indication as to the timing:

"This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "The Daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor at the time it is trampled; the time to harvest her will soon come." (Jeremiah 51:33)

The war we are witnessing in Iraq (Babylon) is brought out in the first part of this verse as the time it was trampled. The United Nations, led by the great American armed forces have certainly trampled Iraq. The prophet says that after Babylon is trampled, the time to harvest her will soon come.

We are not given the number of years, but Jeremiah indicates that it will not be long between the time Babylon is trampled and then harvested.

The Middle East may erupt again soon. The point needs to be remembered that the Old Testament Prophets were predicting a time which was far into the future. The study of Prophecy should remind the believer the return of the Lord is near; and of their need to be ready.

We need to remember:

"For now we SEE through a glass, DARKLY; but then face to face: now I KNOW IN PART; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (I Corinthians 13:12 (KJ))

If the Rapture doesn't occur this year, one of the reasons may be the long-suffering and mercy of God:

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9)

God is merciful, and He doesn't want anyone Christian to perish. While it may appear that God is being slack in His return, His reason may be to give people more time to prepare.

If the Lord does not return this year, the believer should continue looking for Him until He returns.

The words from Matthew Henry's commentary are good advice for the wise:

"Therefore every day and every hour we must be ready, and not off our watch any day in the year, or any hour in the day." (M. H. Volume 5, Page 372)

Question N

How can there be a "*Blessed Hope*" if the Church has to go into the Tribulation period?

ANSWER:

The Blessed Hope is found in Titus 2:13(KJ):

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

The *Blessed Hope* is the hope that Christ will take us to be with Him. We should be looking

for that time and eagerly awaiting His call.

The problem arises, from the fact that the entire church is not looking for the soon return of the Lord, and they do not have the Blessed Hope in their hearts.

The Blessed Hope is REAL, but it is only real to those who have "eyes to see and ears to hear". Only those who are obedient to the Word will have the Blessed Hope:

"Behold, I am coming soon! BLESSED is he who KEEPS THE WORDS of the prophecy in this book." (Revelation 22:7)

The Blessed Hope is available to ALL in the church. Once the SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE takes place, however, the remaining church will have missed out because of their own disobedience to the Word of God.

The church is not appointed to go into the Tribulation. The Blessed Hope is still available to all believers.

QUESTION O:

II Corinthians 5:10, says we must ALL appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ. How could this be if some are Raptured at the beginning, some at the end of the Tribulation period, and some at the end of the Millennium?

ANSWER:

Let's see what II Corinthians 5:9-10 says:

"So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."

The purpose of this judgement, is to give out rewards for faithful service. It will be based upon the good works of faithful servants.

The timing of this judgement is found in Revelation 11:18:

"...The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name..."

This judgement for rewards is right after the seventh trumpet, which places it at the end of the Tribulation and just prior to the Millennium.

The First Fruit believers and the Martyred Saints will be the only ones present at this portion of the judgement, since the rest of the Saints are not resurrected until the end of the Millennium. The remaining Born-again believers, who missed the Kingdom, will not

participate for two reasons:

(1) They don't have any rewards to receive. and (2) They missed the First Resurrection.

This is confirmed by Paul's teaching in I Corinthians 3:14:

"...his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with FIRE, and the FIRE will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one ESCAPING THROUGH THE FLAMES."

The Born-again believers who missed the Kingdom reign are saved, but they loose all of their rewards. They are pictured by Paul, as just escaping through the flames.

This is also seen in Revelation 20:12-15:

"...The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books...each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

These Born-again believers escape the flames of Hell because their names were written in the book of life. They pass their judgement seat, but miss out on any rewards.

QUESTION P:

What did Jesus mean in Matthew 7:21: *"Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven?"*

ANSWER:

The above Scripture is near the very end of the Sermon on the Mount. In this great sermon, the Lord taught us many wonderful things about entrance into the Kingdom which is the 1,000 year reign with Him as King.

First of all, you will notice he is talking about Christians. They are saying to him, "Lord, Lord..." I Corinthians 12:3 tells us:

"Therefore I tell you that no one is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit."

The above teaches that only through the Holy Spirit can a person call Jesus their Lord. This is proof the individuals Jesus was referring to at the end of his sermon were indeed Christians. They were calling Jesus Lord.

Not only did they call him Lord which tells us they were true believers, they also performed many wonderful works:

*"Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?"
(Matthew 7:22)*

From this we can see that these were active believers in Christ who did perform many Godly works. They prophesied in His name, cast out demons and performed many miracles. They were truly believers who had been born again. They were even doing many great and wonderful works. And yet, notice what the Lord says to them: *"...I never knew you, away from me, you evildoers!"* (Matthew 7:23)

The word for *"knew"* in the above verse can best be translated: to be acquainted with. In other words, although these born-again individuals did many great, Godly works for Jesus, they never really knew Him the way he wanted them to know Him. While they knew Him as their Saviour, they had not really gotten acquainted with Him in such a way to make Him their true Lord.

As a result, these Christians were turned away by the Lord. Does this mean they lost their salvation? Of course not! Salvation is 100% free and it can NEVER be taken away. There is nothing anyone can do in order to earn their salvation, and there is nothing they can do to lose it. Salvation is completely free and secure.

These Christians did not lose their salvation. They were turned away by the Lord, and did not gain entrance into the Kingdom of heaven. This is the 1,000 year reign with Christ that begins right after the Second Coming. These believers will not enter into the Kingdom of heaven because they failed to be counted worthy due to their failure to know Him properly. For a further look into this issue, the reader should see Chapter 9, Salvation of Your Soul.

QUESTION Q:

How was the length of the 42 generations from Abraham to Christ determined to be 2,166 years?

ANSWER:

The length of the 42 generations from Abraham to Christ was taken directly from the Word of God:

- (A) Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born (Genesis 21:5).
- (B) Isaac was 60 years old when his son Jacob was born (Genesis 25:26).
- (C) The Israelites lived in Egypt for 430 years (Exodus 12:40).
- (D) Jacob went to Egypt when he was 130 years old (Genesis 47:9).

(E) King Solomon began construction of the Temple 480 years after the Israelites came out of Egypt (I Kings 6:1).

Adding the above together: $100 + 60 + 430 + 130 + 480 = 1,200$

This tells us there were 1,200 years from Abraham until the construction of Solomon's Temple. Since the Temple was begun in the year 966 B.C., we only need to add 966 to 1,200, to determine that there were 2,166 years from Abraham until Christ.

The above lengths of time were recorded in the Word of God. One of the reasons may have been for a calculation such as this.

QUESTION R:

What does it mean to be an overcomer?

ANSWER:

An overcomer is a believer who has had an authentic experience with God. Though thrown into the furnace of affliction, they have come forth as pure gold. The overcomer is born through the victory they receive by trusting in Jesus Christ.

Learning to be an overcomer is perhaps the most difficult thing to do on this earth as a human being. Possessing impressive credentials and degrees offer little solace when it comes to where the "rubber meets the road". Every professing Christian must learn to be an overcomer through faith and total trust in their Savior.

In Matthew 11:28-30(KJ), Jesus urges:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

The overcomers take their agony and burdens to the mighty counselor. Through prayer and trust, Jesus leads the downcast believer to "green pasture". The sting of the adversary is somehow turned to sweet victory. Christ alone is able to provide the peace that passes all understanding.

While every believer will have trials and testing in this world, Christ reminded us to be of good cheer because He overcame this world. As believers, we find our sweet victory in Him! He has already overcome for us. Overcomers are believers who find their strength and help in Him--not through man, but by the power of the Son of God.

A genuine overcomer follows in Christ's footsteps. They learn to "take it on the chin" and

to "take it to the cross". What-ever the world dishes out is handled with prayer and placed on the altar before God. By offering everything to Christ, they find hope and sufficiency in Him.

Being an overcomer is what being a Christian is all about. Through the trials of this life, the overcomer's faith is put on trial and thereby confirmed as Holy evidence before a mighty God, it is authentic.

As our example, Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before him. Overcomers have the victory because of His victory. Through His victory, the overcomer is able to walk in newness of life. The overcomer knows: they have been crucified with Christ their old life is gone (Gal.2:20). By dying to self, the overcomer experiences the joy of Christ's triumph in their life.

Finally, an overcomer is grateful and humble: for they know of God's rich mercy and marvelous grace. If it wasn't for Christ, they would be doomed. Out of this gratitude, rises the song of gladness and praise. An overcomer's heart bursts forth with praise and adoration unto their God for the victory He provides.

The overcomer knows, first hand, that while weeping may endure for the night: joy cometh in the morning!

QUESTION S:

Please discuss the difference between God's sacred calendar and the civil calendar.

ANSWER:

The Civil calendar is believed to be the original calendar up until when God divinely instituted the sacred calendar:

"The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, "This month (Nisan) is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year." (Exodus 12:1)

The differences between the two calendars can be shown as follows:

GOD'S SACRED	MO.	MO.	JEWISH CIVIL
-----	-----	-----	-----
1	NISAN	March	7
2	IYAR	April	8
3	SIVAN	May	9
4	TAMMUZ	June	10
5	AV	July	11
6	ELUL	August	12

7	TISHRE	September	1
8	CHESHVAN	October	2
9	KISLEV	November	3
10	TEVET	December	4
11	SHEVAT	January	5
12	ADAR I	February	6
13	ADAR II	LEAP YR.	

Examples: The second month on the civil calendar falls in Cheshvan or October. The ninth month on God's sacred calendar falls in Kislev or November-December (Note: the Jewish months overlap our regular months).

QUESTION T:

What did Jesus mean by, "*Occupy until I come?*"

ANSWER:

This verse is found in Luke 19:13, which is the parable of the ten pounds. Jesus was teaching us that His faithful followers should be diligent until He returns.

In the past, when people thought the Lord was about to return, they quit their jobs and sold their possessions. Unless the Lord told the individual to do this, this type of behavior is contrary to what the above verse teaches.

The believer should be diligently doing whatever they have been called to do. At the same time, however, some take the above verse as an excuse for not looking for Him.

This extreme is not correct either. The believer should be diligent; but, at the same time, should also be LOOKING for the Lord to return.

Looking for Him is an attitude of the person's heart. While we should continue living our lives doing what the Lord has called us to do, we should also understand that this world is NOT our home. The believer's true home is in Heaven, and we are really strangers just passing through this world (see I Peter 2:11 & I John 2:15).

The believer needs to learn to balance diligently working at those things they have been called to do, along with LOOKING for and eagerly awaiting His soon return.

QUESTION U:

What is the difference between those described in the 5th seal (Rev. 6:9-11) and the Great Multitude of Rev. 7:9-17?

ANSWER:

We can't be certain, but note the following: Those described in the 5th seal are said to be given robes, while those described as the Great Multitude in Revelation 7, are said to be washing their robes.

The first group did not appear to previously have any robes, while the second group did. This may mean the first group represents individuals who were not saved prior to when the Tribulation period began. They received Jesus as their Savior after the Tribulation began, and were GIVEN white robes.

The second group has been discussed in this book as the Great Multitude of Born-again believers who had to enter the Tribulation because they had soiled their garments prior to when it began. They are pictured in Revelation 7, as washing their robes and making them white again in the blood of the Lamb.

QUESTION V:

What about the Feast of Trumpets, could the Rapture take place on this Feast?

ANSWER:

Popular Tradition has convinced most people that the Feast of Trumpets is the only day the Rapture can take place. As we have seen in this book, there are other dates which are more likely.

Students of Bible Prophecy know that the first four Feasts have seen either their fulfillment or partial fulfillment:

- o Passover - Jesus died**
- o Unleavened Bread - Jesus was buried**
- o Firstfruits - Jesus rose**
- o Pentecost - Church was born**

This book has shown that Pentecost is a very likely time for the Rapture. If the birth of the Church is only a partial fulfillment of that Feast, then the Rapture should also occur on

that day to fulfill it completely.

However, if Pentecost was completely fulfilled with the birth of the Church, then it is possible for the Rapture to occur on the Feast of Trumpets.

The Feast of Trumpets is the next Feast in line after Pentecost. And since God has fulfilled the Feasts in the order given, the Rapture could occur on this Feast.

QUESTION W:

Please discuss the Judgement Seat of Christ.

ANSWER:

The Judgement Seat of Christ is described in II Corinthians 5:9-10:

"So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."

The purpose of this judgement, is to give out rewards for faithful service. It will be a time for the Lord to review every individual's life for both good and bad. For all the good things that were done, the believer will receive rewards. The Word of God indicates that there are five possible crowns that can be obtained:

VICTORS CROWN

"Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a CROWN that will LAST FOREVER."

"Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize." (I Corinthians 9:25-27)

MARTYR'S CROWN

"Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the CROWN OF LIFE." (Revelation 2:10)

ELDER'S CROWN

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers - not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the CROWN OF GLORY that will never fade away." (I Peter 5:2-4)

SOUL WINNERS CROWN

"For what is our hope, or joy, or CROWN OF REJOICING? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." (I Thessalonians 2:19-20(KJ))

CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

"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." (II Timothy 4:8(KJ))

For all believers who have faithfully served the Lord, the Judgement Seat of Christ will be a glorious day indeed. The crowns outlined above will never fade away. Don't let anyone take your crown! (Revelation 3:11)

QUESTION X:

Why is the Blessed Hope important to the Believer?

ANSWER:

The Blessed Hope is so very important to the believer for several reasons.

First of all, looking for the Blessed Hope of the Lord's soon return is sound doctrine. The reader is encouraged to read the first and second chapters of Titus where Paul tells the importance of sound doctrine.

Sound doctrine should be encouraged and taught. Any who refute sound doctrine should be rebuked and encouraged back to sound doctrine.

***"Looking for that Blessed Hope..."** is sound doctrine that needs to be taught to all believers.*

Second of all, having the Blessed Hope, the believers will purify themselves:

"Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure." (I John 3:3)

Knowing that the Lord will return very soon, the believers know that they will stand before a Holy God at that time. Having this hope in their heart, the believers are motivated to live a holy and blameless life. They will want to purify their hearts, knowing they will be with Him very soon.

Finally, as was noted in the last question, one of the crowns that can be obtained is the CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, for those who LOVE HIS APPEARING.

Those who LOVE HIS APPEARING will be given a crown. Having the Blessed Hope in ones heart should motivate the believer to long for and truly love the thought of being with Him. This will result in the believer receiving a glorious crown.

The Blessed Hope is a very important hope that every believer should have.

QUESTION Y:

What is the order of major events during the Tribulation?

ANSWER:

The following is a highlight of the major events that are about to transpire on this planet. These are listed in their order chronologically:

- 1) Rapture of First Fruit believers.**
- 2) Anti-christ is revealed and a strong delusion is sent out by God.**
- 3) Two-witnesses arrive and Angel proclaims eternal gospel.**
- 4) 144,000 Jews sealed.**
- 5) Peace covenant signed.**
- 6) World War III (Gog-Magog War).**
- 7) Famine & Death over one-fourth of the earth.**
- 8) Christians Martyred for Jesus.**
- 9) Temple worship restored in Israel.**
- 10) Satan is cast to the earth to indwell the body of the Anti-christ for a 42 month reign of power.**
- 11) The Two Jewish witnesses are killed and then resurrected three days later.**

- 12) Anti-christ ends sacrifices and creates abomination of desolation.
- 13) The Jewish remnant flees to safety.
- 14) God pours out His wrath.
- 15) Earth is Harvested.
- 16) Jesus Christ returns with His Saints for the Battle of Armageddon.
- 17) Anti-christ and False Prophet thrown into the lake of fire for 1,000 years.
- 18) Judgement Seat of Christ.
- 19) Millennium reign for 1,000 years.
- 20) Satan let loose for a short time for one final battle on earth, after which he is cast into hell forever.
- 21) Great White Throne Judgement: with all whose names are not found written in the Book of Life, being thrown into the lake of fire.

(Note: Some events happen near the same time, so the above chronology may require slight adjustment.)

QUESTION Z:

Haven't you forgotten that we are saved by Grace?

ANSWER:

God's Grace is provided for believers to be overcomers. His Grace is not divine favor extended to the believer for continuance in any form of unholy behavior.

His Grace enables committed believers, empowered by His Spirit, through genuine repentance, to be overcomers. By God's Grace, through faith in Christ, the believer is able to break the chains of darkness and live a victorious life in Him.

Christ, alone, is able to heal and make whole. His beautiful gift of Grace is sufficient. Being justified by His Grace, we have the hope of eternal life:

"...having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good." (Titus 3:7&8)

This position of Grace is sacred, and should be deeply respected.

Too many people have misunderstood God's Grace. Often His Grace is perceived as a level of assurance which enables them to go along in their same uncommitted behavior. Erroneously, they believe God's Grace will counteract their uncommitted and un-yielded life. They have assumed Grace means erase with no consequences for their actions.

While we are saved by Grace, our salvation does not assure us that we will be found worthy to escape the Tribulation period. While salvation is completely free, escape from the Tribulation and entrance into the Kingdom will be based upon how the believer has utilized that free gift.

Peter tells us in II Peter 3:18: *"...GROW in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..."* Peter is reminding the believer to continue to grow in God's grace. To grow in His grace means to *"make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him"* (see II Peter 3:10-18).

Through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, the believer will grow in the Grace of God.

The overcoming First Fruit believer realizes that he has to give over areas of his own life to be triumphant by His marvelous Grace. This is completely different from the *"lukewarm"* view which says that God's Grace will look over those areas because of His Grace. Grace then becomes a bandage to cover an unclean life. As Jude 4, says:

"For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the GRACE of God into a license for immorality."

We are justified freely by God's marvelous Grace (Romans 3:24). That Grace, however, should not be used as a license to sin. God will not be mocked.

Jesus is our answer, not our excuse.

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